

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

Infantry

Item number: 23/43/26

Title: 26th Infantry Battalion

September 1917



AWM4-23/43/26

Original

WAR DIARY

26 Pm

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
ABBEY de WOESTINE	1. 9. 17 10 7. 9. 17		The training during the week consisted of wood fighting and practice of "leap-frog" method of attacks, in addition company schemes for attacking strong points etc were carried out.	
	8. 9. 17 10 11. 9. 17		For these few days training consisted of Gas practice & "leap-frog" methods of attack by the Brigade. Concerts were arranged during the evening by Capt. Humphreys, member of the Bn. contributing the items. On 11th Sept Lt. Col. R. J. G. Travers D.S.O. left the Bn. to take command of the 2nd Australian Divisional Wing, 1st Arzac Rpts camp CAESTRE, Major Currie D.S.O. taking command of the Bn. temporarily.	
	12. 9. 17		Bn. moved to STEENVOORDE by route march (operation orders attached). The weather was very good & march was well carried out, the men being in very good condition. Billets in STEENVOORDE were reached at 3 p.m. and by 3.30 p.m. everybody was settled. Although some of the billets were rather crowded, the Bn. was moving again next day any inconvenience was endured uncomplainingly.	
STEENVOORDE	13. 9. 17		Bn. moved to HALIFAX CAMP near OODERDOM by route march (operation orders attached). The camp was reached at 4 p.m. after an exhausting march, the last few hours consisting of quickly-alternating long & short marches and the road was very dusty.	

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HALIFAX CAMP	14.9.17 16	17.	In view of the coming operations the period was spent in completing and issuing all extra material to the men & reorganizing the forward area and front line by officers & N.C.Os. Working parties were supplied by the Bn. for the purpose of constructing dumps etc on BELLWAARDE & WESTHOEK RIDGES.	
PIONEER CAMP	18.9.17	17.	Bn moved to Pioneer (about 1/2 mile) by route march and took over tented camp from 19 th Bn.	
PIONEER CAMP	19.9.17	17.	At 9 p.m. the Bn. moved to take up their position on the "jumping-off" tape in rear of BELLWAARDE LAKE and were in position at 2 AM. 20 th September. The night was very dark and there was a good deal of confusion on the duckwalks with troops of the 10 th & 12 th Bns who appeared to be lost. This confusion was accentuated by the enemy putting over a few gas shells. However the Bn got into positions near the lake without a single casualty nor were there any until a few minutes after 3.30 hours. About 10.30 p.m. there was a sharp fall of rain for an hour but fortunately ceased before jeopardising the success of the operations.	
WESTHOEK RIDGE	20.9.17	17.	The casualties at the ^{lake} up till 8 A.M. when the Bn. moved forward to WESTHOEK RIDGE were one killed and five wounded. At this hour the Bn. moved forward in close support to the 28 th Bn. The formation adopted from the lake to the Ridge was that of companies in single file. Three companies got up without losing a man while	

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			<p>the other company had about half a dozen casualties. After reaching the Ridge, three companies went over in support of 28th Bn. The remaining company was detailed by Bde. Major as a carrying party to 26th Bn. At this stage of the operations, G.O.C. 7th A.I. Bde sent for the C.O. & after explaining the situation, sent him forward with instructions to use the 26th Bn as the situation required. The C.O. found that 25th & 27th Bns were well established in their respective positions & that the 28th Bn. had gained their objective and were busy consolidating. The flanks had been connected to the 5th A.I. Bde on the left and the 3rd A.I. Bde on the right. As 28th Bn. had ample men for the work required, the Bn. was put on to dig a O.T. to the rear at the same time holding themselves in readiness to give aid to 28th Bn in case of a counter attack made whilst 3 Lewis Guns and teams were lent to 28th Bn. and remained there till relieved by 6th A.I. Bde.</p> <p>The work of consolidation done by 26th Bn. was as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) A L. Trench from 2nd Objective to marshy ground in front of first objective. (b) A L. Trench from 3rd to 2nd Objective. (c) A support trench 100' long in rear of 3rd objective as well as a strong point near same. (d) A strong point near ALBERT REDOUBT which was held by a platoon and 2 Lewis Guns. 	

