

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

Infantry

**Item number:** 23/57/13

**Title:** 40th Infantry Battalion

April 1917



AWM4-23/57/13



Date.	Place and Time.	Remarks or References to Appendices, &c., attached.
23/3/17	}	Training at TATTINGHAM.
4/4/17		
5/4/17		Moved to ARQUES.
6/4/17		Engaged at STOMER do STEENWERCK and marched to ARMENIERES.
7/4/17	ARMENIERES.	40 BN Specialists went into line - HOULINES SECTOR.
8/4/17	in 8 hrs.	40 BN relieved 34 BN in HOULINES SECTOR.
9/4/17		Against left sub sector strong but over considerable fire from Minnewerpen, 4.2 Hows & 4.2 Recd

D.398/9.14.—C.11056.



Date.	Place and Time.	Remarks or References to Appendices, &c., attached.
16/4/17	A-TIERES	Rest of Bn front trench. Enemy continued to shell left sub section. Some damage done to <del>casements</del> and front line.
17/4/17	- -	do do do. Some H.E. also directed against right sub section (in vicinity of <del>camp</del> ).
18/4/17	- -	Enemy put over 70 H.E. & a few S.G. shells also 30 77 mm on left sub section.
"	10.17 pm	Enemy opened heavy bombardment left sub

D.398/9.14.—C.11056.



Date.	Place and Time.		Remarks or References to Appendices, &c., attached.
		Section with Minnie Cooper on front and support lines 5.9 4.2 and 77 mm principally on support line and overruns was later lifting to Subsid line.	
17/4/17	Atunis 10.26	Our barrage opened in reply to O.S. call 10.55pm. Enemy attempted to enter our trenches opposite HOBBS FARM but was repulsed before reaching them by our	

D.398/9.14.—C.11056.



Date.	Place and Time.	Remarks or References to Appendices, &c., attached.
		<p> <i>Lewis Gun fire and bombs - all casualties from bombardment C 0012 &amp; 0005, wounded. In case and account of <i>Evitus Spencer</i>.</i></p>
13/4/17	ATIERES	<p> An officer's patrol brought in dead German, rifles, equipments &amp;c from last night's attempted raid. Identification secured. Day quiet.</p>
14/4/17	-	<p> Enemy shelled battery positions heavily. Shell</p>

D.398/9.14.—C.11056.



Date.	Place and Time.	Remarks or References to Appendices, &c., attached.
		Line also directed against the front, especially left Sub Sector.
15/4/17		Proportion Specialists 30% Bo came in prior to relief. Enemy registered left Sub Sector during day and was very active in reply to our L.T.M. shoot.
"	745	Enemy opened barrage on support line left Sub Sector Locs 14, 15, 16, 17 then to

D.398/9.14.—C.11056.



Date.	Place and Time.	Remarks or References to Appendices, &c., attached.
		front line and Sub 4.
		Miner was for principally on front lines.
"	7.54pm	Our barriade opened in reply to S.O.S.
"	8.20	Enemy barriade extended now to N side of LYS.
"	8.37	Situation eased and our barriade taken off.
"		Enemy raided N side of LYS and was ejected leaving dead in our trenches (7 3 <sup>rd</sup> Div Inf Troop).
"	9pm	Situation Normal. Enemy

D.398/9.14.—C.11056.



Date.	Place and Time.	Remarks or References to Appendices, &c., attached.
		did not attempt to raid on this Bn tent. Our casualties from shell fire 1 killed and 12 wounded.
16/4/17	After 11/12/17	Relieved by 38 <sup>th</sup> Bn & went into Reserve as D Battery.
17/4/17	"	Specialist Training & Training for offensive.
22/4/17		
27/4/17	12/11/17	Became Bn in Support. C. Bn" vice 39 <sup>th</sup> Bn.
23/4/17		Drumming parties and Training.

D.398/9.14.—C.11056.



