

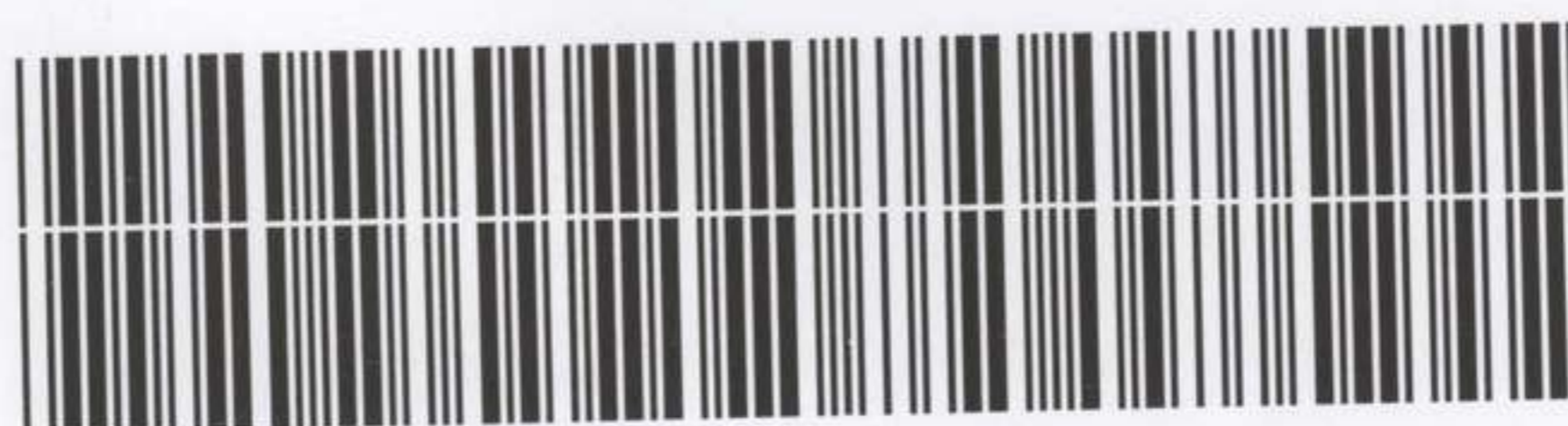
AWM4
Australian Imperial Force unit war diaries,
1914-18 War

Infantry

Item number: 23/32/41

Title: 15th Infantry Battalion

August 1918



AWM4-23/32/41

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201

Australian Imperial Force.

WAR DIARY

OF

15th Battalion A.I.F.

FOR

August 1918

Signature of Officer compiling

[Handwritten signature]
Lieut
Adj. 15th. Battn.

Signature of Officer Commanding

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WAR DIARY

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or
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

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15th Battalion August

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
TRENCHES east of CACHY SHEET 62D.	1918	Aug. 1.	<p>Strength of Battalion including attached 39 Officers 785 Other ranks.</p> <p>Weather fine and sunny. Patrols were out throughout the night, but no enemy seen or heard. Artillery and machine guns of both sides showed normal activity, but there was no mortar fire. Our planes were over enemy lines all day; observing, and bombing planes dropped bombs on Hangard Wood and near areas. Enemy aircraft fairly active in early morning and about 3 p. m. but none were over our lines during the day. Lewis Gun training being pushed on at nucleus camp. The sector we are occupying is quite flat and under observation of the enemy. It is fed by a good communication trench, and the trenches throughout are in a fair condition and down to head cover, though not duck boarded or revetted.</p>	
		2.	<p>Our right flank was extended last night to U.22.b.3.6. and one platoon of right front line Company was brought up from Supports to occupy the additional frontage.</p>	
		3.	<p>Heavy rain fell during the day and night, and trenches are in a very muddy condition. A few Germans were seen (small parties of one's and two's) well in rear of sector, otherwise no movement observed. Our artillery, machine guns and aircraft were very quiet, and our mortars did not fire. Enemy artillery shelled rear areas in morning; CACHY at 3.30 p. m. and commencing 10 p. m. shelled U.15.za 21 and 22 for 15 minutes with heavies. His machine guns were active at night on our right Company front. Enemy was apparently nervous, for a large number of flares were put up during the night. Our front was covered by patrols throughout the night but no enemy were seen or heard. In Hangard Wood the enemy is about 50 yards from our front line, and owing to thick undergrowth, patrols are practically advanced listening posts covering approaches. On the left Company front, No Man's Land has a width varying from 50 yards on the right up to about 300 yards on the left. Exact location of enemy advanced posts on the left is uncertain.</p>	
		4.	<p>During day weather dull, but no rain; night clear and starry. Our artillery was fairly quiet quiet-occasional burst of fire on Hangard Wood East and rear areas. Machine Guns very quiet. No trench mortar fire. Aircraft showed fair activity. Enemy artillery very active during the period. Heavies engaged targets all over our sector, trenches, roads and villages, and registered with H.E., shrapnel on trenches and villages in our support area. His machine guns were normally active on indirect fire on trenches and roads. Enemy trench mortar fired a few shots from U.16d.8.3. Only one enemy plane over during period. More enemy movement</p>	

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Place	Date.	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
TRENCHES east of CACHY. SHEET 62/D.	1918. Aug. 4		<p>than usual observed in his rear areas, mostly small parties, some of which were harvesting crops. At about 11.30 a.m. enemy party of 6 approached our lines under cover of the scrub and mist, but was dispersed by our L. G., and rifle fire. A fighting patrol pushed out from our lines at once, but enemy escaped in the scrub, leaving three rifles and some bombs. Enemy attitude is alert and nervous; numerous flares were put up during the night. Trenches are drying slightly but are still very muddy.</p> <p>5. Day clear and sunny and trenches drying up. During day our artillery and machine guns were quiet, and there was no mortar fire. Enemy shelled our sector intermittently during the day with heavies, the fire being well dispersed and falling mainly on rear area. Relieved in front line by the 49th Battalion. We had several casualties, otherwise relief was carried out successfully. On relief, moved to bivouac in J.25.c. Good shelter from aircraft. Roads were packed with Transport, and the march to Vaire-sur-Corbie took over three hours. Battalion settled down by 7 a. m.</p> <p>6. Enemy heavily shelled our bivouac area from 4 a.m. to 6.15 a. m. causing heavy casualties, including Lieut. Col. T. P. McSHARRY, C.M.G., D.S.O., M.C., and Lieut. W. J. HINES, both of whom died of wounds. Capt. T. B. HEFFER, wounded seriously and 3 other ranks killed and 12 wounded. Burial took place at CORBIE Cemetery at 6 p.m. Generals McLAGAN, BRAND, CANNAN, Colonels DOWSE, BROCKMAN, MARKS, CROWTHER and other Officers from Unit present. Major B. SAMPSON assumed command of Battalion, and Captain B. S. Atkinson, M.C., returned from Brigade to carry on as Adjutant. Arrangements well in hand for forthcoming operations. S.A.A. and Bombs, Flares etc., Iron rations, Sandbags issued to Coys. Conference held at 3.30 p. m. - all officers present - to discuss with Tank Officer, our plan of operations. Endeavours made to get in touch with the troops on the left, but the Brigade concerned had not yet come up. All surplus magazines returned to Transport Lines.</p> <p>7. Bright sunny day. All arrangements finalised, extra material issued and equipment fitted, inspection held, and letters from G.O.C., Corps and Division read to all ranks on parade. C.O. got in touch with the British Brigade who are to operate on our left. All ranks advised that 17th Armoured Car Battalion will operate with 5th Australian Division and may return on our front. Special markings made clear to everyone so that they will not take these cars for Bosch.</p>	