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9.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
			(c) A b. Trench from WESTHOEK RIDGE to dead ground on the eastern slope.	
			The whole of 'A' company was engaged in carrying to the 3rd objective and in addition two platoons under Lieut Pearson were working under the Bde. Bombing Officer.	
21.9.17	21.9.17		At 9 P.M. on the 20th the Bn took up a position on WESTHOEK RIDGE and remained there till relieved by 22nd Bn. The relief was completed by 11 o'clock on night of 21st/22nd Sept and the Bn moved back to HALIFAX CAMP arriving there about 2 a.m. The march back to the camp was stood well by the men who were thoroughly done up after their 56 hours vigil but they were welcomed into camp with a hot meal and a good rum ration.	
HALIFAX CAMP	23.9.17		The total casualties were two officers & sixteen O.R. killed, three officers & ninety nine O.R. wounded whilst eight O.R. were missing. Bn. moved to WIPPENHOEK AREA by route march (operation orders attached) arriving there at 12 noon. The camp was a tented one and was occupied by 5th Australian Divisional Details.	
RENINGHELST	24.9.17		This period was spent in refitting, route marching P.T. and markety instruction & training of specialists. On 29th Sept Lt Col. Raven D.C.O. took command of 28th Bn vice Lt Col. Reid who had been wounded by a bomb from an aeroplane.	
	29.9.17			
	30.9.17		Bn. moved to BELGIAN CHATEAU by route march (operation orders attached) arriving there at 2 p.m. There was a lot of traffic on the road which inconvenienced the march a great deal.	

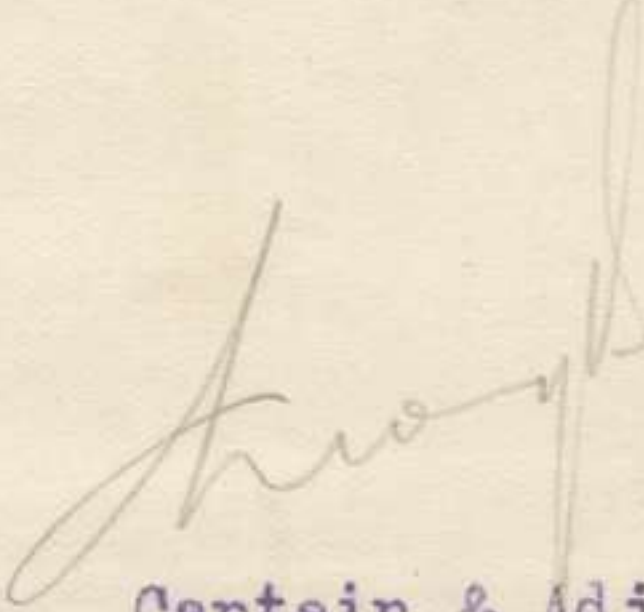
J. Raven
Lt Col

26th. Battalion. A. I. F.

11th. September 1917.

INSTRUCTIONS RE THE MOVE TOMORROW 12th. INST.

1. The Battalion will move to STEENVOORDE tomorrow 12th. inst. and will continue the march on the 13th. inst. and be billeted at HALIFAX CAMP (H.14.c.7.8.)
2. Billeting N.C.O's will report to Lieut. Wills at Battalion H.Q. at 6.30.a.m.
3. REVEILLE will be at 5.a.m. and all tents must be struck and rolled ready for Transport at 5.30.a.m.
Companies will arrange their own Breakfast.
4. BLANKETTS will be rolled in bundles of ten and labelled and will be ready to be loaded on Lorry by 6.30.a.m. This also applies to Officers gear which will be dumped at Q.M. Store by same time.
5. BILLETS will be thoroughly cleaned and ready for inspection by 6.45.a.m. All Latrines other than those that are fly-proof must be filled in and marked clearly "FOUL GROUND".
6. IRON RATIONS. These will not be issued but will be carried on Motor Lorries.
7. ABSENTEES. Special attention must be paid that all men are warned that the Unit is moving forward and a list of all absentees to be forwarded to Battalion Headquarters prior to the Unit moving out.
8. REINFORCEMENT CAMP. All men as shewn on Nominal Roll to proceed to Reinforcement Camp will be paraded to the Assistant Adjutant on the Battalion Parade Ground at 6.45.a.m. Lieut Suffolk will take charge of the party and will also be present. These men will be issued with rations for the 13th. inst prior to leaving.
9. LEWIS GUN GEAR. All Lewis Gun Gear must be loaded on Transport by 6.45.a.m. One man per Company will accompany the Limbers.
10. All Lorries will report to the R.Q.M.S. He will take delivery from all Companies of all tents at 5.30.a.m. and will hand over same to representative of Area Commandant at RENESCURE.
11. DUTIES. "B" Company will detail 1 N.C.O. and 6 men to report to R.Q.M.S. at 5.30.a.m. for loading.