# 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.)

Hour, Date, Place	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
26/4/17      A'TIERES. 11 p.m.	Relieved 43 Bn. as Bn in Support (B Bn) in PLOEGSTREET WOOD.	
30/4/17      P'STREET    4 a.m.	Heavy enemy bombardment and raid on 39th Bn. L.G. teams 40 Bn also did good work. Ex Corpl LAWLER and No 314 EVANS. H.mention.	
	(Original of above written on same sheet as entries for beginning of subsequent month and filed with volume for that month).	



10th AUS. INF. BRIGADE,  
3rd DIVISION.  
A. I. F.

Brigade Headquarters,  
18th April, 1917.

PROVISIONAL DIVISIONAL AND BRIGADE PLANS.

FOR MACHINE GUNS.

REFERENCE MAP. PLOEGSTEERT, 1/10,000, Sheet 28 S.W.4  
Edition 4 A.

1. DISPOSITIONS of BRIGADES. Two Brigades in line, each Brigade in two lines with 2 Battalions in each line.
2. DISPOSITIONS of BATTALIONS. The Battalions are lettered from right to left, the 1st Line Battalions being A.B.C.D., the 2nd Line Battalions being E.F.G.H.  
On completion of the operation Battalions will occupy relative positions shewn thus:-  
  
H.G.F.E.  
D.C.B.A.  
  
The probable dispositions will be as follows:-  
  
A Bn. 9th Inf.Bde.33rd Bn.(Lt-Col.MORSHEAD)  
B Bn. -do- 35th Bn.(Lt-Col.GODDARD)  
C Bn. 10th Inf.Bde.39th Bn(Lt-Col. HENDERSON)  
D Bn. -do- 40th Bn.(Lt-Col.LORD)  
E Bn. 9th Inf.Bde.36th Bn.(Lt-Col.MILNE)  
F Bn. -do- 34th Bn.(Lt-Col.MARTIN)  
G Bn. 10th Inf.Bde.38th Bn.(Lt-Col.DAVIS)  
H Bn. -do- 37th Bn.(Lt-Col.SMITH)
3. RESERVES. The 11th Aus.Inf.Bde.furnishes the Divisional Reserve.
4. MACHINE GUN COMPANIES. Machine Gun Companies will be under the command of the Divisional Commander until after the capture of all objectives and at a clock time to be named when one Machine Gun Coy., will pass under the orders of each front line Brigade.
5. LIGHT TRENCH MORTARS. One battery is held in reserve. One Battery remains at the disposal of each attacking Brigade.



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6.	POSITIONS of <u>HEADQUARTERS.</u>	Division	STEENNWERCK
		9th Aus. Inf. Bde.	U.20.a.80.90.
		10th -do-	U.14.c.50.20.
		11th -do-	CATACOMBS
		A Bn.	U.15.c.60.65.
		B Bn.	PROUSE POINT.
		C Bn.	U.14.b.15.95.
		D Bn.	U.8.c.35.40.
		E Bn.	U.15.c.95.50.
		F Bn.	U.15.a.65.15.
		G Bn.	U.8.d.20.15.
		H Bn.	Not yet recommended

Note:- E.F.G & H Battalion Headquarters  
will move forward, after assault, to suitable  
dugouts in captured territory.

7. BOUNDARIES.
- (a) Between Right and Left  
Brigades. A Line running from the point where  
ANSCROFT AVENUE joins our front line, through the  
M in GREY F.M.
- (b) Between the Left Brigade and the Division on our  
left. A line running through U.8.b.00.40. and  
U.3.d.30.85.

8. PROBABLE  
PLAN  
OF  
OPERATIONS.
- ZERO HOUR will be at DAWN.
- At ZERO PLUS TEN the barrage will lift off the  
enemy's front line.
- At ZERO PLUS FIFTEEN enemy's Second Line must  
be captured. The barrage will hold for TEN MINUTES  
about the line G.H.J. to allow E.F.G. and H. Battalions  
to pass through. There will then be a second bound  
for the capture of the line ULNA RESERVE, ULSTER RESERVE,  
which must be completed by ZERO PLUS THIRTYEIGHT.
- The barrage will hold for FIVE MINUTES on the  
line L.M.N. and will then creep forward finally coming  
to rest upon the line of the UNCANNY TRENCHES where.  
it will be maintained <sup>in</sup> definitely.