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	1918			
	Aug.			
	8.		<p>Marched out at 1.30 a. m., D.A.B.C., Coys, all in forming up position No. 1 by 3 a. m. Zero hour 4.20 a. m. Very heavy mist at 5.50 a. m., when we moved to 2nd Forming up position, which got thicker as time went on, and it was most difficult to see more than 10 yards, and to keep direction, and touch, we pushed on straight past our 2nd Forming up Position and moved to position in front of GAILLY Hospital. Got in touch with 14th Battalion and Engineer party under Lieut. Lewis, also artillery liaison officer of 110th Howitzer Battery, Australian Artillery. Up to this point we had no casualties. We crossed green line at 8.20 a. m. sharp and reached our objective on left by 9 a. m. We were held up on our right from Sunken Road in Q.9.b.7.0. to Q.9.b.50.99. Enemy held this very strongly with Heavy Machine Guns. At about 2.45 p. m. heavies shelled CHIPILLY and during this bombardment we were able to push on to our objective capturing about 50 prisoners, 12 Heavy Machine Guns, 2 Minnenwerfers and two .77 Guns. Total prisoners captured approximately 350. Material, two .77 Gune, 2 Minnenwerfers, 15 Heavy Machine Guns and 4 Light Machine Guns. Casualties, 1 Officer and 7 other ranks killed, 27 Other ranks wounded, 6 Other ranks gassed. First Battalion relieved us at 12 midnight, and we moved to support in rear of Red Line in Q-23.a. central, just outside village of MORCOURT.</p>	
	9.		<p>Men resting until 3.30 p. m. Cleaning up guns and refilling magazines etc. Brigadier advised if we move ahead, 13th and 15th Battalions in advance, 14th Battalion support, and 16th Battalion reserve. 16th Battalion in Blue Line were able to advance their line to a depth of 400 or 500 yards and asked for one Company of 15th Battalion to move up to position they had vacated. B. Coy. under Lieut. Drybrough moved out at once and came under orders of C. O. 16th Battalion. Night quiet.</p>	
	10		<p>Fine day, very quiet morning. C. O. had to visit Brigade for instructions, was recalled three times on account of orders being countermanded. Word received that the 44th Battalion would relieve us at night; advanced party moved out to J.24 at 6 p. m. to allott areas and to meet Companies. Relief complete by 12.30 a. m. No casualties. in spite of very heavy shell- ing and bombing especially at Cross Roads in Q.16.d. The accomodation only middling, but men were able to sleep and rest. Narrative of stunt is attached.</p>	
	11.		<p>Beautiful bright day. No movement until noon. Breakfast was brought up on limbers, and cookers sent up later in the day. All recommendations for awards and first appointments sent to Rear Headquarters for completion. G.O.C., Brigade visited Battalion and pointed out</p>	

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	Aug. 11.		the present line on the north of the Somme, which the 13th A. I. Brigade captured last night, also informed us he had no "oil" and we should probably remain in our present position.	
	12.		Still resting, bright hot day. Brigade Canteen had large supply of beer, which was greatly appreciated and soon bought up by the "Diggers." Parties from each Company bathing in the Somme. G. O. C., Brigade visited Battalion, informed us that the Balloons may go up in 48 hours and that we should be there. Warning order received that we are to move to South of Marcleave at an early hour on 13th instant. Later cancelled; we are to move out in the afternoon.	
	13.		Weather tip top. Battalion I. O. and scouts moved with Brigade I. O. to new area at 8.30 a. m. Battalion moved from a position about one kilometre N.E. of SAILLY le SEC to a position about half a kilometre S. W. of HARBONNIERES. The order of march D. A. C. B. Route SAILLEY le SEC across Canal, thence through HAMEL on to La Motte en SANTERRE then just touching the outskirts of BAYONVILLERS and then on to Billet in large sunken road. Left 5 p. m. arriving 9.25 p. m. At BAYONVILLERS Fritz put a shell into A. Company, Killing nine of No. 3. Platoon and wounding two. At 10.30 p. m. the men settled down for the night after a drink of hot tea. C. O. attended a conference and at Brigade immediately on arrival to talk of coming stunt.	
	14.		Again the morning was beautiful. At 10.15 a. m. the C.O. with Capt. Atkinson, and Os.C. Coys. and all C.Q.M.S's. went up to see view the sector of the line to be taken over. C. O. returned at 2.10 p. m.. 2.15 p.m. Capt. Burke the O.C. of No. 1 Section 11th Tank Battalion together with his 4 tank commanders called to see the C.O. and all arrangements for the stunt were gone into and everything finally settled. During the morning Brigade advised that only a forward party would move in tonight., the Battalion relieving the 2nd Battalion the following night. All men were issued with second water bottles, extra 100 rounds of S.A.F. and bombs, wire cutters etc. during the afternoon. At 7.35 p.m. the forward party consisting of 3 Officers, Lieuts. Barwood, Greenwood and Drane, 6 L.M.G. teams with their guns and an N.C.O. from each platoon in A. B. & C. Coys. moved forward to the line. The Battalion Transport moved from VAIRE WOOD to the Northern part of BAYONVILLERS during the day. The men had a good days rest and no fatigues were required. Lieut. Davies the Brigade I. O. called at 9.45 p. m. and informed us the stunt was off indefinitely. During the day, Fritz put about 12 shells into the village of HARBONNIERES. This was the only hostile artillery activity in this area.	

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	1918			
	Aug. 15		<p>Weather very fine and hot. Troops rested all day, prior to moving into front line later during the evening. At 2 p.m. all Lewis Guns and A.M.C. gear moved up to new Battalion Headquarters together with escorts. At 1 p.m. Capt. Atkinson moved up to forward area to look around and arrange dispositions of Companies. At 8 p.m. the Battalion started to move out, viz, Headquarters at 8 p. m.,</p> <p>A. Coy. at 8.15 p. m. B. Coy. at 8.30 p. m. C. Coy. at 8.45 p. m. D. Coy. at 9 p. m.</p> <p>with 100 yards at least between platoons. Decided A. and B. Coys. take over front line with C. Coy. in support and D. Coy. in Reserve. Coys. were taken in by</p> <p>A. Coy. Capt. W. L. E. Domeney B. Coy. Lieut. J. L. Drybrough C. Coy. " W. Goninon D. Coy. " C. S. Goss.</p> <p>Major Sampson was in command with Capt. Atkinson 2nd in Command. Lieut. Robinson, Adjutant, Lieut. Chataway, Intelligence Officer, Lieut. M. A. Cook, Signalling Officer.</p> <p>At 12.5 a. m. 16th August the relief was completed, and only one casualty caused, slightly wounded. During relief enemy shelled Crepy Wood at intervals, but shelling on the front line was fairly active during night, and the enemy was firing at quarter hour intervals in S.19.b. and S.25.Q.Q. As soon as relief was complete, Coys. pushed out patrols and got in touch with flank Battalions. Patrols report enemy very quiet, and nothing doing. Battalion Headquarters are at X.28.b.4.7., R.A.P. X.28.b.4.6. B. Coy. took over the left sector with a frontage of about 700 yards from S.19.b.6.0. to S.20.c.6.5. consisting of four posts. Coy. Headquarters at S.19.d.90.99. A. Coy. have three posts and have Right Sector</p> <p>Post 1. S.20.c.6.4. 2. S.26.a.9.7. 3. S.26.a.9.7.</p> <p>C. Coy. in Support are as follows, 1 Platoon in trench P.25.b.1.9. to P.25.b.3.8. Two platoons in trench at P.25.b.7.3. to P.25.b.4.3. D. Coy. in Reserve are in a trench from X.29.a.2.6. to X.29.a.2.9. The map references are from Sheet 63 D. S.E. and 62 C. S.W. 1/20,000. There was very little enemy machine gun fire, just occasional bursts during the night. The latest "oil" is that the Brigade will go out and do a Peaceful Penetration stunt during the next 24 hours if possible. We are going into the matter at once. Our flank Battalions at present are left 13th</p>	

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			Battalion, and right 46th Battalion.	
	Aug. 16.		Weather still good. Enemy started to shell Headquarters at about 11 a. m. with small stuff and kept going at intervals of 15 minutes, firing about one round per minute. Shelling on front line by enemy was fairly active, and heavy stuff was used by them. At 8 p. m. two Stokes guns 3" reported and were sent to B. Coy. in Front Line Trench. At 8.15 p. m. A. Coy. reported one of our own heavies, evidently a 6" firing short on A. Coys. post at S.20.c.9.2. Only one casualty was reported during the day, and that was a walking case. At 9.20 p. m. our shells again falling short at S.20.c.9.2. this time 18 pounders. Liaison officer advised and the matter dealt with. At 11.10 p. m. A. Coy. report artillery again falling short.	
	17.		Good weather. Nothing of any consequence happened during the early hours of the morning. At 11.30 a. m. B. & A. Coys. moved out on a silent penetration stunt, and connected up with the 13th. Battalion on right and at 3 p. m. were established in a line running from S.20.a.3.1. to S.20.c.7.9. to S.20.c.9.6. No opposition was encountered. At 12 noon our artillery again fell short, and Brigade got into them, and everything was O.K.	
	18.		Still good weather here. During early morning about 1 a. m. enemy put about 20 rounds in the vicinity of Headquarters, but did no damage beyond wounding a few Americans. The front line was strafed pretty freely during the early hours of the morning, and A. Coy. had four wounded and B. Coy. one wounded. From 9 a.m. to midday he was very quiet, and limited his strafe to AUGAR WOOD. At 12.30 p. m. B. and A. Coys. advanced their line still further beyond LIHU FARM and the sector now held runs from S.20.b.0.3. to S.20.b.3.0. to S.20.d.0.7., along old line to S.26.d.0.6. No opposition was encountered. Officers and N.C.O's. of 2nd. Battln. 132nd American Regiment came to look over our sector during the day, but it is now decided they will not take over on the evening of 20/21 as arranged. At 11 p.m. tonight D. CoY, in reserve relieve B. Coy. in Front Line. Relief was completed at 11.15 p.m. and only one casualty was caused in relief - 1 slightly wounded.	
	19.		Weather fine and hot. At 4 xxx a. m. the Sergeant of 15 Platoon sighted an enemy patrol of 6 advancing on our post situated at S.20.b.1.2. These were dispersed by Machine gun fire from 15 Platoon. A fighting patrol was sent out and the bodies of 1 German Officer and 1 private were identified and their regiment was 19th Bavarian Regiment 27th Division. Brigade were advised at once and papers etc. taken from the bodies and sent to rear. At 6 a.m. enemy put a	

