

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

Infantry

**Item number:** 23/43/4

**Title:** 26th Infantry Battalion

November 1915



AWM4-23/43/4

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118.

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or  
~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY~~

(Erase heading not required.)

26<sup>th</sup> Bn A.I.F.

3.1.19  
13

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Taylors Hollow.	1/11/15		"B" Coy &c. moved up to new position in firing line known as LOWER CHESHIRE RIDGE consisting of 7 officers and 185 others. No 2 Beach Party 94 men returned to Camp. 4 returned from Hoop. Received orders today that the Bn will not relieve the 28 <sup>th</sup> Bn as previously arranged but would be transferred to the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Aust. Div and relieve the 2 <sup>nd</sup> <sup>Aust</sup> Bn at COURTNEYS.	
"	2/11/15		4 men wounded at CHESHIRE RIDGE. Capt Bond & 6 men returned from Hoop. To Hoop sick 3 other ranks. I visited 2 <sup>nd</sup> Aust Div & received verbal instructions re transfer to that Div.	
"	3/11/15		1 man wounded, 6 men sick to Hoop, 13 men returned from Hoop. in Egypt and 21 from Field Hospitals. No 3 Beach Party 3 officers 98 others returned to Camp. A & B Coys returned from CHESHIRE RIDGE.	
"	4/11/15		8 men sick to Hoop. 1 returned from Hoop. Platoon 1 off & 31 attached to 13 <sup>th</sup> L. Horse returned to Camp. M. G. Sects. 1 off 66 others returned to Camp. 2 off & 123 others returned from Beach Party Nos 1 & 3.	
	3/11/15	7 pm	The Bn marched out of Camp and camped on BRIDGES ROAD.	Gen. A. Ferguson 2/10 26 <sup>th</sup> Bn

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26<sup>th</sup> Bn A.I.F.

(14)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Bridges Road	3/11/15		Col Burstin returned to duty today.	
"	4/11/15		(See page 13 for casualties.)	
"	"		At 0900 half of "A" Coy & half of "B" Coy marched to COURTNEYS POST and STEELS respectively & portion of men were placed on duty in the trenches with men of 21 <sup>st</sup> Bn 6 <sup>th</sup> Div Bde. At 1230 I received instructions that all arrangements for transfer to those positions had been cancelled. At 1400 I reported to Brig. Gen W. Holmes of 5 <sup>th</sup> Bde. He accompanied me to position known as RUSSELL'S TOP & showed me over. I received instructions to occupy that position. "A" & "B" Coys were withdrawn from COURTNEYS and STEELS & returned to camp at BRIDGES ROAD.	
"	5/11/15		6 men sick to Hosp. I returned from Hosp. Officers from all Coys with Adj & myself visited RUSSELL'S TOP held by 20 <sup>th</sup> Bn. In the afternoon "A" Coy moved to new position. Major O'Donnell ret from Hosp.	
"	6/11/15		1 sick man to Hosp. 6 men from Hosp. 8 men from LEMNOS. 1 man transferred to Indian Mule Corps. "B" Coy moved up to new position	

Gen A. Ferguson Lt Col

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26<sup>th</sup> Bn A.I.F.

15

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Bridges Road	6/11/15		at RUSSELL'S TOP. I visited & went round the posts. A number of men were sent up as Miners Pappers & fatigues to relieve men of the 18 <sup>th</sup> working there. The Bn still at Bridges Road.	
"	7/11/15		Parade State. 31 officers 858 other ranks. Wanting to complete 18136. Pioneers, Signallers and more men for fatigues moved up to Russell's Top. During the afternoon I moved up also. 5 sick to Hoop 5 returned from Hoop. M.G. Sect to Russell's Top. (At 1600 charge was blown in H1 tunnel)	
"	8/11/15		Stretcher Bearers and more fatigues sent to Russell's Top. Balance of Bn still camped on Bridges Road. 3 sick to Hoop. 1 from Hoop 1 man wounded to Hoop. (At 1130 another charge was blown in H1 tunnel forward).	
Russell's Top	9/11/15		Bal of Bn reported at Russell's Top today. Major Foster & 2 others went to Hoop. 4 others returned from Hoop. I took over command of Russell's Top about 1600 from Lt Col J. Lamrock 90 20 <sup>th</sup> Bn. and reported the fact to B.M. 5 <sup>th</sup> Inf Bde. During the evening Miners broke through to Enemy Tunnel in H3 Tunnel. Had to put up a barricade enemy firing through hole. Blow in H1 during afternoon and in H3 at 12255. Gen. A. Ferguson Lt Col.	

