

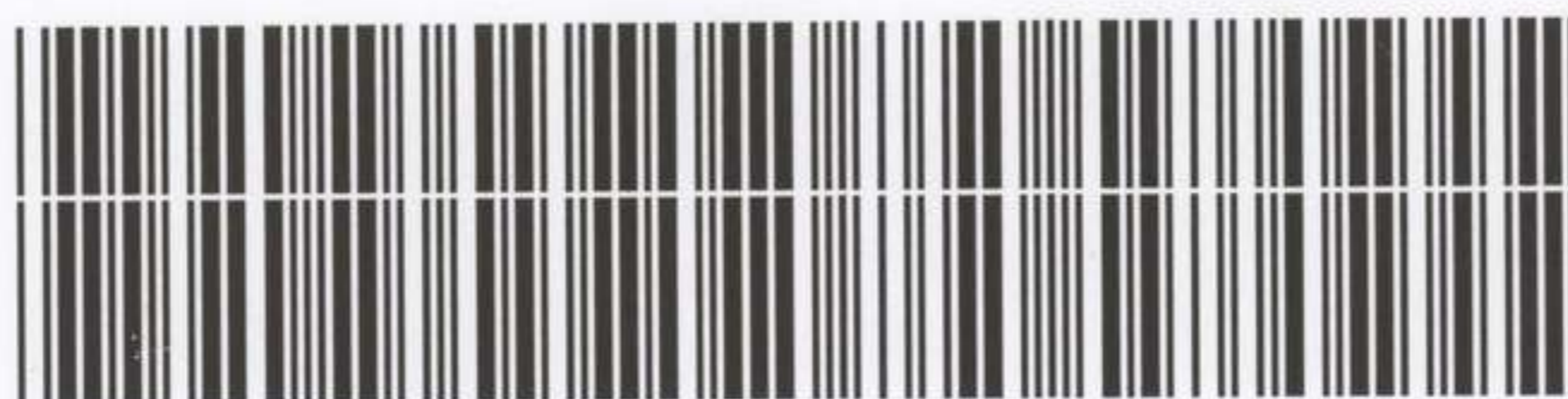
**AWM4**  
**Australian Imperial Force unit war diaries,**  
**1914-18 War**

Infantry

**Item number:** 23/34/21

**Title:** 17th Infantry Battalion

April 1917



AWM4-23/34/21

APRIL  
MAY

17<sup>th</sup> Bn

44

Date.	Place and Time.		Remarks or References to Appendices, &c., attached.
1917			
Ensomit April 12	Ensomit	Left FRICOORT camp at 9 A.M. & marched to PEVRIEUX arriving there at 5.30 P.M.	)
13/12	11 AM	Relieved 16 <sup>th</sup> Battalion in line in front of NOREUIL. Relief completed by 11.2 AM 14 <sup>th</sup>	
15	5.30 AM	Germans attacked & broke through 12 <sup>th</sup> Battalion on our right at 4.55 A.M. This left our right flank in the air. We were forced to retire to our outpost line with right Coy under Lieut W.H.S. Sheppard at 5.20 A.M. By this time the enemy were well in the rear of our right & were almost down to NOREUIL.	

45

Date.	Place and Time.		Remarks or References to Appendices, &c., attached.
1917			
Apr 15	6 AM.	<p>We counter attacked at 6 AM in conjunction with 19<sup>th</sup> &amp; 20<sup>th</sup> Battalions &amp; by 8 AM had regained all lost ground.</p>	
		<p>We captured two machine guns and</p>	
		<p>54 prisoners. There were some hundreds of dead in front of our positions.</p>	
		<p>Our casualties were 5 officers wounded</p>	
		<p>43 O.R. killed</p>	
		<p>82 " wounded</p>	
		<p>51 " missing</p>	
		<p>Officers wounded: Lieut H. Ellis, Lieut R.W. Shield, Lieut</p>	
		<p>F.W.S. Smith, Lieut B. Bradford &amp; 2nd Lieut R.W. Phelps.</p>	
		<p>Lieut J. Ellis died of wounds.</p>	
16			
17/18		<p>18<sup>th</sup> Battalion relieved our D Coy on the left</p>	

C.11056.

46

Date.	Place and Time.		Remarks or References to Appendices, &c., attached.
1917			
April 17 <sup>th</sup>		we moved round & took over one company front from 8 <sup>th</sup> Battalion	
		Relief completed by 2.15 AM 18 <sup>th</sup>	
18	PM 11.15	Were relieved by 18 <sup>th</sup> Battalion & marched to VAUX.	
23		Were relieved by 2nd Battalion for the day to allow us to practice our attack scheme. We took over from them again at 6 P.M.	
24	AM 9.15	18 <sup>th</sup> Battalion relieved us and we took over portions of Corps Main Line in front of BEUGNATRE.	