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	1918		<p>barrage of heavies on our front line, lasting a quarter of an hour and again at 10 a. m. Counter battery work was asked for, but very little of this was obtained. Mainly 5.9's. and 4.2's. were the calibre of shells used. Enemy shelling appeared to be coming from the direction of Polygon, Chaulnes and Kratz Woods on our right, and this was communicated to the artillery. Our patrols had nothing to report and the location of enemy is unknown to us. A German Minnenwerfer shooting from Blockhouse Copse in S.21.a. gave A. Coy. some trouble, but after the artillery were switched on nothing has been heard of it so far. Enemy planes were active between 8 and 10 a. m. this morning. C. Coy. relieved A. Coy. in the front line and relief was complete at 11.15 p.m. Enemy put a few gas shells on the Support Coy. at 11 p.m. but no damage was done.</p>	
		20	<p>Weather very dull during morning but cleared at noon. Nothing to report from patrols during the night. Enemy shelling was not so heavy and the day passed without anything unusual happening. The Brigadier called at 4.30 p. m. but gave us no "oil" beyond the fact that we may be relieved about the 27th by the French. At 11 p. m. Kratz put six shells on Headquarters one landing opposite the door of the dug out slightly wounding Lieut. Cook.</p>	
		21	<p>Weather again beautiful. The good news of the French on our right and the English stunt on our left reached us this morning. During the day there was nothing to report, and all day the enemy was quiet and no shelling was experienced in the rear of the line and very little on our front line. During the evening though, at 9 p.m. he opened out on Headquarters with 4.2's. just as our ration parties were leaving for the line, but he missed. Put a few Gas shells. evidently Blue Cross into them again at Crepey Wood, but this was not severe and no casualties were caused. Lt. Englert a reinforcement Officer reported and was posted to C. Coy. now in the line and proceeded there at 10.30 p. m. We received a letter from the G.O.C. 132nd. U.S.A. Regiment expressing their regret on severing their connection with our Division, and thanking us for our help extended to them whilst attached to our Division. It runs as follows:-</p> <p>"My dear General,</p> <p>It is with considerable regret that I have received word that the pleasant and profitable association of my Regiment with the Units of your Division will be terminated.</p> <p>"What can we do for you" was our first and last greetings from every member of your Staff, as well as your Brigade Commanders and their Staffs."</p>	

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			<p>"The spirit of friendliness between my Officers and men and those of the Australian Forces, which began during our first tour of observation on the Australian front and which was strengthened by fighting beside one another in the battle of Hamel and Vaire Wood, was about to be brought to a feeling of comradeship in the association of this Regiment with your Division.</p> <p>"The Officers and men of my command join me in expressing the hope, that the severance of our relations is but temporary.</p> <p>"May I express to you personally my appreciation of the pleasure which I derived from serving under you.</p> <p>Respectfully yours, (Sgd). ABEL DAVIS, Colonel, 132nd. Infantry, U. S. A."</p>	
	Aug. 22		<p>Beautiful morning. During the early hours our working parties proceeded with wiring the new support line, and also further improved T. heads in front of present line front line. From 10 a. m. to 12 noon he persisted in shelling the vicinity of Headquarters with 4.2's. firing at the rate of 2 per minute. Up to known he had only inflicted one casualty wounded. At 4.30 p. m. Corps Heavy Stokes registered quietly with 2 guns from a position at S.20a.2.3. the left gun firing a point at S-14.d.2.3. on South along trench system to S. 20.b.10.zR 20. The right gun carrying on from S.20.b.10.20 along a straight line to S.27.a.9.4. Fritz again opened out with 4.2's. on Headquarters at 9 P.M. but he missed ration parties as they left at 8.55 p.m. At half hourly intervals from 9 p. m. onwards he pumped about 6 shells near Battalion Headquarters.</p>	
	23.	8.18 a.m.	<p>Good weather, bright and sunny. A good bit of back wash fell in our area due to our stunt on the left at 4.45 a.m. No damage was done. During the morning he left Headquarters alone. Patrols have nothing to report and the night passed quietly. The Batmen and other heads are full of "Oil" and say we are being relieved by the French tonight. "Thumbs up!!! We are hpoing the news is correct. The enemy artillery have treated us well today and since noon has not troubled Headquarters. The front line has been shelled, but with nothing like the consistency of a few days ago. Mostly .77's. are being used. He managed to blow out a Lewis Gun of C. Coy's. this afternoon, but this was promptly replaced by one from support. The</p>	

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			<p>The batmen were right; we are to be relieved tonight tomorrow night by the French. 13th and 16th on our left are being relieved tonight by the English.</p>	
	Aug. 24		<p>At 3 a. m. the Commandant and his three Coy. Commanders and M.G. Officer of the 1st. Bn. of 59th Inf. Regiment called to see us and arrange relief. This Battalion will relieve our two front line Companies, D. & C. & 2 front line Companies of 46th Bn. on our right. The Reserve Coys. A. & B. are to be relieved by the 2nd. Battalion of 59th Inf. Regiment whose Commandant and Coy. Commanders called at 10.15 a. m. and arranged matters. Guides meet these Battalions at 11 p. m. at (Map HARBONNIERES 1/40,000) F.3.b.2,5. and guided them as far as Crepy Woods arriving there at 12.15 a.m. on 25-8-18.</p>	
	25.		<p>Whilst French were relieving us and were at a point in vicinity of Crepy Wood, the enemy opened out with a heavy barrage of Gas Shells on our front line and to a depth of 1,500 yards. This upset the relieving party and they had to take cover for a time. Shelling did not cease after half an hour so the French pushed on as best they could but made little progress and instead of relieving us by 1 a. m. they did not finally take over until 4.45 a. m. on 26th. when it was reported to Battalion that relief was complete. Our boys filed out, but did not feel the effect of the Gas beyond irritation of eyes. They proceeded to a point at W.15.b.2.8. where busses awaited them to bring them to ALLONVILLE, the last bus arriving there at 9.30 a.m. The men then began to feel the effects of the Gas, and their eyes began to swell and had violent headaches. 75 per cent of A. C. and D. Coys. were affected, some very bad. It is thought that it was a new gas that Fritz used. The bombardment lasted 5 hours.</p> <p>Appended hereto is the Gas Officer's ^{Cmdg Officers} report on the bombardment and give casualties affected.</p>	
	26.		<p>Weather rather dull, but no rain fell during the day. The time was spent by letting the men rest and all shortages of kit were taken.</p>	
	27.		<p>Weather still dull and light showers fell about 9 p.m. A branch of the Brigade Canteen was opened at Allonville, and two barrels of beer were served out and promptly mopped up by the boys. The day was spent in bathing at the baths at CARDONETTE, where a clean change of togs was procurable. This was much enjoyed by the "diggers." The M.O. inoculated the whole</p>	

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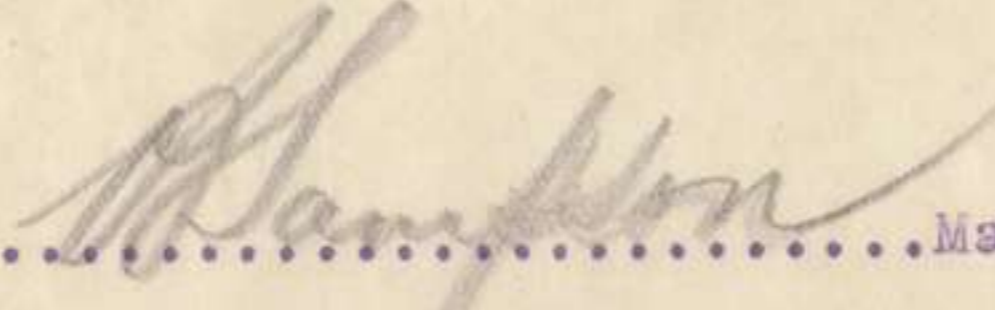
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			Battalion during the afternoon for para typhoid, so all hands have stiff arms.	
	Aug. 28.		Weather still dull and light showers falling at intervals. On account of inoculation yesterday, troops are resting. Pay is being dished out today. The canteen is well supplied with stuff and has a fair amount of beer and stout.	
	29		Weather quite fine again. Troops still resting on account of inoculation. All shortages of clothing and material have been taken and the tailor, barber and bootmaker are kept going. 17 Officers and 480 other ranks actually doing duty, and we have 8 Officers and 94 Other ranks detached. The training of signallers & Lewis Gunners is the main thing, and we are very short of both.	
	30		Weather rather dull, but no rain fell. Training was carried on as per Syllabus.	
	31.		Weather dull and light showers during the morning. Battalion paraded for C.O's. inspection and march past at 10 a. m. The turn out was very good. During the afternoon we beat the 4th Field Ambulance at Rugby by 17 to 11. Strength of Battalion including attached, 21 Officers 576 Other ranks.	