9. TASKS AND  
OBJECTIVES.
- The following are the tasks and objectives  
proposed for Battalions of this Brigade and the two  
Assaulting Battalions on our right.

"B" BATTALION  
35th Battalion (Lt-Col. GODDARD)

Mines will be blown at Zero in the flat salient  
opposite ARTON'S FARM. These will materially shorten  
the length of enemy front and support trenches likely to



9. TASKS AND OBJECTIVES.

"B" BATTALION (Contd.)  
35th Battalion (Lt.Col.GODDARD)

be effectively held against the advance of this Battalion -

The objectives of the Battalion are the Front and Support Lines inclusive of the craters. The direction of the advance will be on a bearing of  $24^{\circ}$  East of true North, except for the left Company, which will conform to the direction of the right Company of "C" Battalion.- Care must be taken to keep touch with the left of "A" Battalion on the right so as to avoid any gap.-Owing to a change of direction of enemy trenches at the before mentioned salient there will probably be some overlapping at the meeting flanks of the Centre and Left Companies: but this does not in the least matter.

The troops must not advance beyond the line of the ULSTER SUPPORT, until all the waves of F Battalion have passed through.- They will then follow the rear wave of F Battalion, as far as the line of consolidation F,G,H,J. The junction for consolidation with "A" Battalion on the right should be made at F on ASH AVENUE, just east of the bend in that road, and with C Battalion on the left at G about the point where the Brigade Boundary is crossed by the hedge-(see photos). There will be ample time to choose the line F,G, carefully, as it will take some time for tools to be brought up. Particular attention must be given to securing a good field of fire. This should be easy, as the line F,G, runs transversely across a spur which has a 1 in 120 fall towards the North-east, and a 1 in 50 fall towards the North.

B. Battalion will be responsible for the defence of the line F,G. against counter-attack in the event of our forward line being driven in.

The total length of trench to be captured by each wave is about 500 yards.-This can be adequately dealt with by 6 platoons in line, in each wave. The density of the attack of the left platoons need not be great, because the mine explosions will have thoroughly disorganised the defence of this part of the objective of this Battalion.- Thus, one Company of the Battalion is available for carrying parties and Reserve; the remaining Companies finding their own Moppers up.-The furthest distance to be traversed by carrying parties from our present front line to the line F,G, is only 400 yards, so that small carrying parties can make frequent journeys.

The total length of new fire and communication trenches to be dug is about 1,100 yards. This would require the continuous labour of 220 men for 48 hours.- Thus about 180 shovels and 80 picks should be available for this Battalion.-



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# TASKS AND OBJECTIVES

## "C" BATTALION

39th Battalion (Lt.Col. HENDERSON).

In view of the extended frontage and number of objectives of this Battalion, it will be desirable to employ all its four Companies in attack, disposing them in line.- In view, however, of the blowing of the Mines in U.9c., the defence at the right or southern end of the objectives of this Battalion will be much disorganised, for a distance of at least 150 yards from the Mines.- The right of the attack need not, therefore, be so dense as the remainder.- On the other hand the left of the attack will have to be designed with special attention, and with a careful allocation of mopping-up parties to each of the several defined objectives. Consideration must be given to the possibility of the mines not exploding.

The direction of advance of this Battalion will be 54° East of true North.

The objectives of this Battalion are the ULRICA TRENCH, the ULRICA SUPPORT ( which is a double line). the ULRICA ROW, LA DOUVE FARM and MOAT, and AVENUE FARM ruins.-The halt of the Artillery barrage will be east of all these objectives, so that the whole area containing all these objectives can be taken in one continuous advance.-But the troops must not advance East of a line which skirts the Eastern edge of the Moat and Avenue Farm, or East of the ULRICA SUPPORT, until G Battalion has passed through.They will then advance to the Line G,H, and dig in. If, as may be inferred from the photos, there is a hedge along the East margin of the moat, the leading wave of C Battalion would assist to clear passages for C Battalion through it.

