

AWM4

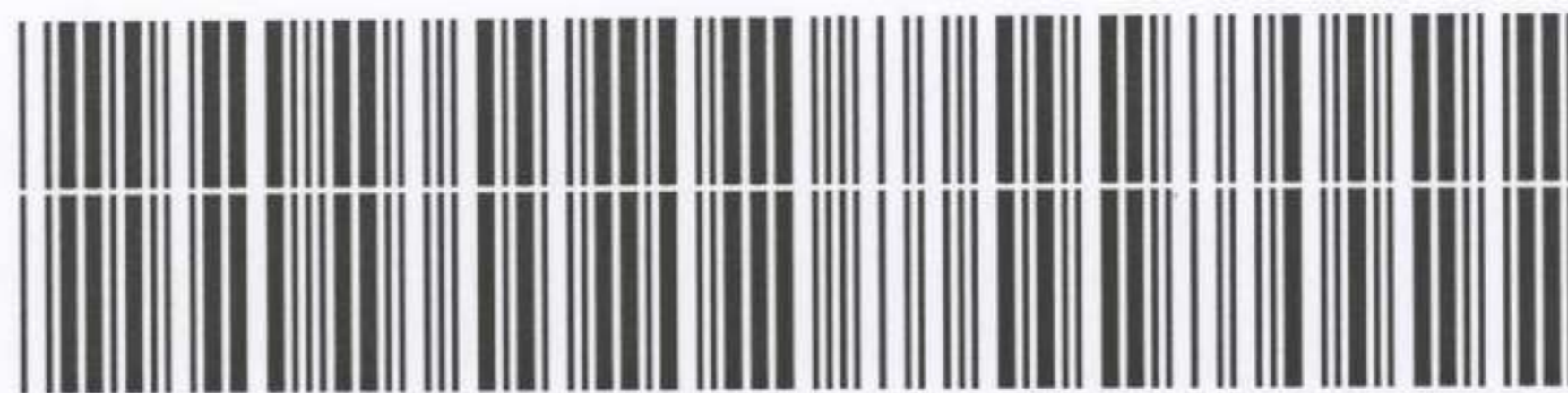
**Australian Imperial Force unit war diaries,
1914-18 War**

Infantry

Item number: 23/40/20

Title: 23rd Infantry Battalion

May 1917



AWM4-23/40/20

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.

ORIGINAL

WAR DIARY

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Erase heading not required.)

Army Form C. 2118

23rd
Vol. XXV

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
FAYREUIL H10C	30/17		<p>may 16 Batt^m took part in Battle Practice as on 27th. Retired during day and at night strength forward the fighting strength moved forward to line and relieved 26th Bⁿ AIF. Relief being completed by 3.30am on 1st May. Following is disposition Bⁿ Coy front line from 20-645 to C5 a 5.3. to C4 H 6.8. 17+10 occupying trenches and road in C4 d. Bⁿ Hd Qtrs Details in NOREUIL - LONGATTE Rd at C9 d 8.5. Maj W^m took Command of Bⁿ for the attack. 36-926</p>	PB
FRONTLINE SUPPORTS	1-9/17		<p>Bⁿ held positions taken over from 26th Bⁿ AIF. Boys made all final arrangements for coming attack and by night drew all necessary material from dump which we had established at approx C10 a 5.3. This was taken to Coy lines for issue next day. Details left at H10 c moved into Div Detail Camp at H16 c. Lt Col W. Pateman in Command of 6th Bds Details. 2nd Lt K. Rays W^m 2nd ORW^m when taking a patrol forward.</p>	PB
do	2-5/17		<p>Boys issued all material to troops. Bⁿ Hd Qtrs moved up to C5 a 2.6. Our Lewis guns brought down Hun planes about 100 yds behind Hd Qtrs. Preparations well forward for attack. 40-1000</p>	PB
FRONTLINE	3-5/17		<p>As attached report of action by 23rd Bⁿ against Hindenburg Line 26-647</p>	PB
SUPPORTS	4-5/17		<p>Bⁿ was relieved in the HINDENBURG LINE at 3.30am and returned to Railway Embankment. The Bⁿ was then formed into one Coy of 4 platoons of 40 each under officers. Capt Rossiter remaining in charge of Coy. Capt Parker (Col Bⁿ and Hd Qtrs) with remainder of Bⁿ moved back to NOREUIL - LONGATTE Rd about 70 all told. The Coy under Capt Rossiter was relieved next morning 26-647</p>	PB
NOREUIL- LONGATTE Rd	5-5/17		<p>Capt Rossiter's Coy was relieved by 4th Bⁿ AIF and is moved back to Bⁿ Hd Qtrs in, sunken road, in vicinity of Pateman's camp forward from Details bringing with him 2nd Lt Helberg 2nd Lt Baker + 50 P^m. Capt Rossiter took party of 100 men to construct strong post on our right flank in the line. Casualties OR 23. 26-635</p>	PB

