

AWM4
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1914-18 War

Infantry

Item number: 23/43/41

Title: 26th Infantry Battalion

December 1918



AWM4-23/43/41

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Australian Imperial Force.

WAR DIARY

OF

26th Battalion

FOR

December 1918

Signature of Officer compiling

G. A. Thelander Lt.

Signature of Officer Commanding

W. M. Davis Lt Col
CO. 26th AIF

Monthly Summary

From 1st to 16th Dec
the Pbn was at GRAND
FAYT. Here we were all
Very comfortable.
Athletic training
was carried out daily
all ranks exhibiting
the greatest keenness.
Hockey especially becoming
very popular.

A good deal of Battalion
and ceremonial drill
was done with
magnificent results.

The men went into
this work whole heartedly
and by the 16th they
were really excellent.

Educational training
went along with a
swing. all classes
keeping up to strength.

The greatest interest
and keenness is
exhibited by the men
in this regard as

they readily realize
its value.

16th to 20th Dec we marched
to MARCHIENNE AU PONT.
and although the weather
was wet and particularly
cold the march was
well carried out. The
Divisional commander
saw us twice on the
road and gave us a
very good report each
time.

The inhabitants of
MARCHIENNE AU PONT. turned
out "en masse" to welcome
us and have never tried
of showing us kindnesses
since. All ranks now
have the most comfortable
quarters we have had
during the war.

The first couple of
days here the inhabitants
pulled to pieces the shops
of a few people who
had profited by the
German occupation.

The first night the soldiers

remained as interested
spectators only and then
we organised Picquets
and completely quelled the
disturbance after the first
~~night~~ second night.

Here we have been
doing principally
recreational gymnastic
and educational training
and finding numerous
guards for abandoned
and ceded German
material.

The men of the battalion
are now having a
more free and easy
time than at any
other period of the war
but their behaviour is
magnificent.

Throughout the time
we have been here
including Xmas week
I have not had one
case for disciplinary
action. This alone
speaks volumes.

6/1/49.

W. M. Davis
Sgt
Co. 26 Bn 4th

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118.

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
GRAND-FAYT.	1-12-18		<p>The day was cold but fine and bright H.M. the KING accompanied by the PRINCE of WALES and PRINCE ALBERT inspected the Brigade in a field off the road between MARBAIX and MAROILLES. The turnout of the Battalion was smart and neat and afforded the KING great satisfaction. His MAJESTY made a minute inspection of the whole parade and both he and the PRINCE of WALES spoke to many of the soldiers. After the inspection the C.O.s were presented to the KING.</p>	gat
GRAND-FAYT.	2-12-18 to 16-12-18		<p>The weather during this period was generally dull and wet with a few sunny days interspersed. Training was carried out as per syllabus attached and the Battalion drill of the platoon which had hitherto been difficult to practise has now reached a high state of perfection. Afternoons were spent in inter-company football and hockey matches. The keenness displayed by the troops in these sports has been very marked and as a result we have three representatives in the Divisional Rugby team as well as Coy and Bn teams prepared to meet anyone in Hockey and Football matches.</p>	gat

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
GRAND-FAYT	17.12.18		<p>On this day the Battalion commenced its journey with the rest of the Brigade to the CHARLEROI area. The weather was dull but not very wet. The first days march was from GRAND FAYT to BEAUFORT a distance of about fourteen miles. The Battalion band played throughout the march. Lunch was provided by the Cookers "en route" and the Bn arrived at BEAUFORT at three pm and was billeted for the night. The Div Commander inspected the Battalion as it marched through CARTIGNIES.</p>	<p>app 1 <u>eat</u></p>
BEAUFORT	18.12.18		<p>Completed the second stage of the march in very cold wet weather the march was from BEAUFORT to BERSILLIES L'ABBAYE about nine miles. The march was completed in the morning so that lunch was provided at BERSILLIES where the Battalion billeted for the night.</p>	<p>app 2 <u>eat</u></p>
BERSILLIES L'ABBAYE.	19.12.18		<p>Completed the 3rd stage from BERSILLIES to THUIN a distance of nine miles. The day was wet and bitterly cold the rain being interspersed at times with sleet. The march was completed by 1 pm.</p>	<p>app 3</p>

