

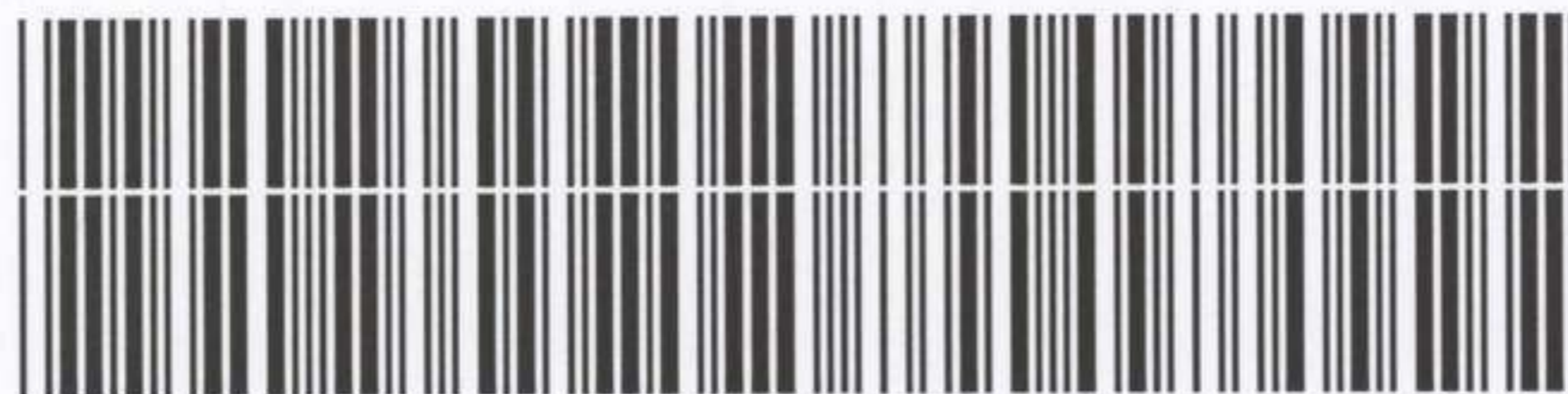
**AWM4**  
**Australian Imperial Force unit war diaries,**  
**1914-18 War**

Infantry

**Item number:** 23/59/20

**Title:** 42nd Infantry Battalion

June 1918



AWM4-23/59/20



155

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ORIGINAL.  
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~~TRIPLICATE.~~

Australian Imperial Force.

**WAR DIARY**

OF

42<sup>nd</sup> Battalion

FOR

June

1918

Signature of Officer compiling

*C. B. ...*

Signature of Officer Commanding

*W. ...*  
*Chal*



WAR DIARY

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

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Army Form C. 2118.

42<sup>nd</sup> Battalion

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Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F. S. Regs., Part II. and the Staff Manual respectively. Title pages will be prepared in manuscript.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Villers-Boutonne 0.28E.80.49	1/6/18	AMB	<p>Weather good. B Battalion holding the line in front of Villers-Boutonne. D Company under Capt R.F. O'Brien on the left, C Company under Lt T. Jans on the right with 2 platoons in the outpost line with one of D Company. A Company (composite) under Lt Wany in left support with a company of 44<sup>th</sup> Batt in right support and another in charge of the defences of Villers-Boutonne. Aerial activity on both sides.</p>	
do	2/6/18	AMB	<p>The Battalion was comprised of three companies each of 3 platoons. Our patrols were very active. Villers B. was shelled heavily. Our artillery very active on enemy rear - F.L. defences. Works policy pursued vigorously. Enemy opened up early in the morning with a heavy gas attack of phosgene on forward areas about 2000 yds on Battalion area no casualties resulting. Aerial activity above normal. Remainder of day comparatively quiet with intermittent strafes. Aircraft active over enemy lines. Weather fine.</p>	
"	3/6/18	AMB	<p>Great aerial activity by our planes throughout day. Our patrols engaged on enemy party with bombs no result obtained. Weather fine.</p>	
"	7/6/18	AMB	<p>The adjoining division (Gouaux) on our right fired the S.O.S. in the early hours of the morning causing somewhat of a stir in our headquarters as the adjoining Battalion repeated the signal and our artillery opened up but were soon under control.</p>	
Railway cutting N 28.	7/6/18	AMB	<p>Partial relief carried out by 38<sup>th</sup> Battalion in the early morning and the Battalion was relieved in the line in the evening relief being completed a little after midnight. Battalion marched out to bivouacs in N 28. B.H.Q. approached to and from line subjected to severe strafing during time relief was being carried out. Battalion rested, bathing in the Douve. Col Woodcock to C. Belton for next morning. A little H.V. shelling by the enemy from direction of Warfuselbancourt. Pay day.</p>	