1875 Wt. W593/826 1,000,000 4/15 J.B.C. & A. A.D.S.S./Forms/C. 2118.

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
NOREUIL- LONGATTE Rd.	MAY 6 th		The Battalion had a quiet day. Toward evening we were instructed to form the B ⁿ into a Coy under O.C. 2 nd Command & 4 subalterns. The remaining officers to move back to VREUX. The B ⁿ to be called 'C' Coy & form part of a composite B ⁿ under Major Wilshire MC. Lt Winter. I. O. W. (Died of wounds) Lt Redhead S. O. K. 19.	24-635
	7 th		Surplus Officers (3) with few runners, Hqs & Sigs moved back to Div Detail Camp on BAPPAUME Rd. The remainder of B ⁿ were relieved by 3 Coy PIF during evening and moved back to transport line arriving there at 11 am on 8 th .	24-643
M20d	8 th		The B ⁿ moved from transport line at FAYREUIL to camp on POZIERES Rd. at M20d and were joined by our details from Div Detail Camp.	24-643
MAMETZ	9 th		6 th Inf Bde moved into camp at MAMETZ - 2 nd B ⁿ occupying 'C' Camp. Rec 20 R ^s	24-662
do	10 th		Batt ⁿ started re-organising, inspection at 11 am. Football matches bet Coys in afternoon.	24-655
do	11 th		Batt ⁿ bathed.	24 652
	12 th		Reorganization. specialist work. Half holiday.	24 652

WAR DIARY

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Mametz	MAY 13 th		Bn parade church parade at sports ground.	24-655 RB
	14 th		Specialist training. Inspection, Route march Reinforcement & details inspected by C.O.	Football match 25-692 RB
	15 th		Specialist training. Inspection.	25-690 RB
	16 th		Morning devoted to salvage & cleaning up camp. Afternoon Full marching order parade. Football match 13 th v 20 th .	25-691 RB
	17 th		Marched to Warloy. 6 billets. Operation order no. 62.	25-691 RB
Warloy	18 th		Fodder lorry at disposal of Bn. all blankets cleaned. Afternoon full marching order inspection by C.O. 4 Reinforcement officers joined.	29-698 RB
	19 th		Specialist training. Half Holiday marches. 6 new courtesans granted.	Football 29-698 RB
	20 th		Two Bn church Parades.	Football match 29-699 RB
	21 st		Specialist training Battalion Route march. Football match.	29-705 RB
	22 nd		Baths at Contay. - Musketry 5-8 PM. Specialist training 110 men under the tent attend 5th Army musketry school.	29-701 RB
	23 rd		Musketry all day 30 yards range. Long range 5 PM 8 PM specialist training. Football	30-699 RB

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23rd Battr

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Warley	24 th		In the morning Battalion marched Hillcourt for Gas demonstration and instruction. Band gave programme at C.C.S. Yarems.	30-699. <i>BB</i>
	25 th		Teams shooting competition. Transport competition. 6 NCOs receive their commission. Parades.	36-693. <i>BB</i>
	26 th		Specialist training - Battalion parade on new parade ground. Battalion sports meeting. H.Q. team champions.	36-691. <i>BB</i>
	27 th		Double Battalion Church Parade. Football match.	36-690. <i>BB</i>
	28 th		Companies at specialist work during morning. Bn Parade at 11-11-30. Afternoon. Patrols & strong patrols. Band gave programme at Yarems C.C.S.	36-690. <i>BB</i>
	29 th		Companies at specialist work as per syllabus. AM. afternoon. scheme company in attack.	36-715. <i>BB</i>
	30 th		Tactical scheme (receiving bombers) in conjunction with Stokes Mortars. Brigade sports. 23rd wins the cup.	36-715. <i>BB</i>
	31 st		Specialist training and Musketry - 30 yards range.	36-712. <i>BB</i>

P. Brax Enor Lt-Col.
Comd 23rd Battr 6th Inf Bde

23rd Battalion, 6th Infantry Bde.PART TAKEN IN ATTACK ON HINDENBURG LINE ON 3rd May 1917.