The junction with B Battalion on the South will be made at G, where the Brigade boundary crosses the line of the hedge; and with D Battalion on the North at H on the LA DOUVE River near the North-East corner of the MOAT.- The River DOUVE will be inclusive to C Battalion.-

The Battalion will be responsible for the defence of the line G,H, against counter-attack, in the event of our forward line being driven in.-

LA DOUVE FARM and AVENUE FARM may be expected to be a harbour for enemy snipers and Machine guns; the mopping up parties allotted to these objectives must, therefore, act very promptly, the moment the creeping barrage has lifted off them.

A special party, not less than <sup>30</sup>strong, should be told off from D Battalion to follow close behind the left leading Platoon wave of C Battalion to make straight for the point where the enemy's front line crosses the DOUVE, to leap the enemy front trench, and effect a crossing of the DOUVE within enemy territory.This party to then work westerly, along and behind ULRICA TRENCH in the stretch between the DOUVE and ULNA BEAK, so as to meet the other party of D Battalion which is to work East from the BEAK along and behind the enemy front trench.- The special task of these two parties is to facilitate for D Battalion the crossing of the DOUVE,- by overcoming enemy opposition at the earliest possible moment.



9. TASKS AND  
OBJECTIVES

"C" BATTALION( Contd)

39th Battalion (Lt.Col.HENDERSON)

Carrying parties for this Battalion should be found from within the Battalion. The length of the journey from our front line averages 600 yards-say, a trip out and back every 30 minutes.

The length of main and Communication trench ~~1/2~~ to be dug is about 1,100 yards, i.e. 220 men working continuously for 48 hours.- Tools required-200 shovels, 100 picks.



9. Tasks and  
OBJECTIVES

"D" BATTALION

40th Battalion ) Lt. Col. LORD)

The special task of this Battalion is to seize and make good the crossing of the DOUVE and to capture all the country between it, the Divisional Left Boundary, and the Line H, J.

In order to rapidly overcome the opposition to the crossing of the DOUVE, by the seizure of the enemy trench extending between the ULNA BEAK and the point where ULRICA TRENCH crosses the DOUVE, it is suggested to launch to the attack, a special party from this Battalion, - from a position of assembly within our lines, just North of the River - comprising one Company, four platoons in depth. - Of this Company, the first and second waves extended on a front of 100 yards should make for and seize Ulna Support Trench and the front line between LA PETITE DOUVE FARM and the BEAK. The remainder will need to deal with the portion of enemy front line running Eastward from the BEAK to link up with the special party accompanying C Battalion and crossing the DOUVE in enemy territory and assist other parties of the 40th Battalion in placing crossing over the DOUVE River between the BEAK and ULRICA TRENCH.

Two other Companies of D Battalion to make a frontal attack on the line of the DOUVE, placing, at not less than 6 points bridging material, carried out, under cover of darkness, some hours before Zero, to the right bank of the River; crossing the River by such bridges and advancing to the line H, J to complete the capture of its objectives.

One Company of D Battalion to remain at the disposal of the Brigadier.

The dispositions of this Battalion will necessarily be complicated, owing to the convergence of the two lines of attack, and the complex location of the objective trench system. This difficulty can only be met by a careful allocation of objectives to the various platoons and full instructions as to the employment of the various means of offence available to the troops.

ULNA SWITCH will be destructively bombarded prior to Zero. - All that part of ULNA AVENUE which lies East of the line H, J will remain under heavy Artillery barrage until Zero plus 25 minutes, so that little interference to D Battalion, from this direction need be anticipated.

The troops must not move East of a line running through the V in LA PETITE DOUVE FM and H in ULNA SWITCH until K Battalion has passed through. They will then follow the last wave of H Battalion, to the line H, J. and dig in thereon. - D Battalion is responsible for the defence of the line H, J, against counter-attack, in the event of our front line being driven in. -

Contact with C Battalion on the South will be established at H. on the DOUVE, near the North-east corner of the MOAT, and with the right Battalion of the New Zealand Division, at J, at a point the exact position of which has not yet been definitely decided but approximately where shown on the plan.