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THUIN.	20.12.18		<p>and the Bn billeted in THUIN for the night. The Div Commander inspected the Bn on the road.</p> <p>Completed the final stage of the march arriving in MARCHIENNE-AU-POINT at 1.30 pm. The day had been wet in the morning, but by midday the rain had ceased. The battalion made its entry with colours flying and the band playing and was enthusiastically received by the local residents.</p>	<p>gat</p> <p>app 4</p> <p>gat</p>
MARCHIENNE-AU-POINT	20.12.18		<p>Their enthusiasm found outlet later in the evening in a gigantic raid on all the premises shops and houses in the town. During these raids the men of the Bn behaved in an exemplary manner and it is primarily due to them and to the action taken by the Bn that serious rioting was prevented.</p>	

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
MARCHIENNE AU PONT.	21 12 18.		The anti german feeling of the populace again found expression in raids on some outlying farms but the despatch of a mounted picket from the transport of the Bn prevented further development.	gat
MARCHIENNE AU PONT.	22 12 18	23 12 18	On Sunday the 22nd the Bn accorded a military funeral to a Belgian soldier who died from influenza while in MARCHIENNE-AU-PONT.	gat
MARCHIENNE AU PONT.	24 12 18		The weather during these two days was wet and cold. The Prince of Wales inspected the Bde and presented decorations to the following men in this Bn. Sgt Ham DCM Cpl Ramsden MM. Pte Ferguson MM. Cpl Cpl Mackay MM. Cpl Valentine MM. Ptes Davies MM.	gat

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
MARCHIENNE AU PONT.	25-12-18		<p>After the ceremony a number of Officers of the Bn were presented to His Royal Highness. The weather during this period was dull and wet. The men have established themselves in their new quarters and have formed many close friendships with the inhabitants. The Battalion Band has given daily concerts in various parts of the town for the amusement of civilians and soldiers alike.</p>	
MARCHIENNE AU PONT.	30-12-18		<p>The last day of the year was the occasion of much festivity on the part of the civilians. The celebrations continued throughout the night ably assisted by the soldiers.</p>	SAT

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
<p>MARCHIENNE AV PONT</p>			<p>Our present billeting area is without doubt the most pleasant and satisfactory that we have ever had. The men of the Battalion have firmly established themselves in the hearts of the Belgians and have in turn acquired a warm liking for them. There is hardly a soldier who has not all his spare time occupied in being entertained by his numerous civilian friends.</p> <p>The Battalion has seized every opportunity of showing kindness to and doing favours for the inhabitants and the effect of this can be imagined when it is compared with the attitude of the Germans during the last four years.</p> <p>We were surprised at first to find the number of Belgians who could speak English. This was explained when we discovered that they had studied English in secret during the German Occupation in order to welcome</p>	<p>201</p>

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
<p>MARCHIENNE AU POINT</p>			<p>us in our own language in the time of their liberation of which they never despaired. The effect of this close fraternisation has been beneficial to both sides. The good-humoured common-sensed and highly-disciplined Australian soldiers have had a restraining influence on the excitable Belgians and have by sheer personality prevented them from their anti-German demonstrations from degenerating into a mob of anarchists. For the other side the Belgians by adopting the soldiers into their own families have helped them to cast off the rough exterior which is the invariable result of a campaigner's life and to assume once more the finer garments of citizenship. Since our arrival in MARCHIENNE the work of Education has gone ahead rapidly.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>301</p>

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
<p>MARCHIENNE AV. PONT.</p>			<p>Excellent accomodation has been secured and classes have been formed in all branches of Mathematics Book-keeping Shorthand Woodclassing French German Latin Greek and English literature.</p> <p>These classes have been found particularly useful by those who wish to resume their education after demobilisation.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Wm Davis Steel</p>	<p>301</p>

WAR DIARY
OF

26th Battalion
FOR.

December 1918

LIST OF APPENDICES

No.	Subject
1	Movement Order No 75.
2	Do (Continuation)
3	Do (Continuation)
4	Do (Continuation)
5	Transport Officer's Report.
6	Quartermaster's Report.

W.M. Davis
Lieut

MOVE ORDER No. 75.

16th December 1918.

Reference Map :- VALENCIENNES 1/100000.
 NAMIN 1/100000.