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26<sup>th</sup> Bn A.I.F.

16

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Russells Top	19/11/15		<p>Bombing was fairly lively between 1400 &amp; 1500 about 20 bombs being thrown from the crater. At 1455 Turks started a heavy bombardment of No 2 Outpost on our left about 110 shells being fired. From Hoop 3 other ranks. To Hoop. 1 wounded 6 sick. Snipers report 1 Turk killed. During the night of 10-11 we had a successful blow in Tunnel H3. It caused a subsidence of earth to a depth of about 6 ft. to the right of the Tunnel cause of same not definitely known. In the morning a Turkish rifle was seen stuck in the ground as far as the hilt of the bayonet. How it got there or why placed there is a mystery.</p>	
"	11/11/15		<p>It was recovered by Lt Bailey of the 20<sup>th</sup> Bn about 1230 on 11/11/15. It was only about 20 yds in front of our firing line. About 2100 Turks opened with M.G. and rifle fire for some minutes. Several stick bombs were received. Low level Tunnels L8 &amp; L11 were connected. 2 sick to Hoop. 5 Reinforcements from Egypt. 7 from Hoop.</p>	
	12/11/15.		<p>At 0645 a doz Bombs fell on position and 6 shells about 6" also. One did not explode. One man killed 4 wounded 3 sick to Hoop. Returned from Hoop 4. Snipers report 1 Turk killed Cust Ferguson Col</p>	

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26<sup>th</sup> Bn. A.I.F. (17)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Russells Top.	13/11/15.		In H1 Tunnel we are obstructed by the fall of earth from the blow. The enemy is guarding his tunnel & firing into the earth. Barricade has been erected and guard posted. In H3 we are still going forward. In H4 we are advancing in direction of Enemy trenches. Wounded 1 Sick 6 Returned from Hosp. 1. Snipers Killed 1 Turk. Lord Mitchener visited our Post today & went through the Trenches.	
"	14/11/15		Turk still firing at earth in Tunnel H1. Between 0830 & 0930 we bombed the Turks from our Crater on to their front trench, bomb crater and some wire entanglements. Sick 1 off 5 or. From Hosp 4. 2 Turks Killed	
"	15/11/15		The 26 <sup>th</sup> Bn was placed under the 4 <sup>th</sup> Bde again today, that Brigade now under Col Eaton having joined the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Aust Div & taken over the Russell Top command.	
"	16/11/15.		Twelve Sick Bombs landed on position early this morning some did not burst. Parade State 30 officers & 50; Wanted 2 off 144 o.r. Enemy artillery opened on us at 1240 & continued till 1330. Damage principally to a couple of rifles & parapets. Knocked down Lt. A. Ferguson Lt Col C/O 26 <sup>th</sup> Bn	

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26<sup>th</sup> Div A.I.F.

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Russells Top.	16/11/15		In H4 a new direction has been taken to the left. In H3 a bomb damaged the boarding at the mouth of the Crater last night. Between 1300 & 1315 8 shells were fired at Russells Top & later about 40 shells came along. One burst in the mouth of H1 Tunnel crater. All shells 175 rpm. At 1620 hostile aeroplane appeared in the North. 4 wounded and 4 sick to Hosp.	
"	17/11/15		In H4 Tunnel work proceeding steadily. In H3 an aperture was discovered just outside the opening leading into Turk Gallery. Work started on deepening the fire trench. Enemy Trenches appear to be occupied by fresh troops showing greater activity & accuracy in firing. Killed 1 o.r. Wounded 1 o.r. Sick 1 officer 9 o.r. Red Cross Hospital 5 o.r. Snipers report 1 killed.	
"	18/11/15		At 1435 today Enemy blew up a mine in our H4 Tunnel. Two of our men were killed and 2 <del>seriously</del> affected by fumes. Severely but were rescued. Officers and men worked heroically in the Tunnel. H returned from Hosp. 2 sick to Hosp. 1 killed G.S.W.	