WAR DIARY

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

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42<sup>nd</sup> Battalion

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Railway cutting N. 28.	6/6/18	AMB	Battalion part of Reserve Brigade. Training of specialists mainly Lewis gun proceeded with. Issue of clean clothes and bathing powder. Beautiful weather. Enemy H.V. guns active in vicinity. Reconnaissance of areas N & S in case of counter attack.	
do	7/6/18	AMB	Bathing training and issue of clothing. Reconnaissance by Officers & N.C.O.'s. Heavy artillery bombardments both N & S. Good weather.	
"	8/6/18		Under excellent weather conditions training proceeded with. Reconnaissance of sectors. Heavy artillery fire to south.	
"	9/6/18	AMB	Col. Woodcock to Brigade acting as Brigadier. Major G. J. D. Train in command of Battalion. Dull weather a good deal of counter battery artillery work.	
"	10/6/18	AMB	Changeable weather conditions. Working parties. Second Division launched a very successful mva operation gaining a few miles of country between the Somme & Aisne, 350 prisoners. Enemy H.V. shelling in morning.	
"	11/6/18	AMB	Working parties. H.V. shelling by enemy in locality. Weather dull. Men bathed and change of clothing issued.	
"	12/6/18	AMB	Weather fine. Working parties on cable line. Pay day. Enemy H.V. shelling in locality.	
"	13/6/18	AMB	Capt W.H.D. Woodcock appointed adjutant. Working parties, weather good. Area shelled by H.V. guns intermittently. Men bathed.	
"	14/6/18	AMB	Working parties. Cool weather conditions. Balloon observation increased. Shelling of back areas with H.V. guns above normal. Ammunition strafed by heavy guns.	

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WAR DIARY

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

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Army Form C. 2118.

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42<sup>nd</sup> Battalion

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Railway cutting N. 2.8	17/6/18	CMB	Weather dull and threatening. Working parties supplied for cable bury by all companies and bags. Men bathed and issued with clean clothing. Battalion area subjected to a fair amount of shelling by enemy H.V. guns. During the night our immediate left front 4 <sup>th</sup> Division front met a reds' skirmish in the capture of a few prisoners in the vicinity of Bois-de-Vaux.	
do	18/6/18	CMB	Dull cloudy weather with cool westerly wind throughout day. Voluntary church parade. Working parties on cable bury.	
do	19/6/18	CMB	Under good weather conditions aerial activity increased. Working parties supplied for cable bury. Three enemy planes forced down, 2 of which had to alight through engine troubles. Enemy ranging with high oblique bursts over Villers-Bretonneux road and Dams. Our balloons active. Enemy H.V. guns active over Battalion area. Pictures to officers under Brigade supervision.	
do	18/6/18	CMB	Fine weather conditions. A good deal of ranging by the Hun with high oblique bursts. One of our balloons brought down by enemy plane. Artillery actively ranged along front. Working parties supplied for cable bury.	
do	19/6/18	CMB	Enemy balloons active early in the day. Hun H.V. guns shelled area occupied by Battalion. Notification that our Brigade would receive the 10 <sup>th</sup> Bde in the line on the night of 20 <sup>th</sup> & 21 <sup>st</sup> received. Artillery very active at 11 P.M.	
do	20/6/18	CMB	Favourable weather conditions. Aerial activity increased during day. Working parties on cable bury.	
do	21/6/18	CMB	Cloudy dull weather which caused a decrease in aerial activity. Visibility only fair. Pans have opened to all ranks without regard to English leave. Working parties supplied.	
do	22/6/18	CMB	Cloudy windy condition prevailed. Ranging aerial activity. Working parties supplied for cable bury. Advance parties went forward to get in touch with support Battalion of 10 <sup>th</sup> Brigade.	
do	23/6/18	CMB	Favourable weather conditions. Battalion relieved by 10 <sup>th</sup> Battalion B.T.G. at the Mill Chateau Bois l'Abbe. Companies commanded as follows: 'A' Coy Lt Wemy, 'D' Coy Capt R.F.C. Ryan in C 28 & 29. 'C' Company in Hops Villers Bretonneux under Lt. Jack subjected to commands of left forward Battalion. Battalion under the command of Major E.J.D. Dyer in the absence of Lt. A.R. Woolcock acting Brigadier.	
White Chateau Bois l'Abbe	24/6/18	CMB	Weather cool and cloudy with intermittent showers. Heavy mist arising towards dusk made observation difficult. Gas projected over enemy lines with success during night. Our artillery active throughout night. Working parties supplied in forward areas.	
do	25/6/18	CMB	Situation remains aerial activity increased with more favourable weather conditions. Working parties, salvage of Villers Bretonneux. Water carted but enemy loss of two horses. Two men wounded. Meeting of C.B. and company commanders.	