The 23rd Battalion formed up by 3.30 a.m. on J.O. Tape in following formation :-
4 waves numbered 5 to 8.

5th wave "A" Company, under Capt. K.C.D. Dawson
6th " 2 platoons C Coy, left, 2 platoons B Coy., right, under Capt. J. Pascoe.
7th " 2 platoons C Coy. left, 2 platoons B Coy., right, under Capt. F.H. Dunn.
8th " "D" Coy. under Capt. P.G.R. Parkes.

At 3.45 a.m. ZERO the whole formation moved forward up to the barrage, and on 24th Battalion getting as close in to the barrage as possible, 23rd Bn. closed up on them to 10 pace distance between waves. Our leading wave rested on the wire, which was about 50 to 60 yards from the trench O.G.1. The wire was very well cut and offered no obstacle. O.G.1. was taken by 24th Bn. and we pushed forward through wire and O.G.1 and took shelter in shell holes between O.G.1 and O.G.2. At this stage the information that had been given to the men re their objectives, and the absolute knowledge they had of the waves to which they belonged proved of great value. Up to this time the casualties were slight. O.G.2 was then taken by 24th Bn., and at this stage the Officers and N.C.O's had a little difficulty in restraining the eagerness of the men to get forward. Up to this time the right flank had never been in touch with the 5th Brigade, although we had moved along the boundary laid down, but our liason Sgt. kept in touch, and the left flank of the 5th Brigade arrived at O.G.1., U.29.a.65.85. at about the same time as the 24th Battalion. When our 6th and 7th waves were leaving O.G.2 to move forward to the 2nd Objective it was noticed that the 5th Brigade were being bombed back to the road on our right flank, and a large number were observed retiring overland to sunken road. The 5th, 6th, and 7th wave advanced to the 2nd Objective, one wave (5th) of ours having combined with the 4th wave of 24th Bn., our 8th wave remaining about 50 yards in rear in shell holes in front of sunken road. Seeing the right flank was unprotected Capt. Parkes swung 8th wave along road from O.G.2 to 6 cross roads. At this period the 8th wave suffered severe casualties from Machine Guns from REINCOURT. At this period (about 8.30 a.m.) the ground between O.G.2 and 2nd objective was heavily shelled from the N.East and machine gun fire from about U.23.b.9.2 and U 23 d 7.4. Our line then ran from U 23 a 7.2 along ~~Tramway~~ Embankment through cross roads and along sunken road to O.G.2. with a bombing post under Lieut. A.C. Brewster at U 23 d 2.8, and a machine gun in position at U 23 d 15.75, playing on to Hun machine gun at U 23 d 70.35, and sap at U 24 c 1.4 which was being used for reinforcing by the Hun. At 8 45 a.m. the Huns counter attacked along sap running south through U 23 b & d and started to bomb the embankment from U 23 d 20.95. Our bombing post at U 23 d 2.8 opened fire with rifle grenades and checked the attack - we then established a block at U 23 d 2.8. At 8.15 a.m. Battalion H.Q. were established at U 29 a 80 55 and the line was then held as above. A number of the 5th Brigade were lined along the bank to O.G.1. Much movement was noticed along saps leading from REINCOURT to O.G.2, and Artillery was asked for to deal with same, also picks and shovels to establish strong points along road in front of O.G. 2. The barrage which had been down since 7 45 a.m. had been causing us many casualties as a lot of shells were dropping on our side of tramway, and by 11 a.m. the position had become untenable forcing us to withdraw to O.G.2 and leaving posts on road forward from O.G.2 to approximately to U 23 c 9.4. During this period our casualties were very heavy. There was much activity between our bombing posts and the Huns at the bombing posts in O.G. 1 and 2. At 12 noon the Huns counter-attacked along sap running south through U 23 d and along O.G.2 but it was driven off. The supply of bombs and grenades up to this time had been very satisfactory, and our men and the 5th Brigade had dug in a fair fire step along bank in U 29 a. By 12 noon the work of organizing the Battalion was well in hand and our disposition was 11 Officers and 103 O.R. in O.G.2 right flank with remainder of Bn. (approximately 40) in posts along bank in front of O.G.2, H.Qrs being in O.G.1 having shifted there from road at approximately 12 noon.