.....Major,
COMMANDING 15th BATTALION.

WAR DIARY

OF

15th Battalion. A.I.F.

FOR

August 1918



LIST OF APPENDICES.

No.	Subject.
✓ 1	Narrative 15 th Bn Attack 8/8/18
✓ 2	" Continuation to 10/8/18
✓ 3	Notes operations 8, 9, & 10 th Aug.
✓ 4	C.O.'s report on Gas bombardment 24/20 Aug. 1918.
✓ 5	Transport Officer Report
✓ 6	A.Q.M.'s report
✓ 7	memo of award V.C. to Pte Dalziel
8	Bridge Scheme map. also 2 maps

Narrative of the attack by 15th. BATTALION
on
CERISY-GAILLY 8th. August 1918.

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Reference Sheet 62D. S.E. 1/20,000 - 62D. N.E. 1/20,000.

At 1.30 a.m. 8th. August 1918 the Battalion moved from the position of readiness behind the chateau in VAIRE-SUR-CORBIE to its No.1 Forming up position in P.3. a & b. Tapes had been laid and lamps placed to mark each Company's right flank by the Intelligence Officer. These proved of great value in preventing confusion, the Battalion was ready in position at 2.40 a.m. Men lying down in the corn in Artillery formation and making small splinter proof walls of earth.

The morning was fine but foggy. Our barrage fell at 4.20 a.m. the fog now became dense and it was impossible to discern men moving at more than twenty yards distance. At 5.30 a.m. a runner brought message from C.O. 16th. Battalion "Brigade will move at 5.50 a.m."

Punctually at 5.50 a.m. the Battalion moved in artillery formation to its No.2 Forming up position near RECORD WOOD in P.12.a., which was reached at 6.49 a.m. I saw C.O. 14th. Battalion at this point and we decided to move on in conjunction as far as Road running North and South through Q.1.c. and Q.7.a. and there halt to sort out any disarrangement of Companies caused by the blank wall of fog. On going round my Battalion I found that all were in their right positions, largely due to the judicious use of the Prismatic Compass by Company Commanders. The three Tanks allotted to the Battalion joined us here as well as half Section of the 13th. Australian Light Horse and one Artillery Officer of the 110th. Howitzer Battery.

At 7.40 a.m. the Battalion moved again on its way to the BLUE LINE, the fog was now lifting rapidly and a few enemy shells were falling about cross roads in Q.7. One of our own Heavies was persistently falling short as we advanced about 1000yards from the BLUE LINE.

At 8.20 a.m. the protective barrage ceased; B, A & D Companies with "C" Company in support passed through the 42nd. Battalion who were digging in on the BLUE LINE. The three Tanks were well up and making good progress. Battalion Headquarters was established on a high bank at Q.8.b.30.95. from which a good view of the village and high ground to the right was obtainable.

At 8.40 a.m. prisoners commenced to appear, including an Medical Officer and his Staff, identification 97th, 55th. & 202nd. R.I.R., by

9.30 a.m. over 300 had passed through.

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201 My Intelligence Officer reported on his return from forward at 9.30am that all our objectives were gained. By the din and chattering of Machine Guns on the North bank of the Canal I conjectured that the 58th. Division were not running to schedule and this was proved conclusively at 9.40 a.m. The enemy opening a very heavy front from our left and left rear with Field and Machine Guns on to my right Company inflicting several casualties. The Adjutant who had gone forward returned at 9.50a.m. and gave me a clear outline of the position which was as follows. The left Company and left half of the centre Company were on their objectives and covered the approaches of all bridges, but were coming under very heavy fire from CHIPILLY and the ridge East.

The Right Company and right half of the centre Company had advanced to a line running North and South through Q.9.b.3.0. and Q.3.d.4.0. but were met with withering Machine Gun fire from the Sunken Road running North and South through Q.9.b.8.0. to Q.3.d.7.0., that the Company was forced to withdraw to the Sunken Road running North and South through Q.9.b.0.0. to Q.9.a.95.95. The right of the centre Company had established a Post at Q.3.d.5.4. At this time all our Tanks had received direct hits from 77 M.M. Guns firing from CHIPILLY SPUR and were in flames in "NO. MAN'S LAND". We got in touch with a 3rd. Division Male Tank and he attempted to go along the CERISY-MORCOURT Road, but he was forced to return on account of the fire from 77's and a Minnewerfer about Q.9.b.94. We got in touch with our Stokes Mortars to deal with this opposition and found they had no ammunition. This enemy Strong Point was also holding up the advance of the left Company of the 14th. Battalion.

At 11.30 a.m. message was received from O.C. centre Company reporting that Boche were coming over the Spur into CHIPILLY and the low lying ground on N. side of canal and asking for Artillery to deal with this.

My Liaison Officer with the 3rd. London's arrived at 11.30 a.m. and stated that they were hung up. Their line running through K.27.a.& c. K.26.d. and K.32 Central.

At 1 p.m. our Heavies shelled CHIPILLY with good effect. During this time the 14th. Battalion's right had continued their advance and had succeeded in capturing the village of MORCOURT. Large numbers of prisoners making their way back along the CERISY-MORCOURT Road. Seeing

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26 these prisoners returning the enemy in the Strong Points who had up till now offered a stout resistance realizing that further opposition was futile, allowed our advance to continue and the position was captured with over 50 prisoners 12 Heavy Machine Guns, 3 Light Machine Guns and One Minnewerfer. At 2.10 p.m. we were able to report that all our objectives were gained and consolidated.

In this operation we captured over 300 prisoners, 2 Field Guns, 2 Minnewerfers, 15 Heavy and 4 Light Machine Guns, also inflicting very heavy casualties on the enemy.

Our casualties - 1 Officer, 7 Other Ranks Killed, 2 Officers and 27 Other Ranks. Wounded.

Continuation of narrative of events 15th BATTALION, A.I.F., from 2.10 p. m. 8-8-18, until midnight 10-8-18.

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At 2.10 p. m. all objectives were gained and consolidated. Enfilade M. G. and 77 m.m. artillery fire was still coming from the direction of LES CELESTINS WOOD and CHIPILLY SPUR, but our artillery was to a great extent neutralizing this.

At 3.52 p. m., seven Bosche prisoners of 202nd. R.I.R. found hiding in a cellar in CERISY were brought to Battalion Headquarters.

At 4 p. m. received 'phone message from Brigadier that Mackenzie would relieve me and Battalion would move to vicinity of DUDGEON WOOD.

At 4.10 p. m. C.O., 1st Battalion arrived and his Company Commanders and details of relief were mutually arranged.

The Battalion were disposed as follows:-
"B" Coy. on left along Canal Bank. "A" Coy. centre, and "D" Coy. on the right, with "C" two platoons dug in behind "D" Coy and two platoons dug in forward of the Cemetery.

At 7.20 p. m. the 58th Division delivered their attack on the N. bank of the Canal, on the WOODS and CHIPILLY CREST under a heavy artillery barrage. The two Vickers of the 24th M.G. Coy. attached to me and "B" Coys. L.G.'s. assisting with covering fire at Bosche movement on the ridge.

At 9 p. m. my Liasion Officer (Lieut. A. B. Smith) with 3rd London Regt. returned and reported that the English attack had failed, and they were back in their old place.

At 10 p. m. in accordance with orders, I sent my support Company, ("C") to report to Brigade Headquarters in MORCOURT and carry for 16th Bn.

At 10.45 p. m. the 1st Battalion arrived to relieve my left and centre Coys. and a Company of the 2nd. Battalion reported to relieve my right Company.
Relief was completed at midnight, Companies digging in in terraces in Q.23.a. and b., Battalion Headquarters being established in a Hun "dug-out" in MORCOURT VILLAGE.