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WAR DIARY

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
White Chateau Bois l'Abbe	24/12	9:00	Weather conditions much improved. 4th Divisional front reconstituted by assault and scout officers. Aerial activity exceptional a number of combats taking place in which machines of both sides were damaged. One bombing very active over enemy lines during night. Artillery on both sides quiet. Advance parties of 2nd Batt arrived.	
do	27/12	9:00	Weather conditions good with quiet aerial and artillery activity. Battalion relieved by 2nd Batt and marched to Reserve Brigade area N. 23 Bligny Tronville. Relief carried out without casualties before disembarkation. Lt A.R. Woodcock attached to Battalion from Brigade.	
Alouville Chateau Grouss	27/12	9:00	Received by 2nd Batt in Reserve Brigade area and marched to Alouville taking over from 10th B. Regt in Alouville Chateau Grouss. All companies within very distance of B. HQ Regimental HQ also instituted. All houses sunk two feet below level surface to afford shelter against bombs. Army bombing planes very active during night. Activity of C.B. Co. Company Commanders.	
do	28/12	9:00	Demonstration with tanks in the attack at Vanvoren-Amersois. Show put up very creditable. Tank marched to and from demonstration, though soft after long period in line. He depended well. Meeting of C.B. Co. Company Commanders deliberating upon plans for oncoming attack. Weather hot and arid.	
.	29/12	9:00	2 American platoons reported to Battalion for experience in street. Amersois taken to Vanvoren. Amersois and put through tank course showing great business and appreciation. Church destroyed. Great aerial activity during night, many bombing planes caught in our searchlights engaged heavily with anti and M.G. fire. Strength of Battalion officers 23 C.R. 669.	

Still unaccounted for

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# WAR DIARY

OF

42<sup>nd</sup> Battalion

FOR

June 1918

## LIST OF APPENDICES.

- | No.          | Subject.  |
|--------------|---|
| 1            | Medical Officers Report   |
| <del>2</del> | <del>2<sup>nd</sup> Report</del>  |
| 3            | Transport Officers Report   |
| 4            | General appreciation for month<br>of situation  |
| 5            | Adjutant's Report   |
| 6            | Intelligence Summaries  |
| 7            | Sketch taken from White Chateau<br>Bois l'Abbe looking North East Towards<br>Prieure & Sully & Sec. By T Cross. |
| 8            | Valley of the Somme near Blangy-<br>Tronville   |
| 9            | Villes Boulonnaises   |

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I

M.Os report - June 1918

During the month of June the general health of the men has been especially good, after considering the trying time they have had for some months. The epidemic of influenza of the previous month has almost died out. Whilst in reserve area around BLANGY TROWVILLE every available chance was taken off bathing the men in the river in addition to the hot baths and change of clothing at the Corps bath house. One short return to the support area of Villers Brettoneux was uneventful. We had 4 casualties - 3 being to a gance shell on one of the Battalion water carts. On relief the battalion koved off to bivouac around ALLONVILLE, where unfortunately a good rest was not possible. The sanitation of the camp - good. All latrines are fly proof. The kitchens are clean and all have grease traps. Water is drawn from a filling point. The rations are of a good quality and quantity save in a shortage of vegetables. All the Battalion has been bathed since arriving at ALLONVILLE.

