

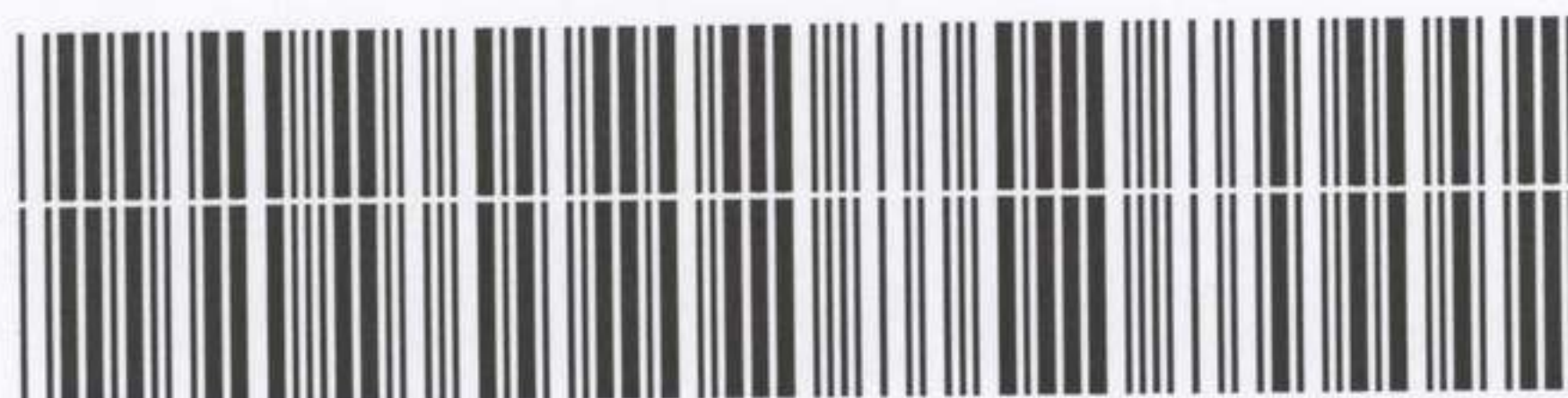
AWM4
Australian Imperial Force unit war diaries,
1914-18 War

Infantry

Item number: 23/43/12

Title: 26th Infantry Battalion

July 1916



AWM4-23/43/12

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.)

26th BN. A.I.F.

48. 31

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Trenches Messines Wyachteles.	1-7-16		Repairing parapets, cleaning up com. Trenches. Removing gas cylinders. 2/7/16. Fusiliers (Royal) City of London, visited trenches to take over during night of 2/3 July but order cancelled at 17.30. 3/7/16. 131 gas cylinders (full) removed from trenches to Tramway dump near R&J. 145 gas cylinders sent out of our trenches to Tramway dump near R&J. Artillery bombarded enemy front line & support line cutting wire & damaging trenches. Feble retaliation by enemy, very little artillery but considerable "barrage" fire.	
	4-7-16		Reconn. 7/12 th in command Bn. Reconnoitered Walsingham switch with Angars Genl. Paton. 4/7/16. Note to move received at 1 am.	
	6-7-16		Moved to billets at La Cuche' after handing over to Royal Fusiliers. 9/7/16. In billets. 10/7/16. Moved from La breche' at 8.45 am La Beque	
	8-7-16		thrua Noen Bn. Outpost, Trenches, Strangel, Rouge cross to billets. 11/7/16. Pense laois, Penesure, Les Bing Quar	
			Eblingham. Billeted in Chateau. 12/7/16. Moved at 1.30 pm to Argues for entraining. Bn. entrained in 20 minutes, train moved off at 5.30 pm. part time table. Train journeyed N.W. passing Calais, Boulogne and arriving at Longueau 12.15 pm. at 14 am on 13/7/16. Disentrained and marched to St. Vert Penhauser army at 11.30 am. Co. visited front line with P. P. P.	
	14/7		Bn. training daily. Attack practiced from road at Roman Camp area. 20/7/16. Moved to Rubempré (canon farm) passing	
	26-7-16		Flascelo, Sempionville. 21/7/16. Route by a bridge of G.H.Q. on Lens M/gun. 22/7/16. CO and B.Ms with G.S.O.1 to front line. Red move to move at 7.15 pm via Henricourt, Tuden Court, Harponville to Wailry. V 2/4 C 7.2. Practiced attack at U 12 d 2.2. (57 th 1/40000). Moved at 6.50 pm. to Bwouac W 21 D. via Senda	
Taras Hill. Poiziers	27-7-16		Cross roads V 12 c 6.4.1, Bouzin Court W 14 Central. halts for 10 minutes at 7 pm and 8 pm	
	28-7-16		moved to Taras Hill at 7 p.m. Brouaced. 28-7-16. Company commanders visited Rogers front to reconnoiter ground for attack as far as possible. Battalion moved off by platoons at 3 minutes interval. Arrived on position in good time with only 6 casualties before the "jump off" position was reached. Copy of Intelligence report is attached and also report of attack. Casualties were 2 officers killed 14 other wounded. Capt T.C. Hewitt, Lieut L.T. LINDUS, and wounded Capt J.E. Herbert Lt J.M. Kennedy, 2/C1 Patterson O.B. Nelson N.W., and 24 others killed. 1500 others wounded. 174 unaccounted for.	
			Parade State at 30-6-16	
			Plus Reinforcements	
			From Hospital	
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INTELLIGENCE REPORT.On attack on night of 28th. 29th. July 1916.