During morning of 9-8-18 MORCOURT VILLAGE was heavily shelled at intervals. To save runners and linesmen, Battalion Headquarters was moved at 2 p.m. to bank in Q.23.a.6.6. in close proximity to Companies.

At 5 p. m. American Troops attacked on the N. side of the SOMME and from Battalion O. P. appeared to be making good progress.

At 8 p. m. received orders to send one Company to C.O. 16th Bn. to act under his orders. I thereupon sent my strongest Company "B" 2 Officers 91 Other ranks to support 16th Battalion's left, where they assisted to dig the new line.
During night Hun planes bombed their old Transport lines in Q.23.a. and his heavies strafed the vicinity of and MORCOURT intermittently.

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10-8-18, Battalion, less one Company ("B") remained at Q.23.a. & b., salvaging material and burying Bosche dead.
At 10.30 p. m. 44th Battalion commenced to relieve us. "B" Company in the line being relieved by a Company of the 43rd Battalion.

Relief was complete by 11.55 p. m., Companies marching independently to the bivouac area in J.24.c. North of SAILLY-LE-SEC. En route, roads especially in the vicinity of CERISY and MORCOURT were bombed by Hun planes.

Rampson
.....Major,
COMMANDING 15th BATTALION.

20th August 1918.

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NOTES ON THE OPERATIONS, 8th, 9th and 10th AUGUST 1918.

(1) TANKS.

- (a) Should arrive at "Forming up" position at least two hours before zero.
- (b) Conferences between individual Tank Commanders and Infantry Company Commanders as early as possible before "Zero" Day essential.
- (c) That the Tank Section Commander and Battalion Liaison Officer (Adjutant) move forward together close in rear of the attacking Companies, for closer liaison between tanks and Infantry.
- (d) An Infantry Scout should go forward in each tank.
- (e) Every tank working with a Unit should bear that Units colors or distinguishing mark.

(2) R. A. F.

- (a) That at least a week before a "Stunt" several planes should patrol the front line about dawn so that enemy's suspicions should not be aroused on "Z" day.

(3) GENERAL.

- (a) Considered that there were too many troops too close to the "Forming up place" for too long a period prior to "Z" day. If troops were further back there would not be the abnormal amount of traffic on roads through having to deliver rations water, Iron rations, Ammunition and R.E. Stores, and it would be possible for hot meals to be served to the troops at regular hours and for the men to obtain unbroken rest.

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- (b). More detailed arrangements might be made by "Q" for the clearing of the battlefield of prisoners, burial of dead, removal of trophies and salvage of other material. Too many fighting men, who can ill be spared from the attacking troops are at present employed in this manner.
- (c) That Maps and Photos be issued to Battalions as early as possible before "Z" day to allow closer study of same to be made.
- (d) That synchronization of watches be more thorough.
- (e) That the opportunities for "visual" are not fully realised and exploited.
- (f) That until the supply of Stokes Mortar ammunition is guaranteed they are of very little value in the attack.
- (g) That the scale of issue of Pack Saddles is totally inadequate. If it is necessary to send up Rations per pack saddle at least 30 per Battalion are required.
- (h) That the delay in the advance from the 1st Objective to the 2nd Objective was considerably too long. This could have been cut down by one hour, and then allowed ample time for the troops detailed for the 2nd Objective to reach their "jumping off" place, and thus prevent the enemy's defence stiffening.

V. Hampson
Major,
COMMANDING 15th BATTALION.

20th August 1918.

APPENDIX

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Report on Gas Bombardment of 15th Battalion, 24/25 August 1918.

REFERENCE SHEET - HATTENCOURT.

At 11.30 p.m. the enemy put down a very heavy gas shell bombardment over the whole of my sector. This continued with great severity until 2.30 a. m., when it eased off considerably; but intermittent shelling of about three gas shells per minute continued until 4.20 a. m.

The opening nature of the Bombardment was that of a heavy Barrage, and fell on the Front Line and Support Company in S.19, particular attention being paid to AUGUR WOOD. This barrage lifted at 11.45 p. m. and moved on towards the Reserve Company in X.29, which it reached about midnight. About the same time thirty 5.9 Blue Cross shell fell around Battalion Headquarters at X.28.b.4.7.

Until 2.30 a.m. the shelling of the Front Line and Support System of trenches and saps was heavy and continuous. From that hour it gradually slackened, and the shells fell mostly in AUGUR and GREPEY WOODS, and in the vicinity of the Hospital in X.24.c.

Nature of the gas used:- There is much difference of opinion amongst the officers and men regarding this.

Blue Cross at the outset undoubtedly predominated. Later Yellow Cross or so called Mustard was plainly identified.

A feature of the shelling was that all ranks talk of a shell which made a "ping" on explosion like a "ricochet" bullet, and smelt like "burnt rubber;" others speak of it as smelling like "tyre solution." This shell many say burst in the air like shrapnel.

I am of the opinion that several types of gas shell were used during the bombardment, which lasted almost five hours.

Evacuations yesterday and today are as under:-

	Off.	O/Ranks.
A. Company (Support)	3	43
B. Company (Reserve)	-	2
C. Company (Line)	-	31
D. Company "	2	43
E. C. (Linesmen and Sigs).	-	4
	5	123

Relief of this Battalion by 1st and 2nd. Battalions 59th French Infantry had just commenced, and to this fact I attribute the majority of the casualties. The relief had to be completed before daylight, and so men had to move about.

PRECAUTIONS. The S.B.R's. were immediately worn, men kept quiet with their heads above the trench, and where possible sat on the parados. Respirators were not removed until tests had been made for

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gas by an Officer.

The depth of the shelled area was over 3,000 yards. As far back as Battalion Headquarters the concentration of Gas was quite strong at the time I left, viz. 5.10 a.m. Undoubtedly many men were affected as they came out on relief through not wearing the S.M.R. as they moved through the Reserve Area, where there was no perceptible smell, but which must have been still full of gas.

Early in the bombardment, about 11.50 p.m. all forward telephone lines were cut, and from that time till 3.40 a.m. my only means of communication forward was by runners.

The relief by the French started at 11 p.m. and was not completed until 4.30 a.m., and so caused many of this Battalion to be in a heavily gassed area for over five hours.

The night was beautifully fine and clear with hardly any wind; towards dawn it became foggy.

W. Hampton
.....Major,
COMMANDING 15th BATTALION.

26th August 1918.

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11. 9. 19.
Report for Month ending 5
AUGUST 31st 1919.

FEED: During the past month we have experienced a very low issue in our hay ration, this in company with the amount of work done by the horses, told very much on their general condition. At times we were not in a place where grazing could be done nevertheless every opportunity was taken.

CONDITION: The condition at the present moment is good, but this standard has only been obtained by careful nursing & attention. The constant night work of the previous months began to tell on

the majority of animals.

We had no evacuation during the month.

P. H. Ohlson
/ 0.

Rations for the month
of August 1918. The
supply generally was
satisfactory. In no
instance did important
components of ration
such as fresh meat,
bread, and vegetables,
fail to come forward,
and for components
not available useful
equivalents were
forthcoming.

The supply of potatoes
was, however, at various

II
periods inadequate, and
as this is a valuable
~~vegetable~~ ^{ration} & difficult to
replace, the supply was
supplemented by purchases
from regimental funds.

The necessity for such
action in the purchase
of vegetables presents
a concrete example
of the necessity for
close co-ordination
between Q.M.S. + S.O.S.
in order that Q.M.
may be thoroughly acquainted

with the ²nature of
components of rations available;
thus facilitating, + hastening
arrangements for local supplies
in the event of suitable
equivalents not being
available - Such
co-ordination is impossible
if S.O. is located, as
recently, some 16 K. distant
from area allotted. Brigade
Q.M.S.

Transport. The transport
of rations to front line
& forward areas, was
effected by methods
usually employed

viz. by G.S. wagons and
forward carrying parties

Careful & judicious
packing is essential
in order that food
reached the front line
and outposts, sufficiently
hot to ensure the

derivation of the maximum
of nutritious & stimulating
value. This difficulty
was partly overcome
by placing food in
thermos food containers;
the practice was, however,

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(25) curtailed by the insufficient supply of such containers; which are, very cumbersome and on account of excess capacity do not facilitate the issue of food to small parties and outposts.

A smaller & lighter container would be more serviceable.

For the transport of tea ration in forward area small petrol tins were used with good effect.

(26) However precaution is necessary in order that tea be kept at the desired temperature. In the event of timber wagons or tramways being employed in transport, an improvised hay box is very effective in retaining heat; but when unavoidable delay occurs after removal from hay box, the contents of tin cool quickly. This could only be prevented by the application of a durable & powerful non-conductor of heat in the form of a thick paint - to outside of tins. The transport issue of dry rations was greatly facilitated by use of sand bags.