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Date.	Place and Time.			Remarks or References to Appendices, &c., attached.
1917 Apr 24th	Vaulx	9 15 AM	Were relieved by 18 <sup>th</sup> Battalion & moved back to Corps main line.	
29			<p>Were relieved by 1st Battalion &amp; moved back to tented camp near BIEFVILLERS</p> <p>Honors &amp; awards</p> <p>No 2044 Pte MARS DEN J. MM</p> <p>No 276 Sgt M<sup>c</sup>DONALD P do</p> <p>No 603 • LITTLE R P do</p> <p>Lieut L Sgt Allen }          Dra. A.S. Sng. } Military Cross</p>	

C.11056.



9. (2) The 5th A.M.G. Coy. will place 3 guns each at the disposal of Battalion Commanders for consolidation of gains, and will hold remainder in reserve at the Railway Cutting.
10. Two mortars, 5th L.T.M. Bty. will accompany each of the right and left halves of the 4th wave in the 3rd line as far as the sunken road in U.23.d. and U.24.c. where they will be at the call of Battalions to deal with any strong points in REINCOURT or vicinity. 20th and 17th Battalions will each provide carrying parties for ammunition at the rate of 18 per gun.  
Smoke mortars for discharge of smoke, will be established at C.5.c.0.4. for use if necessary.
11. Zero minus 15 minutes.  
All units to be in position formed up as in para.6 (a) with front wave on jumping-off line.  
~~Zero minus 15 minutes.~~  
The whole begins to move forward, waves maintaining their relative positions, 1st wave lying down when close up to the barrage.  
~~Zero~~  
Barrage begins to lift, and 1st wave moves forward with it, other waves conforming.  
Zero plus 6.  
Barrage is clear of wire, and 1st wave passes through, getting into position to rush trench.  
Zero plus 16.  
Barrage lifts from enemy first line, and first wave rushes and captures it, and mops up; successive waves follow, jumping over trench, and 2nd wave creeping up close under barrage.  
Zero plus 33.  
Barrage lifts, and 2nd wave rushes enemy support line, captures it, and commences mopping up.  
The 3rd wave, followed by the 4th wave, pass 2nd wave, and creep up under barrage.  
Zero plus 1 1/4 hour 40 minutes.  
Barrage lifts from second objective, and the 3rd wave rushes, captures, and mops up.  
The 4th wave moving on under barrage to line U.23.d.9.6. to U.23.b.3.5.  
The 5th wave (that is, the 1st wave of the 18th Battalion) will pass through them, followed in succession by the 6th, 7th, and 8th waves. As soon as these have passed, they will swing back their right flank, and join up with 3rd wave; also, if not already in touch with the 6th Brigade on the left, will bring back that flank slightly to prevent enemy getting behind them.  
The position at this stage will be:-  
1st wave consolidating enemy front trench.  
2nd wave consolidating enemy support trench.  
3rd wave consolidating sunken road in 23.d.  
4th wave consolidating on line U.23.d.9.6. to U.23.b.3.5.  
When the 18th and 20th Battalions have gained their objectives, and commenced consolidating, the 1st wave will occupy the communication trenches as follows:-  
"A" Coy. from U.29.b.6.6. to U.23.d.6.0.  
taking over any strong points.  
"B" Coy. from U.29.b.3.7. to U.23.d.3.0.  
The 2nd wave will act likewise:-  
"A" Coy. extending from U.23.d.6.0. North to sunken road, connecting with 3rd wave, and "B" Coy. occupying the C.T. running North from U.23.d.1.1/2. to sunken road.  
The 3rd wave will remain in sunken road.  
The 4th wave remains where they are, throwing back their right to connect with 3rd wave at U.23.d.7.4.
12. The Contact Patrol Aeroplane will be over at the following times:-  
1. Zero plus 1 hour.  
2. Zero plus 2 hours.  
3. Zero plus 3 hours.  
Front line infantry will mark their position by lighting RED ground flares at these times, if a contact plane is in sight, and at other times, when called for by Klaxon Horn or by light. 200 red ground flares per Battalion will be issued.
13. All companies taking part will synchronise watches with Brigade Sig. Sect at 12.45 p.m. and 5.45 p.m. on day previous to the attack.

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Word

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- 14. (a) The following signals will be used to indicate success:-
    - 1st Trench, 2 red flares fired simultaneously, at intervals of 10 seconds.
    - 2nd Trench, 3 red flares in quick succession.
    - 2nd Objective, 1 red and 2 white alternately in quick succession.

All signals to be fired in a Westerly direction.