Captain & Adjutant.

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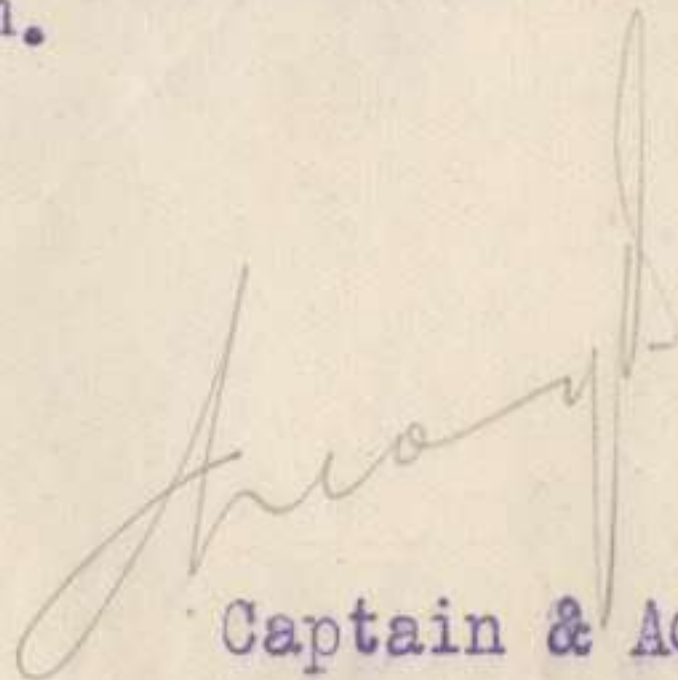
Appendix

26th. Battalion. A. I. F.
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OPERATION ORDER No. 7.

12th. September 1917.

1. The Battalion will assemble at 35.b.7.3. (near "D" Coy Billets) at 7.30.a.m. tomorrow. It will then proceed to Starting Point and pass Cross Roads in K.35.d. (Sheet 27) crossing CASSEL-POPRINGHE and GODEWAARVELDE-WATAU Roads at 9.35.a.m.
2. DRESS - Marching Order (see para 5).
3. Distance of 200 yards will be maintained between Battalions.
4. Lieut. R.A. Wills and one N.C.O. from each Company will report to Staff Captain at HALIFAX H.14.c.7.8. at 10.a.m. The N.C.O.'s referred to will report to B.O.R. at 7.15.a.m.
5. My memo of today re Packs. Each Company will detail one Guide to report to B.O.R. at 7.a.m. for the purpose of guiding Motor Lorry which will call at each Company's dump for packs. The latter must be ready to be picked up at 7.15.a.m.
6. Sick Parade will be at 6.a.m.


Captain & Adjutant.

26th. Battalion. A. I. F.

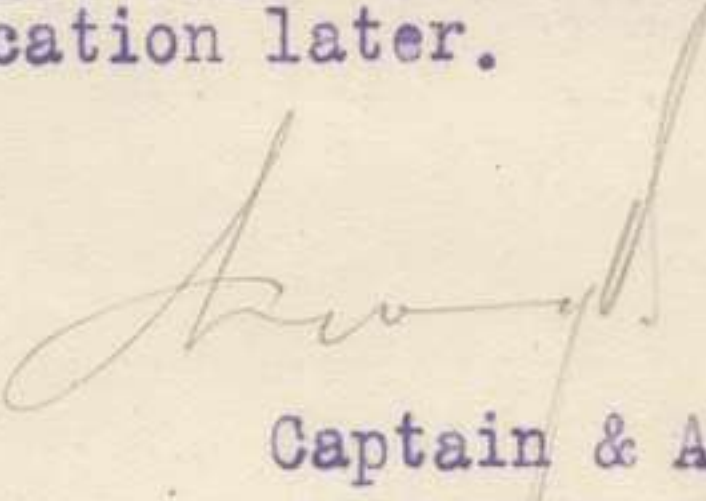
ORDER No. 8.