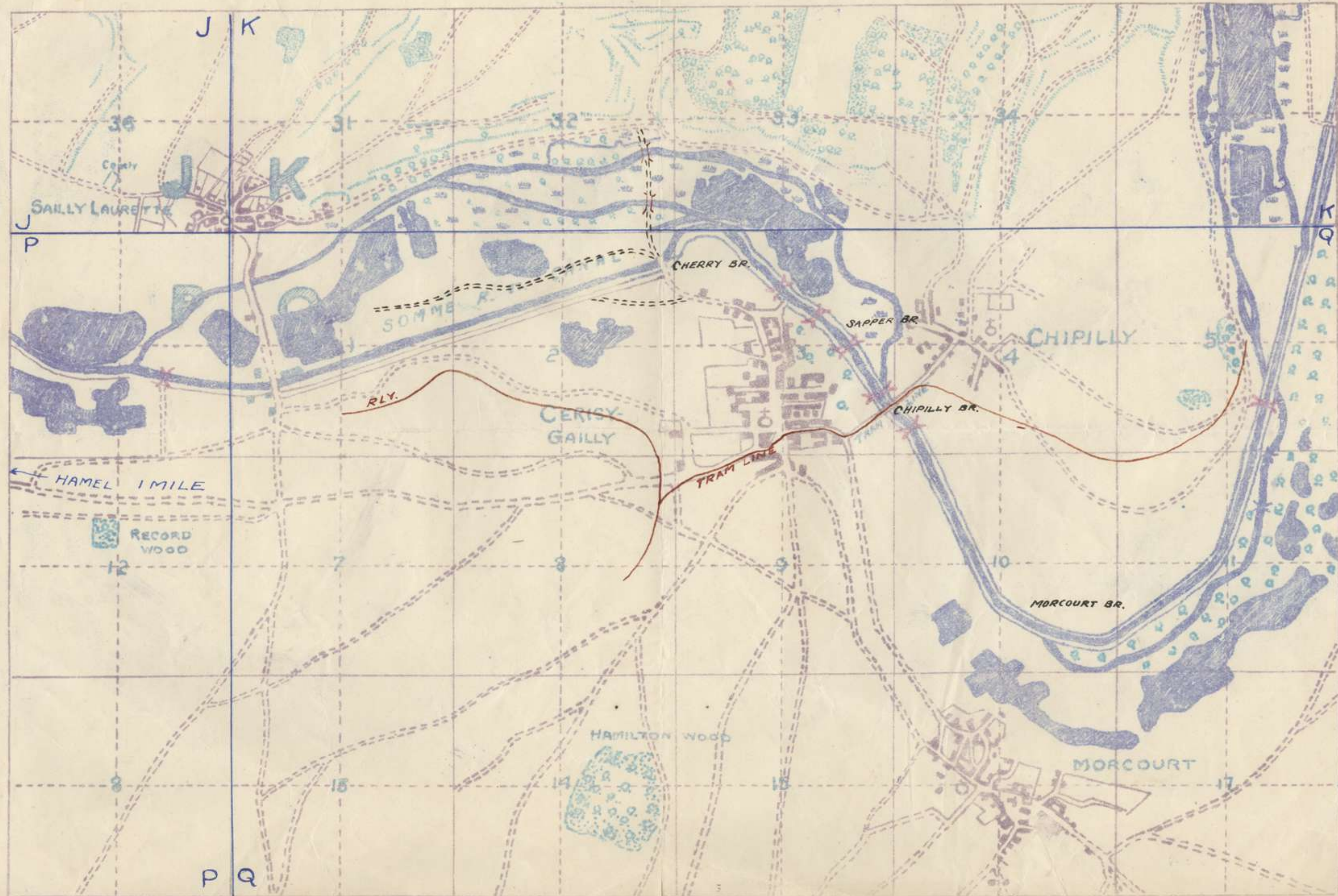
J. H. Over
R.O.V.

MAP TO ILLUSTRATE BRIDGING SCHEME

PART of SHEET 62°

SECRET

201

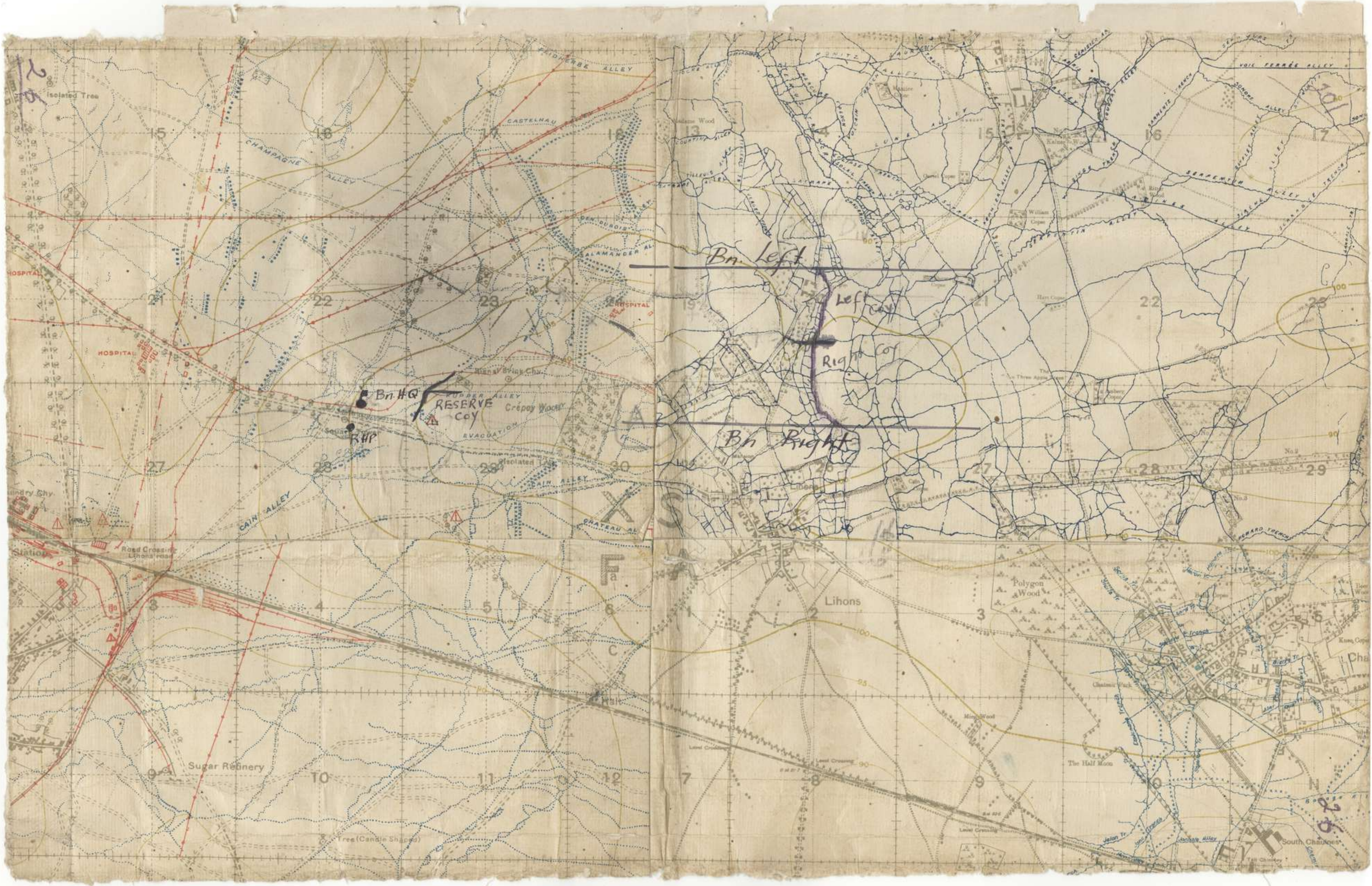


APPENDIX I

8

25

12TH FIELD Co A.E.