C. A. Ferguson Lt Col





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26<sup>th</sup> Div

20

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Russell's Top.	20/1/15		Part of the trench in No 5 group No 1 Post fell in and filled up the trench. One man was killed. About 0900 6 or 7 shells fell on the position from an enemy 75 mpm. No damage beyond dislodging a bit of earth. At 1200 friendly aeroplane appeared. At 1615 a hostile plane appeared in the South. Our Machine gun fired at her but with no apparent effects. She dropped one bomb.	
	21/1/15		At 0900 we blew a charge of 500 lbs ammonal in L 5 Tunnel which must have considerably affected the Turks underground works. At 1610 a small charge was blown in A 4 Tunnel. The backs of the left arm were blown in but remainder of the Tunnel was intact. A 1 open still as far as our barricade but portion held by Turks has fallen in. At 0900 Enemy fired 6 or 7 H.E. shells no damage. At 1400 started again to put 25 shells into position. Portion of front parapet & Loophole knocked down & other earth dislodged. Casualties. Killed 2 wounded 3 sick 1 officer (Capt T. G. Hewitt) 2 others. Wounded 6 others.	
				Gen. A. Ferguson, Lt Col

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

26<sup>th</sup> Dec. A.I.F.

21

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Russell's Top	22/11/15		<p>In H4 the tunnel is blocked by the falling in of the backs in the left arm of the tunnel. In H3 there is no change. In H1 work has begun again and we are tunnelling out on the right with the intention of getting communication with the crater formed by the big blow in L5 and then taking possession of same.</p> <p>Turks 75 mps fired 4 shells at 1100 and 3 shells about 1310 at our position. No damage done. During last night the Turks rebuilt their bomb shelter in front of No 2 Post, of wire netting. It was somewhat destroyed during the day by bombs and rifle fire. During the day a slight open sap was made out from H1 in dead ground to the top of the soil thrown up by the big blow and in the evening a listening patrol was sent out &amp; lay all night, being relieved hourly. Nothing seen. The Turks were working in their trench just to our right of their new bomb crater. Casualties Sick to Corp. 10. Snipers Bay H.</p>	
			<p>Geo. A. Ferguson Lt Col.</p>	

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26<sup>th</sup> Div. A.I.C.

22

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Russell's Top	23/11/15		The men stationed out in the sap in front of A1 during the night heard Turks apparently in the new blow. They saw some crossing the sky line & fired at them. Bombs were also thrown into the depression and groans were heard afterwards. It accounted for 6 sick to hospital 1 wounded. 3 from Hoop.	
"	24/11/15		In A1 we have run out a tunnel to the right skirting the blow made in L5. In A3 & 4 the position is unchanged. Our Artillery 17 <sup>th</sup> Siege Battery fired a few shells at the Turkish trenches on the Nek with good effect this forenoon. The sniping from the Turkish trenches seems to be more constant in the early morning. Wounded 1 sick 6 from Hoop. 3 other ranks. A Policy of silence was ordered from 1800 today. No shooting and no showing of Periscopes unless absolutely necessary. At first the enemy was to be allowed to show himself but about 2100 instruction was received that no opportunity was to be missed of killing a Turk.  Gen. A. Ferguson Lt. Col.	

8-11  
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26<sup>th</sup> On A.I.F.

23

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Russell's Top	25/11/15.		<p>Period of silence still continues. Tunnel in H1 progressing, H3 no change. H4 some earth was blown in by enemy bomb. but is being cleared out. Enemy sent 4 shells about 1000 from 75 m/m. gun and 4 more about 1415. No serious damage. The enemy has sapped out from their trench towards the big blow crater and also about 10 feet to the right of H3. These two saps are apparently joined up by a trench running parallel to their fire trench. The Tanks are close to the lookout hole in H4. One was fired at about 2300. A bomb was shortly afterwards thrown down the hole &amp; blocked it up. Sick to Corp. 1 off (Major O'Donnell) &amp; others Returned 1 officer (Capt T Hewitt) 3 others. Snipers 5 killed</p>	
"	26/11/15		<p>Period of silence still continues. One man Pte Malcolm was killed by his own bomb. He held it too long.</p>	
"	27/11/15		<p>Period of silence ends tonight at midnight. It was thought the enemy might come to the conclusion that we were evacuating our trenches and charge them but he did not do so.</p>	

Geo. A. Ferguson Lt Col

3.14  
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26<sup>th</sup> Bn. A.I.F.