1. The 7th A.I. Brigade Group will proceed by route march to MARCENELLE Area, commencing on the 17th instant, to be completed on the 20th instant.
2. First days march will be to BEAUFORT.
3. Starting point will be Church in Grand Fayt. Head of column to pass starting point at 0720.
4. Order of march will be:-
 Headquarters, "A", "B", "C", "D", Companies, Transport.
5. Following distances will be maintained between Units until 0950 halt. Between Battalions 50 yards. Between Companies and Transport, 10 yards.
 On commencement of march at 1000, the following distances will be maintained. Between Battalions, 200 yards. Between Companies, 100 yards. Between Units and their Transport, 100 yards. Between every section of 12 vehicles, 100 yards.
6. Halts will be at 10 minutes to the clock hour, and from 1050 to 1200 for lunch.
7. O.C. "A" Company will detail one platoon to march in rear of Brigade Group to act as rear party. One Medical Officer and three horse ambulances will accompany the rear party.
8. Blankets rolled in bundles of 10 and marked; Officers Kits, Mess gear and Band gear will be at Q.M. Store at 0615 sharp.
9. The greatest care must be exercised during the march to see that only water which has been tested and marked fit for drinking is used. Water for drinking and cooking must be chlorinated.
10. During the march forward Traffic Regulations must be strictly adhered to.
11. The Battalion will march three abreast during the whole of the march.
12. Watches will be synchronised at 0600 each day at Battalion Headquarters.
13. ACKNOWLEDGE.

(sgd) S.K. HOCKINGS.
 Capt. & Actg; Adjutant.

Issued by Runner at 1715.

Copies to:-

- | | |
|--------|--------------|
| No. 1; | "A" Company. |
| 2. | "B" " |
| 3. | "C" " |
| 4. | "D" " |
| 5. | H.Q. " |
| 6. | T.O. & Q.M. |
| 7-9. | War Diary. |
| 10. | Spare. |
| 11. | " |

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26TH BATTALION A.I.F.

17th December 1918.

CONTINUATION ORDER No. 75.

Reference Map;- VALENCIENNES 1/100000.
NAMUR. 1/100000.

1. 7th A.I. Brigade Group will continue its march to MARCINELLE Area, tomorrow, the 18th instant.
2. Second days march will be to BERSILLIES-L'ABBAYE .
3. Starting point will be the Church at BEAUFORT. Head of column to pass starting point at 0830.
4. Order of march will be;-
H. Qrs. "A", "B", "C", "D", Companies, Transport.
5. Distances will be maintained as per Order No. 75.

Between Battalions	200 yards.
Between Companies	100 yards.
Between Units and their Transport	100 yards.
Between every section of 12 vehicles.	100 yards.
6. O.C. "B" Company will detail one platoon to act as rear party for the Brigade, and will report to the Adjutant at starting point.
7. Watches will be synchronised at 0600 at Battalion Headquarters.
8. One G.S. Wagon will report to 0700 to each Coy., including H.Q. Coy., for purpose of carrying blankets, Officers valises and Mess gear. No other transport will be available and these wagons will be loaded ready to move off at 0800.
9. Packs of sick men will be carried on Coy. G.S. wagons.

(sgd) S.K. HOCKINGS,

Capt. & Actg. Adjutant.

Distribution
as per Order No. 75.

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26TH BATTALION A.I.F.

18th December 1918.

CONTINUATION ORDER No. 75.

1. The 7th Brigade A.I. Group will continue its march to the MARCINELLE Area tomorrow; 19th instant.
2. Third days march will be to THUIN.
3. Starting point will be Church BERSILLIES-L'ABBAYE. Head of column to pass starting point at 0835.
4. Order of march will be H.Qrs., "A", "B", "C", "D", Transport.
5. Distances will be maintained as per Order No. 75(continuation).
6. O.C. "C" Company will detail a rear party of one platoon to report ~~at~~ starting point ~~to~~ Adjutant.
7. Coy. G.S. wagons will report to Coys: at 0700 and will be loaded ready to move at 0800.

(sgd) S.K. HOCKINGS.
Capt. & Actg. Adjutant.

Distribution.
As per Order No. 75.

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26TH BATTALION A.I.F.

19th December 1918.

CONTINUATION ORDER No. 75.

Reference Map;- NAMUR 1/100000.