-2-

At about 12 noon the 28th Battalion started to arrive and filed into O.G.1 and 2 to left of sunken road preparatory to the right in O.G.1 and 2. This made right flank well manned for some time so we sent along parties in O.G.1 and 2 to assist 22nd Bn. and relieve their pressure.

At approximately 2 p.m. 28th Bn commenced bombing to right along O.G.1 and made very good progress, but they were unable to hold their position owing to shortage of bombs, and by 5 40 p.m. our right flank was again back on road. At 5 5 p.m. message received from Brigade to organize bombing parties to work through the 22nd Bn. to our left, 24th Bn. doing O.G.1, 23rd Bn. doing O.G.2. This was just being got in hand when the Bosche drove the 28th Bn. back on to our flank, and delayed matters as we had to assist on our right flank, and also the 28th Bn. took our supply of bombs which were coming forward. By 5 40 p.m. the position was normal on our right, and we proceeded to organize our attack to the left. If this was successful we were to be relieved. We were ready to proceed with attack at 6 p.m. but owing to lack of Stokes and Bombs the attack did not take place until 7 30 p.m. This attack had just started when it was stopped owing to number of bombs we had on hand being insufficient so posts were established under orders from Captain Parkes holding the advantage we had gained. Our heavies were playing on our objective throughout the night and later at 10 30 p.m. when Mr. Holland took his attack along O.G.2 to U 23 d 6.4 we suffered many casualties from same, and had to withdraw to U 23 c 1.4.

At 5 p.m. Captain Rossiter, 2nd Lieut. Smith and 2nd Lt. Summers reported at H.Qrs., 2nd Lt. Ethell having been wounded on way up.

At approximately 10 p.m. post on our right flank notified H.Qrs. that 28th Bn. were retiring down road. Major Brown was immediately sent for and stated he was acting under orders from his C.O. Captain Parkes ordered him to hold the position along the right flank from O.G.2 to rear and he stated that he would get his men there and not move without notifying us. Captain Parkes went to road and saw that it was manned. At 11.15 p.m. our post on right flank reported 7th Bde. and 5th Bde. had withdrawn. A patrol of one Officer and 2 O.R. were sent out immediately to get touch, at the same time 2 strong posts were placed at U 29 a 8.6 and U 29 a 8.7. The patrol returned stating that there were no 5th Bde. or 7th Bde. men or officers to be seen, thus leaving our right flank in the air. We sent runners to Bde. with this information immediately and made preparations to hold our flank. At 1 a.m. the 3rd Bn. commenced to arrive to relieve our line. Relief being complete by 3 30 a.m. While the Bn was moving out along sunken road the Hun counter attacked, and we manned the embankment, attack was beaten off and the Bn moved back to embankment, H.Qrs. following immediately after having been held up by attack.

Casualties

<u>Killed.</u>		<u>Wounded</u>	
O.	O.R.	O.	O.R.
2	37	12	227

Wounded & MissingMissing

<u>Wounded & Missing</u>		<u>Missing</u>	
O.	O.R.	O.	O.R.
	5		79

Details of Officers

Capt.	F.H. Dunn	Killed in action	3.5.17.
2nd Lt.	H.S. Kinsman	" "	"
"	W. Keays	Wounded	1.5.17.
Major	W.M. Trew	"	3.5.17.
2nd Lt.	R.G. Sterrett	"	"
Lieut.	S.J. Hodgson	"	"
"	H.A. Rattray	"	"
"	J.V. Roxburgh	"	"
"	W.J. Galbraith	"	"
"	T. McSwiney	"	"
2nd Lt.	S.M. Smith	"	"
"	J.O. Ethell	"	"
capt.	K.C.D. Dawson	"	4.5.17.
Lieut.	A.C. Brewster (remained on duty)	"	"
Capt.	J. Pascoe	evac. sick	"

8th May 1917.