II

Quartermaster's Report - June 1918

During the month of June the Battalion was in the line, the QM store being in LA MOTTE with "B" Mchelson. Supplies were normal and every exigency of the service where interfered with regularly. Bread Though of an inferior quality to previous supplies the quantity was always to be had. Meat A fair supply of Australian frozen meat only in one occasion was affected by weather conditions which were exceedingly truing at the time. A fair amount of tinned ration was issued during the period in lieu of fresh meat. Vegetables Not as plentiful as previous as previous month it being more difficult to obtain supplies locally as had been the case since the Battalion had come into the SOMME area where vacated plots had been commandeered for troops by the authorities. Clothing Above normal though not of Australian manufacture. Boots All demands were complied with. A good deal of repair work affected by boot repairing staff. Salvage Well up to standard of Battalion. During the month 20 tons of flour was salvaged for French Mission from Villers Bretooneux. From the same town whilst the Battalion was in the line salvaging was energetically pressed and supplies of both military and civil value being collected and sent to salvage Coy. to the extent of £2000. Fodder Supply highly satisfactory and with supplies to be obtained local conditions were highly pleasing by results obtained.



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3

Transports Officer's Report - June 1918

The Transport lines were situated at LA MOTTE for the month in one of the best positions that the lines have been in since arrival in France. The lines were made bomb proof by sod walls about 6 foot high and 3 foot wide being erected.

The SOMME ran past the lines and therefore water was very handy. The vehicles were painted and cleaned and harnesses repaired during the month. Things were not very busy during the month as for the greater part of the month the Battalion was situated very near to the QM store. The only casualties sustained during the period were 2 horses killed and driver injured badly. A water cart was smashed by shell fire.

The above casualties were very unlucky as the cart was taking water to the lines and were struck with the only shell which fell on the road that morning.

The transport was inspected by the Divisional Commander during the month who was very pleased with the turnout.

Sickness was slight, 2 of the personnel being evacuated with P.UO. 1 draught and 1 ride were evacuated during period with sickness. The remainder of the animals were in exceptionally good condition and health.

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APPENDIX 4.8

42 nd Batt.

A General appreciation of work done by Battalion  
during month. June 1918

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Throughout the month the weather experienced was on the whole excellent and in no way interfered with operations.

At the beginning of the month the Battalion was holding the Villers Brettoneux sector with the 43rd. Battalion on the right and the French of the 3rd. ZUCAVES on ~~xxxxxxx~~ their right forming the junction of the Allied Armies.

On our left were the 9 th. Brigade. During the period in the line there was not a great deal of activity, identification was secured on one occasion. The enemy used gas freely on one occasion but preventive measures proved to be successful and no casualties resulted. Aerial activity was very marked during the excellent weather conditions that prevailed and our airman had the command of the air. On the night 4/5th. June that Brigade was relieved in the line by 10 th. Brigade AIF and went into reserve at BLANGY TRONVILLE where their men benefited greatly from a rest despite the fact that working parties were constantly supplied.

During the period of Reserves lectures to Officers and NCOs were given under Brigade supervision.

On the 18th. Capt. W.H.A. MacDonnell was appointed Adj. vice Capt. G.A. Dunbar wounded.

On the night 23/24 th. the Brigade relieved the 10th. Brigade AIF in the Villers Brettoneux area and remained in the line for 4 days during which times things were very quiet.

On the night 27th. the Division was relieved by the 2nd. Aust. Division. and went for a rest at Allonville. No sooner had the Battalion arrived at Allonville and settled down heavy training and preparations for an offensive were commenced.

Troops from an American Division were attached for the "Stunt"

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AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

RCDIG1005060



5  
A/ Adjutant's Report - June 1918

During the month the Battalion was in line on a offensive defensive policy. The Battalion came out of the front line night 4/5 th. June and held reserve position in th GLISSY BLANGY Switch. Whilst in this area battalion supplied working parties , burying cables etc. Sports and swimming parades were held in this area , the river SOMME being very handy. Night 23/24 th. the Battalion moved in to close support at Villers Brettoneux from which position there were relieved night 28/29 th. and returned the GLISSY BLANGY switch.

Casualties were light during the period and men were given a good chance to recuperate after the hard previous months.