(24)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Russell's Top	27/11/15		<p>Tunnels H 3 &amp; H 4 no change. H 1 still going forward. Enemy artillery fired 26 shells between 1200 &amp; 1245. Four men were wounded and the parapet of the fire trench was knocked down. Between 1600 &amp; 1645 about 20 shells were received. Little damage was done. Five aeroplanes were observed 2 being hostile killed 1 wounded 4 sick 9 from stop. 1 sniper bag 5. A considerable amount of work has been done in the trenches. They have all been deepened and the sandbag parapets that were too high and conspicuous have been taken down. Provision made for bomb places &amp; ammunition in the fire &amp; support trenches and a little overhead cover has been provided.</p>	
"	28/11/15		<p>A bitterly cold morning there being a heavy fall of snow during the night. The men in the trenches felt it very much. The trenches become very muddy when wet being of clay soil. Tunnels H 3 &amp; 4 the same H 1 progressing slowly owing to the necessity of timbering through the loose earth. Two new tunnels</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Geo. H. Ferguson Lt Col</p>	

21/15

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26th Div A.I.F.

25

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Russell's Top	28/1/15		<p>have been started off the main gallery on the left and will be named #5 and #6. During the night 27-28 our troops stood to from 2330 for sometime as it was reported that the enemy was filling his trenches with troops &amp; so an attack was anticipated. Enemy is providing strong overhead protection in his forward position. Killed 2. Wounded 1. Sick to Corp. 2. Snipers report 3 Turks.</p>	
"	29/1/15		<p>In Tunnels #1, 5 &amp; 6 work is progressing. #3 the Turks damaged the wooden opening of our bomb crater. #4 no change. The enemy showed a red flag on each flank of his most forward position this morning evidently to guide his artillery which opened during the morning killing 3 and wounding 2 men. Snow is still on the ground and the weather is cold. The men from Queensland are not used to such weather &amp; it is seriously affecting them. Sick to Corp 7. Snipers report 3.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Genl J. Ferguson Lt Col</p>	

3.14  
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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

26th Bn. A.I.F.

26

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Russells Top	30/11/15.		<p>Work is steadily progressing in Tunnel H1. In H3 &amp; H4 the position is still the same. H3 is being repaired where damaged by shell fire yesterday. Major H. Foster second in command and Major F.M. O'Donnell of A Coy were evacuated today. Major P. Currie was appointed 2<sup>nd</sup> in Command &amp; Capt H. Grant having reported back for duty with the Bn was appointed ofc 'B' Coy &amp; Command No 2 Post.</p> <p>From 0600 on 19/11/15 the front of this position was subdivided into 3 Posts instead of 2 as formerly held. No 1 extends from the Southern Boundary Stinton's Post along Cully Reef Sap &amp; firing line to &amp; including the Question Mark; No 2 Post from the Question Mark to the entrance to Tunnel H3 including Tunnel H3 and all low level Tunnels. No 3 Post from entrance to Tunnel H3 to Turks Head including Sap O and the Secret Sap. (Bn R.O. No 4<sup>a</sup> x 5<sup>a</sup>).</p> <p>'D' Coy under Major D.M. Davis holds No 1 Post. 'B' Coy under Major P. Currie No 2 Post &amp; 'A' Coy under Major F.M. O'Donnell No 3 Post.</p> <p>Geo H. Ferguson Lt Col</p>	

21/15

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26th Div A.I.F.

27

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices																								
Russell Top	30/11/15		Parade Site. <table style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr> <td>Officers.</td> <td>26.</td> <td>Others.</td> <td>721</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Present.</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Detached.</td> <td>1-</td> <td></td> <td>9</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>27</td> <td>730</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wanted to complete</td> <td>5.</td> <td></td> <td>264</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td><u>32</u></td> <td><u>994</u></td> </tr> </table>	Officers.	26.	Others.	721	Present.				Detached.	1-		9			27	730	Wanted to complete	5.		264			<u>32</u>	<u>994</u>	
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