18th. September 1917.

Reference Map-WESTHOEK 1/10000. and Sheet 28 N.W. and
28.N.E. 1/20000.

1. Information concerning our own and the enemy's dispositions as well as our own intention has been communicated to all concerned.
2. The 26th. Battalion less personnel detailed herein will assemble N.N.W. of BELLEWAARDE LAKE and will be in position one hour before Zero. Position of Companies on assembly mark will be from right to left, as follows, "A", "B"; "C", "D".
3. The Battalion will move forward from its position of assembly at Zero plus 140 minutes round the North side of the Lake in the following order, "D", "C", "B"; "A", and will come into battle formation as already laid down under the WESTHOEK RIDGE. The Battalion will then follow in close support to the 28th. Battalion, keeping the distance of approximately 500 yards in the rear, and will be prepared in addition to supporting the 28th. Battalion to form defensive flanks.
4. The Artillery and M.G. barrage tables have been communicated to all concerned.
5. After capture and consolidation of the final objective, if the situation permits:-
 - (a) 25th. Battalion will occupy WESTHOEK RIDGE.
 - (b) 27th. Battalion will occupy RED LINE.
 - (c) 26th. Battalion will dig a C.T., plans of which have already been issued, and on completion will take up a position West of BELLEWAARDE LAKE.
 - (d) 28th. Battalion will be responsible for holding GREEN and BLUE LINES and the ground between.
6. After capture of GREEN LINE Companies will remain ready to assist the 28th. Battalion and will not commence C.T. until ordered to do so by Battalion H.Q.
7. Distribution of Companies for work on C.T. will be from front to rear as follows, "D"; "C"; "B"; "A". Work will be carried out under supervision of the Engineers. Further instructions will be issued later.
8. Signal arrangements are already issued.
9. Signals- Success Signals will be as follows, two Red Very Lights in quick succession on gaining RED LINE, one Red and one White Very Light in quick succession on gaining BLUE LINE, two GREEN Very Lights in quick succession on gaining GREEN LINE. All success Signals will be fired from each Company front from right to left. These Signals will not be fired until consolidation is actually in progress, but a message to the troops have reached the objectives will be immediately to Battalion H.Q. All success signals must be confirmed by message that the objective has been taken and consolidation is in progress. S.O.S. has already been communicated and will be repeated from each objective to the rear.
Contact Patrol - Red Ground Flares will be lighted, several to every 50 yards, if possible, by troops only in most advanced positions when called for by Contact Aeroplanes.
10. DRESS- Fighting Order with 48 hours rations, 100 rounds additional S.A.A. perman, 1 Mills No.5 Grenade, 1 S.O.S. every fourth man. Rifle Grenadiers will carry full complement of Grenades as ordered. All men (No.1 and No.2 of Lewis Gun Teams excepted) will carry one pick or shovel (proportion 1 pick to 4 shovels) to be carried under equipment on the back. One extra Water Bottle as far as possible will also be carried. Instructions re collecting flares and extra S.A.A. will be carefully observed.