The C.O., Lt.-Col. A.R. Woolcock DSO , acted as Brigadier for the Brigade from 9th. to 28th. June during the absence of the Brigadier on leave and Major E.J. Dibdin assumed command of the Battalion.

Echelons were formed whilst the Battalion was in the forward area and men becoming sick etc. were sent down from the line to "B" Echelon to recover. This proved very successful as men were enabled to have a spell from time to time as occasions warranted.

The last 3 days of the month were very busy with returns, records etc. as the whole Battalion had not been to gether for the month and also shifting into position and working up the scheme for the "Stunt".

Could



The following promotions took place during the month.

- Lt. T.Jack MC to be T/Capt. dated 23-6-18
- Lt. S.R.Warry " " "
- Lt. C.S.Trudgian " " "

The following awards were made to members of the battalion during month.

- Military Medal. 3153 Pte. H.Stafford - For gallantry in obtaining identification during enemy raid.
- M.S.M. 542 Sgt. O.Driscoll Birthday honors.
- 1856 Pte. A.Jakeman



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 Artillery During period our artillery was active (extremely) on enemy front and rear lines. Our 18 pdrs. , in accordance with prearranged stunt , brought down a barrage on enemy front line at 10-45pm shooting was excellent and carried out effectively as desired. Between 3-15 and 4pm. 18 pdrs. carried out a shoot apparently intended for enemy FL 50 rounds of which fell short - 8 rounds fell in rear of Posts at P 31 a 10 80 - 3 rounds actually fell in trench. Remainder fell in vicinity of post.

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 MGs Carried out shoots during night on indirect targets . Engaged enemy FL during out raid on enemy post.

TMs About 40 rounds fired at MG post opposite left Coy. front of adjoining Battalion on left.

Patrols Three patrols operated on Battalion front during darkness . In conjunction a party of 1 Officer and 8 Or. approached enemy line simultaneously with lifting of barrage on right at about P 25 d 50 20 were engaged by heavy MG fire from P 25 d 70 20 . Post was well ~~examined~~ investigated and found to be unoccupied. Other patrols report enemy being very jumpy and kept a continued Very light barrage on NML during remainder of night .

Aircraft Our machine were extremely active over enemy lines during whole period. At 11 pm. were heard to drop bombs on billeting area behind enemy lines in the direction of Vanvillers and Franvillers.

Snipers Active 1 hit claimed at P 25 d 70 50

Grenades 40 mills and 15 halesgrenades were fired during day on enemy trenches in P 25 d from our line jsu North of Amiens - "arfuse Abancourt Road . Direct hits made on trenches.

Enemy Operations

Artillery Throughout day up to 11pm. enemy artillery fire was/normal a few shells only being dropped in village . Following on our stunt enemy tried some and expended all he had saved during day on our lines. Trenches were damaged in places . When the enemy barraged line he put it down as a box barrage . Flanks being P 25 c and d 100 yards south of road ~~appa~~ and line through P 36 and P 31 central . Extended in depth about 500 yards behind our front line

Aircraft Enemy planes were observed over his own lines during day, did not cross our lines . 5 ballons were observing directly opposite our front at 6 30 am 2 enemy bombing planes crossed over our lines at 10 am at VILLERS BRETTONEUX

TM The absence of MW was conspicuous in enemy berrage.

Gas Between 2 and 3 30 pm. the enemy shelled the vicinity of O 25 -26 and 27 with mustard gas it is estimated that 2500 yards were expended A few rounds fell in vicinity of Villers Brettoneux

Identifi- As a result of enemy raid we obtained one prisoner of 137 R.I.R. cation an actg. Sgt. Major. Was questioned and stated that relief was to take place before 12 mn. 31-5-18. A fine stamp of man having been right through the war from the commencement. He did not know of any relief of his regiment.

Miscellaneous During short shoot by our 18 pdrs. between 3-15 and 4pm. Artillery F.O.O observed shoot and notified battery concerned. There appears some doubt as to whether Artillery Officers are conversant with the F.L ~~situation~~ situation. The battery that did yesterdays short shooting was 42nd Bty. 11th. Brigade.

Movement behind enemy lines As on previous day considerable movement was noticed in trench at V 7 b 39 . Bosche enter here when coming from Marcelcave. There is a constant stream of men going and coming all day.