1. The 7th A.I. Brigade Group will finish its march to the MARCINELLE area tomorrow, 20th instant.
2. The destination of 26th Battalion is;-
MARCHIENNE-AU-PONT.
3. STARTING POINT WILL BE on THUIN-GOZEE ROAD, 100 yards the side of road junction SH. of N. in THUIN, near "C" Company's last billet. Head of column will pass starting point at 0910.
4. Order of march will be;-
H.Qrs., "A", "B", "C", "D", Transport.
5. Distances will be maintained as per continuation order No. 75.
6. O.C. "D" Company will detail one platoon to act as rear party, to report to Adjutant at starting point.

(sgt) S.K. HOCKINGS.
Capt. & Actg. Adjutant.

WAR DIARY

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
LE-GRAND FAYT.	1-12-18		Transport Sections arrived at LE-GRAND-FAYT. (FRANCE) after travelling by road for three days. The horses and men had good stabling and Billets en fonte plenty of extra feed was obtainable at all the villages we passed through for the Horses which the Boche had harvested and could not take away with him owing to his sudden flight.	
	2-12-18 to 16-12-18		In addition to the usual daily routine work G.S. lumbered Waggon were detailed daily to carry coal for the Civilians. The Boche had commandeered all the horses and vehicles belonging to them.	
LE-GRAND FAYT	17-12-18		Transport Section moves from LE-GRAND-FAYT to MARCHIEMNE-AU PONT. by road. Scattered stables and billets were obtained en route as the villages were densely populated no extra food was available for Horses.	
MARCHIENNES Au PONT.	20-12-18		Transport Sections arrives at MARCHIENNES-AU-PONT on the 20. 12. 18. The weather was very unsettled rain falling for the best part of four days.	RMS

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MARCHIENNE AU PONT	21. 12 18		horses and men arrived looking well Usual daily routine work. Horses have excellent stables and the men are in good billets most of them are provided with beds by the civilians they are treating them more as guests than soldiers billeted with them	
MARCHIENNE AU PONT.	22-12-18 To 31-12-18		Usual daily routine work re-painting vehicles and general polishing up of harness etc.	

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
<p>GRAND FAYT.</p>			<p>This department shows very little variation from November. Throughout the A.A.S.C supplies have been well maintained though the delivery has been somewhat irregular due probably to the congested state of the railway traffic however delivery has always been made sufficiently early to allow of rations being issued to the men before they were actually overdue. During the middle of the month ^{the fresh meat} fell somewhat short of the authorised scale but latterly a great improvement has been shown and the month's average equals the 800 per man allowance. For several days fresh vegetables have been scarce but an equal improvement is expected by the S.S.O. The bread ration has been very good throughout the month. In all other respects rations have been normal. From the 2nd Aus. Div Comforts Fund one parcel per man was drawn and issued as an Xmas gift.</p>	

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<p>MARCHIENNE AU PONT.</p>			<p>In addition through the same source were drawn one and a half bags of sugar ninety tins of milk and a quantity of custard powder; from the 26th Bn comforts eleven cases of assorted goods; from the Central Queensland Patriotic League through 7th Bde seven footballs forty cardigan jackets of number of singlets and eighteen frogs.</p> <p>The demands on A.A.O.C. have been light due to two causes. First the ending of hostilities secondly the rationing of clothes. With the exception of four revolvers no war-like stores have been received or demanded. Indents accepted for clothing have been readily satisfied and the Bn after starting the month with a deficit commences the new month with a small credit in almost all rationed articles.</p>	<p>9 A</p> <p>Alm</p>

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<p>MARCHIENNE Av. PONT.</p>			<p>Small detailed ordnance come to hand slowly probably due to the change of Base from Stave to Calais. A number of mobilization stores have been withdrawn including rapping hooks, folding shavers hand cuffs binoculars crowbars and fifty flags flappers. None of these articles were ever found useful therefore their withdrawal is a distinct gain to the unit as it tends to ease transport difficulty which has always been acute. Salvage operations have almost ceased but small quantities of paper and cardboard are still being returned to Base. All dripping is now being consumed by the Bn. The Margarine allowance being only one ounce per man dripping now largely takes its place.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Wm Davis 2nd Lt Col CO. 26 Bn A.I.F.</p>	<p>ACM</p>