1. The 6th Inf. Brigade will move to MAMETZ Bde. Camp tomorrow 9th inst. in the following order :-
 - 24th Bn.
 - 23rd Bn.
 - M.G. Coy.
 - T.M. Btry.
 - 22nd Bn.
 - 21st Bn.
 - Bde. H. Qrs.
2. Order of March.- The Battalion Order of March will be, Hqrs, "B" "C" "D" & "A" Companies.
"A" Coy. will supply Battalion rear guard of 1 Sgt. and 10 men to pick up stragglers. Rear Guard to move 50 yards in rear of "A" Coy. No man is to be allowed to fall out without receiving permission from an Officer on a chit.
Companies will be ready to move from their lines at 9 a.m..
3. Route. ALBERT Road to COURCELETTE - MARTINPUICH, along disused DECAUVILLE track to CONTALMAISON - FRICOURT - MAMETZ.
4. Dress. Fighting Order. Steel helmets. Overcoats to be rolled in waterproof sheets and worn on back.
5. Distances. The following distances will be maintained from on the march.-
 - 20 minutes between Battalions.
 - 100 yards between Companies.
6. Transport. Transport will move with Battalions as far as COURCELETTE, and then proceed via LA BOISELLE, CONTALMAISON, FRICOURT, MAMETZ.
7. Cookers. Cookers will be ready to pull out at 8.30 a.m., and will have everything ready to supply midday meal at MAMETZ.
8. Billeting Party. 1 N.C.O. from Headquarters and one per Company to report to Battalion Office at 7.45 a.m.
9. Valises and Blankets. Valises will be at Transport Lines at 8.15 a.m. All Blankets will be rolled in sections of 10 and be at Transport Lines at 8.15 a.m.
10. Horses. Officers Horses will be at Company Lines at 9 a.m.
11. Routine. Reveille 7 a.m. Breakfast 7.30 a.m.
Inspection of Lines, 8.30 a.m.
Move 9.15 a.m.
12. Certificate. Marching-out state and certificate re inspection of lines to reach Battalion Office at 8.45 a.m.

E. J. Poynter
Captain.
Adjutant, 23rd. Battalion.

8th. May 1917.

BATTALION OPERATION ORDER NO. 62.

Reference ALBERT Map 1/40,000

16th May 1917.

1. The 23rd Battalion will march to WARLOY area tomorrow 17th inst, via MEAULT - VILLE - BUIRE - LAVIEVILLE.
2. Order of March. The order of march will be :-
H.Qrs., Band, A. B. C. and D Coys, & Transport.
3. Coys. to be ready to move on to their Coy. markers in front of Camp at 8 a.m. One marker per Coy. and H Qrs. to report at Orderly Room at 7 50 a.m.
4. A halt for 1½ hours will be made when head of column reaches LAVIEVILLE. Halts from 15 minutes to clock hour will be made throughout the march.
5. Transport in rear of Battln. Cookers in rear of Coys.
6. The following distance will be maintained on the march :-
100 yards between Coys.
7. Routine. Reveille 5.30 a.m.
Breakfast 6 a.m.
8. Blankets to be in packs, which will be stacked by Coys. at head of "C" Coys. lines at 6 45 a.m. Officers valises to be at Q.M. Store at 3 45 a.m. Coy. mess boxes, and all other material for transport to be stacked at bottom end of D.Coy. lines. *by 6.45 AM.*
9. All huts to be left thoroughly clean.
10. 1 Platoon of B. Coy. under Lieut. Frost will remain behind when the Bn. moves out until lines are inspected by Major Wiltshire and cleanliness of lines certified.
11. Dress. Fighting Order as indicated to the Orderly Officer to-day. Overcoat to be rolled in waterproof sheet, and not worn unless ordered.
12. March Discipline. Strict attention is to be paid to march discipline. No men to be allowed to fall out unless written permission is given by an Officer.

W. Wiltshire Lieut.
A/Adjutant 23rd Battln.

Copy No. 1 File
2 War diary
3 to 7 O C's Coys
8 Q.M.