Intelligence 2-3 rd June 1918

Operations Artillery Active during period on enemy front and rear lines targets - a good deal of gas used . At 3pm. 4-5 hows fired 30 rds ranging on registration targets . Short shooting was again apparent , in fact some rounds fell in our support lines. All artillery was active throughout day.

MGs. Active throughout night on indirect targets.

TMs Nil.

Patrols Active throughout night on Battalion front. At 2am patrol on left encountered an enemy patrol at Maison Bleu , shots and bombs were exchanged . Our patrol returned safely. A considerable amount of talking heard in enemy FL trenches.

*Chance*



Snipers Active, no hits claimed.

Grenades During period 30 Hales grenades were fired into enemy trench at north of road at approximately P 25 d 90 50

Aircraft During period our planes were exceedingly active over enemy line being engaged by AA and MG fire. At times in single flight, others in as many as six.  
At 4-30am. one of our machines when over enemy lines was attacked by three bosche he successfully drove down one of the enemy planes and returned safely to our lines.

Defences 60 yards of double apron wire in front of post O 30 c 8 6  
40 " " " " " " " left picquet post P 31 a 70 30  
Repairs to gaps caused by our own 18 pdrs. Construction of fire bays and LGs. in outpost line extension of post towards right Coy.

Hostile Artillery Active throughout period with all calibres of gas, HE and shrapnel. Villers Brettoneux subjected to strafes at intervals during day and night. Buildings were set alight. Very little shooting on our front line.

T.M. 10 rounds pineapple fell in front of line, fired from about North of Amiens Road in P 15 d.

M.G. Active during night firing spasmodically on support lines.

Aircraft 3 planes seen over their lines. at 4-30am. attacked one of our planes unsuccessfully one of them being driven down as a result.

Very light Very frequent with occasional golden rain rockets.

Patrols One encountered at Maison Bleu about 16 to 20 strong, bombs were exchanged - our party returned safely.

Movement Enemy balloon rose at V 14a at 10am.  
At 11 30 pm enemy working party fired on by LG and artillery dispersed at P 31 a 60 40 did not appear again.

Intelligence 3/4 June. 1918

Operations Artillery Artillery active all day. 18 pdrs. again shooting short. In response to S.O.S. Signal artillery opened up on barrage fire which kept up for some time. The enemy used a large amount of ~~xxxxxxx~~ very lights, keeping them up all the time.

T.M.S. Nil

M.Gs. Very active in hours of darkness on indirect fire.

Patrols Active on Battalion front. One enemy patrol encountered and after sharp struggle 2 enemy seen to fall and scream the remainder quickly retired to their own lines followed by our patrol.  
Enemy patrol appeared to be about 15 to 20 strong, our patrol was 1 Nco. 9 Or.  
At about 2 am enemy patrol approached our post and bombs were exchanged. Our garrison immediately went out to meet the foe but he must have retired rapidly as no trace of him could be found.

Aircraft During period our plane singly or in flight patrolled over enemy lines. Were at ~~xxxxxxx~~ times heavily engaged by AA and MG fire.

Hostile shelling:- Normal Villers Brettoneux subjected to burst, at interval A few gas shells fell in village at about the same time that he put down a heavy strafe on the village.

Snipers Snipers were active and fired a few shots at targets from about P 26.

Aircraft 4 E.A. flew along our lines between 7 and 8pm. one plane over our lines at 8-15 pm.

Movement behind enemy lines :- At 6-30pm a car with a passenger travelling at 2 mph was seen moving behind Morgeaumont Wood.  
At 7pm. a good deal of movement including transport on road through V 13 b.

Intelligence Report - 3-5-18 - 4-5-18

Operations Our guns active on counter battery work against Marcelcove and Taillaux Wood.

Artillery Our aircraft exceedingly active since daybreak and have been heavily engaged at time by AA and MG fire when approaching enemy lines.

Aircraft Enemy operations :- A fair amount of counter battery work Villers Brettoneux shelled at intervals otherwise quiet

Aircraft Enemy planes seen over Bosche line but did not come over our lines.

Identification :- As reported in summary of 3-6-18 enemy shot in P 25 d by our patrol proved to be a Lieutenant of 332 Rgt. 77 th. "es Di

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The valley of the Somme.

APPENDIX.

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Villers - Bretonneux.

APPENDIX. 9