The C.O. of D Battalion will be responsible for establishing liaison with the New Zealand Battalion on his left. - The route and timing of the approach march of the Company of D Battalion which will operate North of the DOUVE will be arranged between Divisional Staff of this and the New Zealand Divisions. -

D Battalion will have to dig about 300 yards of fire trench and about 400 yards of communication trench. - This will take 140 men 48 hours, - Battalion requires 110 shovels and 60 picks.



9. TASKS AND  
OBJECTIVES

"F" BATTALION

34th Battalion (Lt.Col.MARTIN)

The principle difficulty which confronts this Battalion is the execution of the tasks allotted to it is the unavoidable change of direction which it will have to make during its advance.-Its tasks are to clear the country between the ULSTER SUPPORT and the ULSTER RESERVE to capture the latter, and to establish outposts at V and W.-

The Battalions must advance (either in waves or in lines of section columns) behind B Battalion, its right being directed on the bend of the road in ASH AVENUE, near the point F. During the halt of the barrage the platoons will have time to deploy and swing up their left so as to face their new direction, keeping parallel with the barrage as it swings round. The tendency will, however, be to crowd towards the right, which tendency must be checked, particularly by the left Company.

Behind the leading platoon waves, moppers up must be provided to deal specially with ULSTER SWITCH, and to drop into end and clear any dugouts in ULSTER AVENUE.-

ULSTER RESERVE (so far as same lies within the ground allotted to this Battalion-about 225 yards) may prove a difficult objective, even although previously heavily bombarded. The derelict trenches behind the main trench may be found occupied.

When the Battalion has reached the limits of its advance the dispositions which suggest themselves are as follows:- One platoon of right Company to establish a picquet at V, with one platoon acting in support until situation is established. One platoon of Centre Company to establish a picquet at W, with one platoon acting in Support. One platoon of Left Company to be prepared, by action from South to North, to assist G Battalion in the capture of GREY FARM TRENCH system.- The remainder of the Battalion (Less Reserve Company) proceeds with the consolidation, on the line K, L.

The junction, for consolidation, with E Battalion on the South, is at K on ASH AVENUE, at LONG RUIN, and with G Battalion, on the North, is at L, which is on ULSTER DRIVE, just East of the GREY FARM system.

ULSTER DRIVE at point of junction is inclusive to F Battalion, which must also establish bombing blocks in it and ULSTER AVENUE, east of the line K, L.-

This Battalion is responsible for the defence, against counter-attack, of the new line K, L. from ASH AVENUE (exclusive) to ULSTER DRIVE inclusive).- This line has a good field of fire towards the North, but the field of view to the East and South-east is limited by the KNOLLS at FUZE COTTAGE and THATCHED COTTAGE. It is from behind these knolls that a local counter-attack may be expected to develop. The ruins of TILLEUL FARM, and the farm 150 yards to the South of it afford harbour for enemy snipers until occupied by our own snipers.

The hedges and drains encountered in the advance from ULSTER SUPPORT to ULSTER RESERVE may be expected to be wired.- A good supply of heavy wire cutters should therefore be carried by the leading waves. Men carrying wire cutters should be labelled as laid down in S.S.136 XXX11 para.3.-

This Battalion will have to dig about 1200 yards of fire and Communication trenches, which will require 240 men for 48 hours. Tools required 200 shovels. 100 picks.



TASKS AND  
OBJECTIVES.

"G" BATTALION.

38 th. Battalion. (Lt. Col. Davis).

The objectives of this Battalion are the country between the lines G.H. and L.M. <sup>Ulrica Avenue and</sup> ULRICA LANE, the northern end of ULSTER RESERVE and the Grey Farm trench system:- all to the South of LA DOUVE River.

The country between lines G.H. and L.M. appears to be fairly clear of hedges, wire, or other obstacles.- The ultimate objectives cover a frontage of not more than 350 yards. The maximum depth of the advance, from ULRICA SUPPORT to the line L.M. is nearly 800 yards. Two companies deployed on a four platoon frontage, in two platoon waves should be sufficient for the tasks allotted.- This will leave 2 companies one for Brigade Reserve, and one to provide Battalion carrying parties: The double journey for the carrying parties, from and back to our front trenches, will be nearly  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles:- so that numerous parties are required in the early stages of the consolidation of the line L.M.