11. DUMPS - The Brigade Dump is at WESTHOEK, dug in and distributed in the vicinity of J.7.d.9.9. On the capture of the first objective forward Dump will be established at J.8.b.8.4. On capture of second Objective a dump will be formed at J.9.a.6.9. Battalion Dump will be notified later. R.E.Stores will be obtainable at WESTHOEK DUMP.
12. LIAISON - Lieut. J.G. Harris will act as Liaison Officer with the 28th. Battalion and will report to the 28th. Battalion H.Q. at Zero minus two hours.
13. Lieut. R.A. Wills (I.O.) accompanied by two Observers will accompany Brigade forward party, detachment "A". Their duties will be to keep in touch with the situation and keep Brigade and Battalion fully informed. Lieut. Wills and party will report to Brigade Signal Officer at Advanced Brigade H.Q. at J.7.d.9.9. at least two hours before Zero. Lieut. Hay will be attached to Battalion H.Q. for duty.
O.C. "C" Company will detail Lieut. Walker and one platoon complete to construct and garrison a Strong Point at J.9.a.50.65. This platoon will report to Lieut. Poulson, 7th. Field Coy, who will be in charge of the construction of the Strong Point at a time and place as already mutually arranged. This platoon will come under command of the 28th. Battalion after thinning out has been effected.
O.C. "A" Company will detail Lieut. Cockrill and his platoon and O.C. "B" Company will detail Lieut. Pearson and his platoon to report to Brigade Dump to Lieut. Boyle at 11.p.m. on the day before Zero as carrying parties. These platoons will be fully equipped with YUKON PACKS. Lieut. P.J. Whittaker will detail four Runners to report to I.12.c.3.5. at 6.p.m. on the 18th. inst. O.C. "D" Company will detail 1 N.C.O. and six men (Accumulator carrying party) to report to Brigade H.Q. at I.12.c.3.5. at 6.p.m. on the 18th. inst, also 1 Sergeant and 20 other ranks to be held with the Company in readiness when called on to draw material.
14. March Table attached.
15. ZERO DAY and HOUR will be notified later.
16. R.A.P. at Tank W.N.W. of BELLEWAARDE LAKE.
17. Reports to Battalion H.Q. at TANK W.N.W. of BELLEWAARDE LAKE and after third objective has been gained will be established in vicinity of ALBERT REDOUBT. Exact location later.


Captain & Adjutant.

Issued at 2.p.m. 18/9/17.

DISTRIBUTION.

1. File.
2. War Diary.
3. do
4. 7th. A.I. Brigade.
5. 28th. Battalion.
6. "A" Company.
7. "B" "
8. "C" "
9. "D" "
10. Signal Officer.
11. Intelligence Officer.
12. Transport Officer.
13. Spare.
14. do

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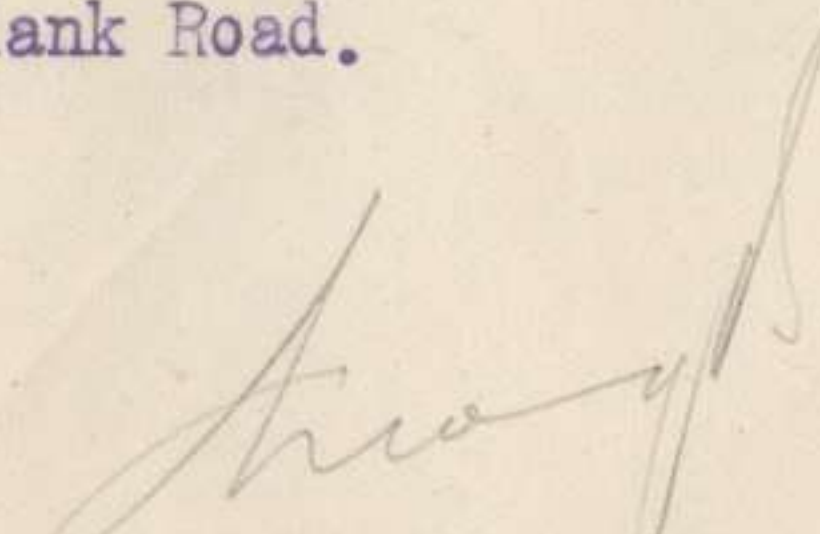
.....26th. Battalion. A. I. F.

Appendix

March Table to accompany Order No. 8.

18th. Sept 1917.

1. The Battalion will move to the position of assembly at a time to be notified later.
2. The route will be via CHATEAU BELGE (H. 23. b. 3. 8.) to X Roads KRUSSTRAAT I. 13. c. 0. 6. along WARRINGTON AVENUE to I. 20. a. 5. 9. -along "C" TRACK to I. 9. d. 3. 0. along Duck Boards to BIRR X ROADS along CORDUROY ROAD (plank) to LAKE.
3. Order of march - H. Q., "A", "B", "C", "D". Distance of 100 yards between platoons will be maintained.
4. Guides will be posted at the following points:-
 - (1) X ROADS KRUSSTRAAT.
 - (2) At point where WARRINGTON AVENUE joins the WYTCHAETE ROAD.
 - (3) Where "C" TRACK leaves WYTCHAETE near LILLE GATE.
 - (4) Where the Duck Boards leaves "C" TRACK.
 - (5) At end of Duck Boards.
 - (6) BIRR X ROADS at start of Plank Road.


Captain & Adjutant.