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1:20,000

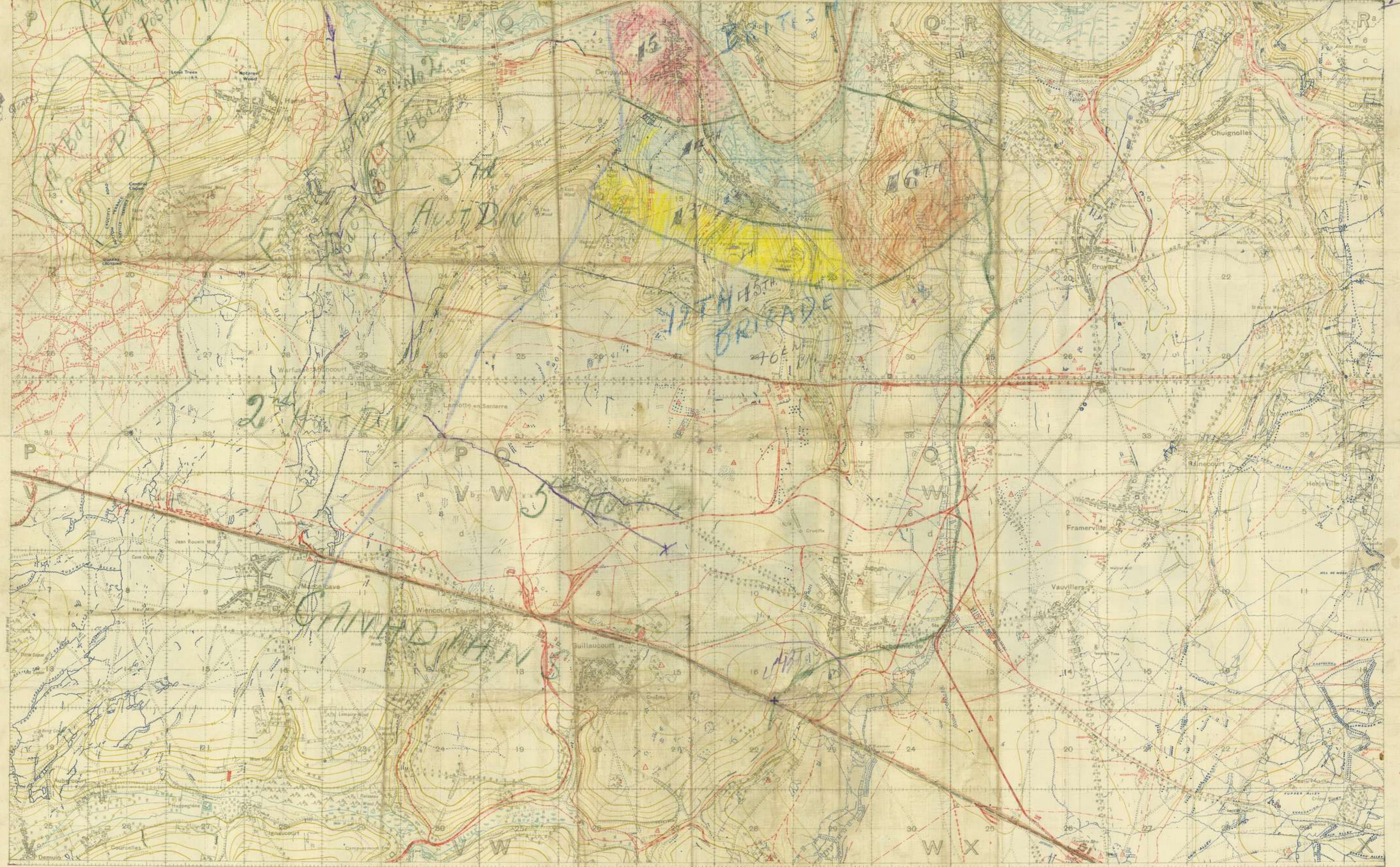
NOTE CHANGE OF COLOUR.
Enemy Trenches in Blue
British Trenches in Red

TRENCHES CORRECTED FROM INFORMATION
RECEIVED UP TO 31-7-18

FRANCE

EDITION 3 C. (Local)

SHEET 62^D S.E. 27



Scale 1:20,000

CONTOUR INTERVAL 5 METRES. ALL HEIGHTS IN METRES

<p>Any trench apparently organized for fire</p> <p>Enemy Trenches (Important ones are shown by thick line. Old or disused by dotted line)</p> <p>British Trenches</p> <p>Wire Entanglement or Other Obstacle</p> <p>Enemy's Tracks</p>	<p>Buried Pipeline or Cable</p> <p>Airline</p> <p>Supply Dumps</p> <p>Ammunition</p> <p>Earthworks</p> <p>Dug-outs</p> <p>Huts</p> <p>Works reinforced by concrete</p>	<p>Gun Emplacements</p> <p>Machine Gun</p> <p>Trench Mortar</p> <p>A.A. Gun</p> <p>Observation Posts</p> <p>Listening Posts</p> <p>Mine Craters</p> <p>Fortified</p> <p>Organized Shell Hole</p>	<p>Hedge, Fence or Ditch</p> <p>Ditch with Permanent Water</p> <p>Cumbersome Points (Position of point is centre of circle. Dot shows that point is trigonometrically fixed)</p> <p>Houses</p>	<p>Normal Gauge, Double</p> <p>Light Trench Tramways</p> <p>Metre Gauge Railway or Tram</p> <p>NOTE: The fact that an obstacle is not represented on the map does not necessarily mean that it is not there. It is often impossible to show a long obstacle or an enemy line of fire, it may be assumed that there are obstacles in front of all the trenches shown by thick line.</p>
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Scale 1:20,000

Meters 1000 1500 2000 2500 3000 3500 4000

Yards 1000 1500 2000 2500 3000 3500 4000

C.O.
1841

C.O.
1841

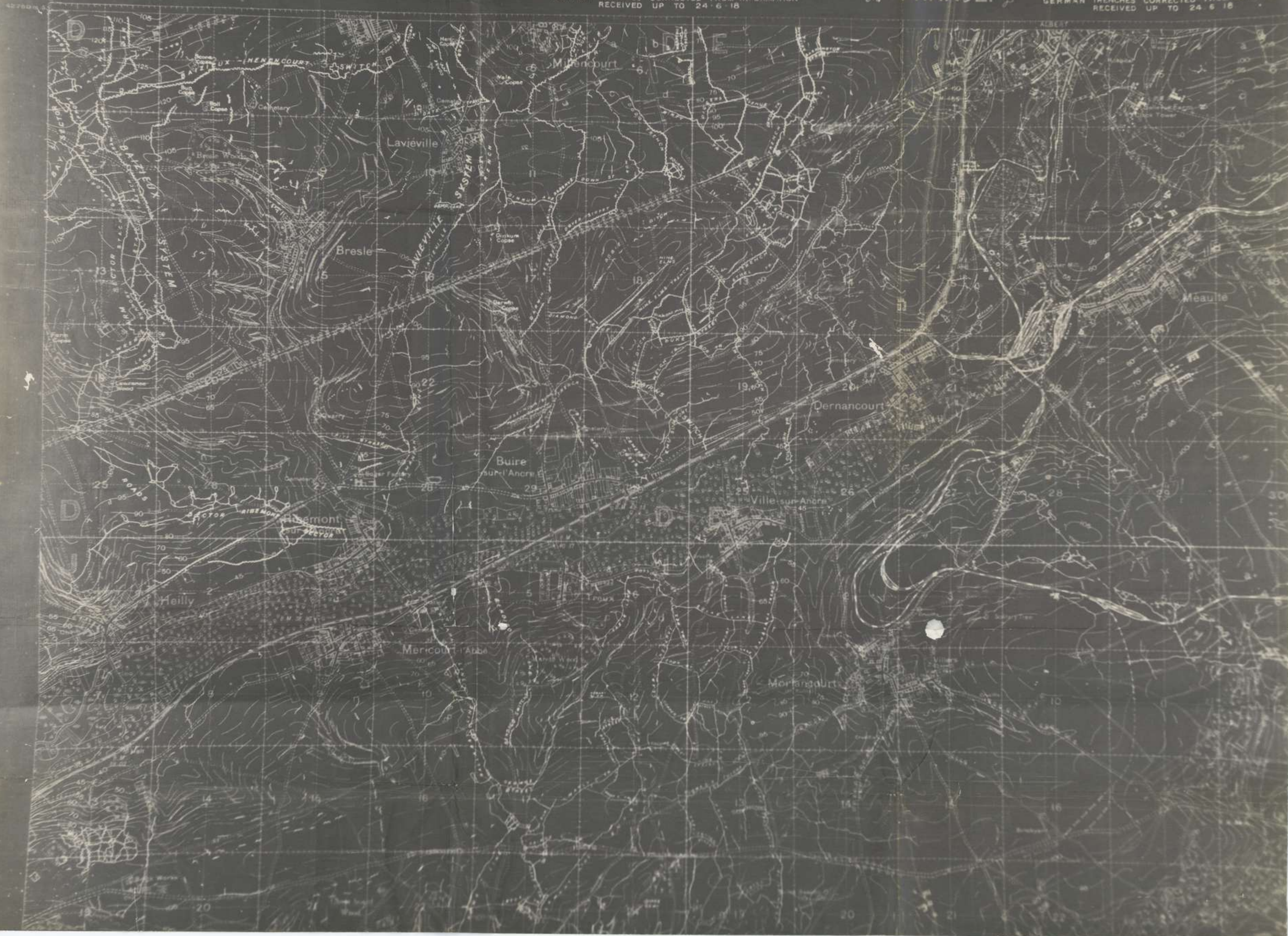
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20,000