1. The men were in position in good order and time.
2. The one minute bombardment was not enough as it did not make the enemy keep his head down at all. For he continued to fire on our men all the time, having started firing on them some three minutes previous to the bombardment, he shot flares freely.
3. The fire in front of the enemy trenches was not sufficient as it caused a considerable amount of trouble.
4. Loss of direction was a big defect with some of our men who having to go off at an angle soon made the angle too big and overlapped the Battalion on our left, the Battalion on our right also overlapped us.
5. An order to retire was passed around from some unknown source, and though several of the officers are known to have tried to make the men go on, the retirement became general and it was not till the men were some 200 yards from the original starting point that the movement was checked. They were ordered to withdraw to the original trenches later.
6. A number of men got into the enemy front trenches before the order to retire was heard. Few of the enemy were encountered, a few men report they were in the enemy second line.
7. Only a couple of machine guns were noticed in the front line, numerous others were behind it. Bombing craters were encountered and bombs were thrown from them freely.

(Signed) F. B. CALESS, Captain
I. O. 28th. Bn.

(Signed) G. A. FERGUSON LT.
COL.

REPORT OF ATTACK CARRIED OUT BY 26th. BATTALION A.I.F. ON NIGHT OF
28th/29th. JULY 1916.

APPENDIX

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Four waves had lined up in advance on tramway at 11.10 p.m. The casualties up to this point were very slight - approximately 6. While waiting to advance there were indications that the enemy had his suspicions aroused as he sent up green flares as early as 11.42 p.m. and kept flares up incessantly from that time. Evidently there were hostile listening posts well forward of enemy first line. The fact is borne out by the number of dead found in NO MAN'S LAND subsequently.

At about 12.8 p.m. while the troops were moving steadily forward to the point from which the assault was to commence the enemy opened on to them with rifle and machine gun fire, a big proportion of which was too high to be effective.

When the assault was made the troops encountered first a number of advanced posts, connected underground and later a shallow trench lightly manned and only partly protected by wire entanglements.

While approaching this position the attack became somewhat confused in that the whole of the troops veered to the left, and the left of the Bn. on our right became intermixed with our Company.

The waves too disappeared and the men went forward in groups owing to the rough ground and enemy shell fire.

Each of the four Companies, however succeeded in getting isolated groups as far as the entanglements in front of the second line and a few men actually got into this position. In general they found the wire intact - and retired because the line was so strongly defended and partly because there were several reports that a general retirement had been ordered.

The left of our troops came in contact with the 23rd. Bn. digging in in vicinity of junction of roads at X 34 C2½ 6. They immediately set to work to continue the trench towards the right - but were ordered by me to withdraw as I considered that such work was quite unnecessary since the position was approximately 300 yards from the first objective. After satisfying myself that only isolated portions of the front line were held by our troops, and that the Bn. on our right had been to withdraw I sent an order to the remainder of my Command to vacate positions occupied and assemble in vicinity of Chalk Pit.

Communications with Companies proved difficult. The telephone lines were cut early, and the majority of the Company Signallers became casualties. We were forced to use runners freely. There were no communications with the Artillery, and no Artillery Liaison officer reported.

It is my opinion that the attack would have been more successful
(a) if the Artillery preparations had been more complete
(b) if Units had had no doubt regarding direction.

(Signed) G. H. Ferguson R.E.
Co. 26 Bn
R. Smith