The main objective is GREY FARM.- It is most important for the success of the whole operation that this objective, and the trenches surrounding it, shall be made good. This locality will be heavily bombarded by us prior to zero.- Also, assistance from F Battalion, by a Platoon attacking from the South, is being provided, Nevertheless the attack on this objective by G Battalion, both from the West and by envelopment from the North, must be carefully worked out.- The provision of sufficient mopping up parties for the several lines of trenches surrounding GREY FARM must not be overlooked.

The Battalion consolidation on the line L.M. for the defence of which line against counter-attack it is also responsible. It also establishes an outpost in vicinity of point K. Its junction with F Battalion on the south is at L. on ULSTER DRIVE, just East of GREY FARM and with H. Battalion, on the North, is at M. on the Douve, which point must be at least as far East as a line joining SCHNITZEL FARM and GREY FARM.

Bombing blocks must be established in ULRICA LANE, leading East beyond line L.M.

There are no apparent dangerous strong points to the east of the line, L.M. as far as the UNCERTAIN Trench system.

The length of main trench to be dug from L to M is about 400 yards also ULRICA AVENUE will have to be cleared and repaired as a main communication. This will involve the continuous labour of, say, 150 men for 48 hours.- Tools required 120 shovels. 60 Picks.



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9. TASKS AND  
OBJECTIVES.

"H" BATTALION

37th Battalion (Lt.Col.W.J.SMITH)

An advanced bridging party of H Battalion, found from its Reserve Company, should follow close on the heels of D Battalion, in order to perfect the emergency bridges over the DOUVE, and otherwise facilitate the rapid crossing of the river by the 12 assaulting platoons of H Battalion.-This portion of the advance should be made in Columns, each of the six platoons in each wave making for one of the six crossings to be provided; special arrangements to be made for guiding each pair of platoons to the particular bridge allotted to it.

The Battalion, after passing through D Battalion, must form up under the Barrage, facing the direction of its subsequent advance, two companies being disposed between the river and ULNA AVENUE, on a frontage of 220 yards, and one Company on the North of the ULNA AVENUE.

The objectives of the two companies South of ULNA AVENUE is the South end of ULCER RESERVE (ULNA RESERVE) and there appear to be no ditches or hedges to impede their advance- A special party of moppers-up, moving near the left flank of the advance, must, however, be told off to drop into ULNA AVENUE, as the advance proceeds, in order to overcome any opposition still active in that trench, and to picquet dugouts therein- A similar mopping up party should move forward with the right flank of the Company which is to advance on the North side of ULNA AVENUE, in order to deal with the latter, concurrently, from the rear.-

The final objective of the left Company of this Battalion is SCHNITZEL FARM and the portion of ULCER RESERVE immediately on the west of it. SCHNITZEL FARM locality is to be regarded as an objective whose capture is of the very highest importance. as it will form the southern pivot upon which the subsequent defence of the MESSINES HILL will depend.- Plans for the capture of this locality by H Battalion, and for its subsequent defensive organisation as the flank strong point of the division, must be very carefully elaborated.

H Battalion digs in on the line M.N. The point M, on the DOUVE, will be fixed in co-operation with G Battalion as defined in their instructions. Point N, where contact with the New Zealand Division is to be established, has been fixed in consultation between Divisions.

H Battalion is responsible for the defence of the line M,N against counter-attack. It will establish outpost picquets, covering its front, in or forward of the line of the UPSET TRENCH in vicinity of the points Y and Z, clearing the country East of the line M,N as far as the Upset Trench (inclusive).

H Battalion has to make an advance of over 600 yards. The length of trenches, main and communication, to be dug, will be about 1250 yards, requiring 250 men for 48 hours, tools 200 shovels, 120 picks. Double journey for carrying parties, over  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles.- say, one trip an hour, including the time to load and unload.