BRITISH TRENCHES CORRECTED FROM INFORMATION
RECEIVED UP TO 24.6.18

28

FRANCE. 201

GERMAN TRENCHES CORRECTED FROM INFORMATION
RECEIVED UP TO 24.6.18



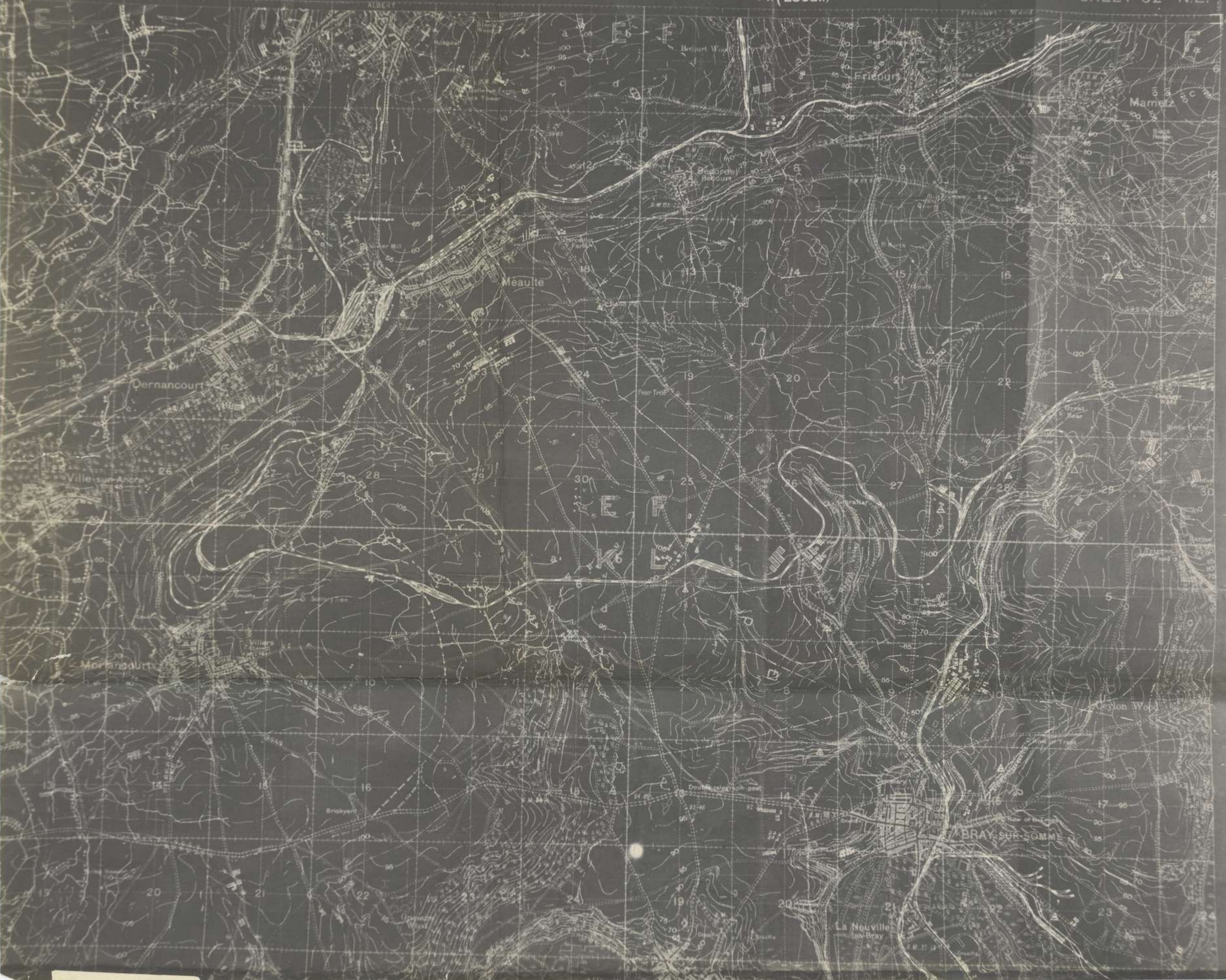
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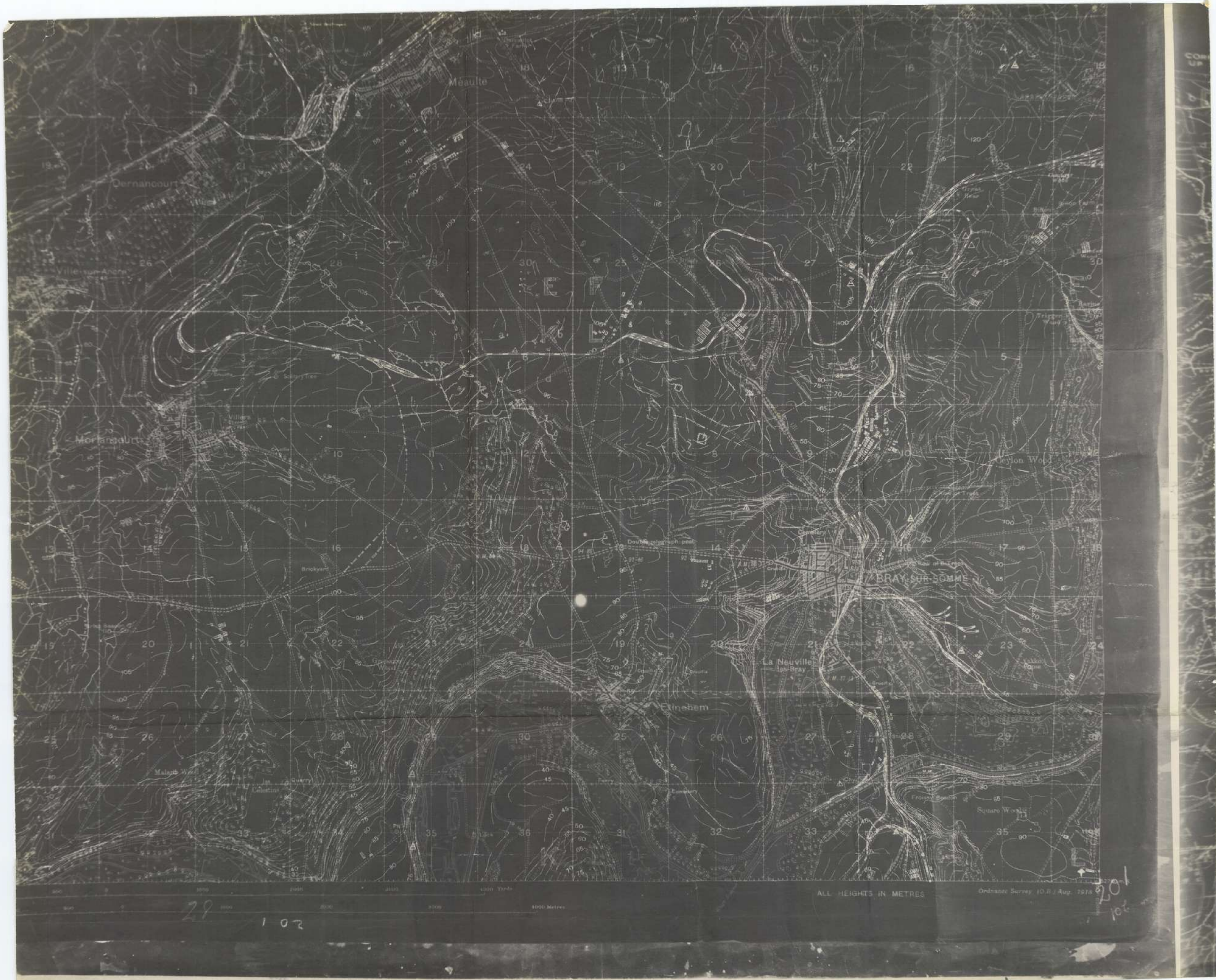
28 FRANCE. 201

GERMAN TRENCHES CORRECTED FROM INFORMATION
RECEIVED UP TO 24 6 18

EDITION 3A. (Local.)

29
SHEET 62° N.E.





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ALL HEIGHTS IN METRES

Ordnance Survey 10.B / Aug. 1918

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G.S.O.S. 2748

NOTE CHANGE OF COLOUR.
British trenches in red.
Enemy trenches in blue.

Scale 1:20,000

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