  - (b) Bombing squads will be provided with small yellow and black flags to indicate their position when bombing along a trench; these flags are to be waved for this purpose.
15. Dress. Fighting Order with greatcoat rolled on the back, sheepskin vest or cardigan jacket to be worn. Officers dress similar to men, and carry a rifle.
 

Equipment. Fighting Order, 2 bandoliers in addition to 120 rounds S.A.A. 6 Mills bombs, 4 sandbags, 48 hours rations, and full water bottles. 4 "P" bombs will be carried per platoon by moppers up. Every 4th man carries a ground flare. Every Officer carries a "Very" pistol on lanyard, with 1 set S.O.S. 2 picks and 5 shovels to accompany 3rd line of each wave.
16. Wire cutters and mats will be carried by the 1st, 2nd and 4th waves. Mats will be drawn from Forward Battle Dump (C.10.c.7.7.) at the rate of 20 for each 1st and 2nd wave, and 5 for the 4th wave.
17. Eight men per platoon will be detailed as carriers. These will be the 3rd line in each wave, and assist in mopping up. A reserve of 50 men will be detailed as a Brigade Carrying Party under lieut. T.L. Adam
  - 1 N.C.O. and 12 men from "A" Coy.
  - 1 N.C.O. and 12 men from "B" Coy.
  - ~~1 N.C.O. and 12 men from "C" Coy.~~
  - 1 N.C.O. and 12 men from "D" Coy.

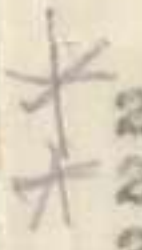
and will report to Brigade Dumps Officer at the Forward Battle Dump.
18. (a) Brigade Dumps are situated as follows:-
  - Forward Battle Dump, C.10/c.7.7. Lieut. Graham in charge.
  - Rear Battle Dump, C.5. Central, Capt. Christie in charge.- (b) In addition to the 6 bombs carried on the man, Battalions will take forward 100 buckets of Mills Bombs, leaving the remainder of their buckets at the Forward Battle Dump.
- (c) In addition to the 20 grenades per platoon now in possession of rifle grenadiers, each platoon will carry forward 1 box No. 23 grenades.
- (d) On capturing an objective, bombs and rifle grenades will be collected in sandbags, and dumped where likely to be required.
19. Regimental Aid Post will be established in sunken road running East and West in C.5.b.
20. Communications will be maintained as far as possible by telephone. 2 wires per Battalion will be run forward to keep touch with the front line.
 

A central visual station <sup>G.K.V.</sup> ~~C.5.b.~~ will be established at C.9.d.5.9. to receive messages from any new positions.

Brigade Signalling Officer will arrange to make known its exact locality. Each message to this station must be sent once in its entirety, and then twice again.

Pigeons will be allotted by Brigade Signalling Officer. The procedure laid down in S.S.135. regarding communications with aircraft will be followed.
21. All prisoners of war to <sup>Battery</sup> Brigade Headquarters. Escorts not to exceed 10%.
22. Advanced Battalion Headquarters will be at Railway Cutting C.5. ~~C.5.d.~~
23. A counter attack; possibly several are sure to follow our occupation of enemy line, therefore all ranks are called upon to meet it with the utmost determination and coolness, and use all means in their power to utterly smash it. The next best friend an infantry soldier has besides his rifle, is a spade, and it behoves him to use it as soon as he gains any enemy trench.
24. All ranks are reminded of the great difficulty of getting forward water and rations, and every care must be taken to see that water bottles are filled before leaving camp, and that they are ~~xxx~~ used most sparingly, as relief may not be possible the night following the attack, and carrying parties may have great trouble in getting water up to the front line.
25. All wounded are to be left to the stretcher bearers until all the objectives have been gained, and danger from counter attack passed, then extra men may be told off by Companies, to assist in removal of same.

*Pistol Flares*



(4).

- 25. Also parties will be told off to bury those killed, after collecting all papers, discs, etc.
- 26. Officers are reminded that all maps and papers likely to be of use to the enemy are to be left behind.
- 27. Reports are to be sent in promptly, and in case of "Nothing to Report" a "Nil" report will be sent in at least once an hour, such as "nothing to report; all quiet".

*J. J. Raine*

Captain.

Adjutant 17th Battalion A. I. F.

COPIES: -

- 1. File.
- 2. CO.
- 3. War Diary.
- 4/6. "A" Coy.
- 7/9. "B" Coy.
- 10/12. "C" Coy.
- 13/15. "D" Coy.
- 16. 18th Battalion.
- 17. 5th A. M. G. Coy.
- 18. 5th A. L. T. M. Bty.
- 19. 6th A. I. Brigade.
- 20/21. Spare.

APPENDIX