

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

Infantry

**Item number:** 23/29/24

**Title:** 12th Infantry Battalion

February 1917



AWM4-23/29/24



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.

12<sup>th</sup> Battalion  
3<sup>rd</sup> Inf. Bde  
A.I.F.

WAR DIARY  
or  
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

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648.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
				<b>VOLUME XII</b>
1917.				
Feb'y.				
1.			2 <sup>nd</sup> officer + 100 OR detached for duty at CLARKE'S DUMP, HIGHWOOD under LT. DENTON, 7 <sup>th</sup> DUMP.	<u>C.M.</u>
2.			Strength. 43 officers 893 OR.	<u>C.M.</u>
5.			Major R.A. RAFFERTY returned to Batten for duty from 10 <sup>th</sup> Bn.	<u>C.M.</u>
6.			2 <sup>nd</sup> LIEUT. R.D. RADFORD, reinforcement officer, joined up with Battalion.	<u>C.M.</u>
9.			Strength 44 officers 870 OR.	<u>C.M.</u>
11.			Battalion relieved 4 <sup>th</sup> Batten in the line, EAUCOURT L'ABBAYE sector. Relief complete 2030. A' + B' Coys in the line + C' + D' Coys in support in the ABBAYE. HQ situated in HEXHAM RD.	<u>C.M.</u>
12.			The thaw set in rapidly.	<u>C.M.</u>
13.			Working parties daily improving PIONEER ALLEY and PIONEER SUPPORT.	<u>C.M.</u>
14.			Lieut. K.S. FIELD evacuated to hospital sick. Heavy artillery registering on HOOK SAP + THE MAZE.	<u>C.M.</u>
15.			C' + D' Coys relieved A' + B' Coys in the line. Enemy firing numerous "pineapple" bombs, causing 1 killed + 4 wounded in D' Coy.	<u>C.M.</u>
16.			Enemy heavily bombarded right company in line with "pineapple" bombs about 2000. It was necessary to push the front line 50yds out into NO MANS LAND to avoid the fire. CAPT. J.A.W. KAYSER + 4 OR killed and LIEUT. C.N. RICHARDSON + 6 OR wounded.	<u>C.M.</u>
			Strength 44 officers + 854 OR.	<u>C.M.</u>
19.			Lieut. G.H.C. HART reported back for regimental duty from 3 <sup>rd</sup> A.L.T.M.B. Relieved in the line by 10 <sup>th</sup> Battalion. HQ situated in VARRA RESERVE. 3 platoons of A' Coy in dugouts in HEXHAM RD. 3 platoons of B' + D' Coys in FLERS-SWITCH TRENCH. C' Coy + the remaining platoon of A', B' + D' Coys in PIONEER CAMP at BAZENTIN-LE-PETIT.	<u>C.M.</u>
20.			2 <sup>nd</sup> LIEUT. J.H. WILL evacuated to hospital sick. The mud is proving very bad in forward area.	<u>C.M.</u>
21.			Capt. W.W.S. JOHNSTON, R.M.O. returned from hospital + CAPT. O.A. FIELD returned to 3 <sup>rd</sup> Fd. Amb.	<u>C.M.</u>



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1917. Feb. 23			Strength 43 officers + 869 OR. Enemy evacuating his front line. THE MAZE occupied by 9 <sup>th</sup> Bn.	<u>CMW</u>
24			Orders received from G.O.C. to relieve 10 <sup>th</sup> Bn. Relief commenced in GIRD SUPPORT at 1300.	<u>CMW</u>
25.			10 <sup>th</sup> Bn captured WHEAT TRENCH where relief was completed at 2200. 'E' 'C' + 'D' Coys in front line + 'B' + 'A' Coys in GIRD SUPPORT. HQ at M 17 D central. 'B' Coy moved up into the line about 2230. CAPT. L.E. BURT, LIEUTS. E.W. LAING, S.W. DOBSON + 2 <sup>nd</sup> LTS. F. MARRIOTT + R.E. PRIDDEY wounded.	<u>CMW</u>
26.			MALT TRENCH captured from BLUE CUT RD at <del>M 12 D</del> M 12 D 8.6 to M 12 Central. Held up by M.G.'s + snipers at BATTERY COPSE. 'A' Coy. moved up to WHEAT TRENCH at 1830.	<u>CMW</u>
27.			at dawn 'A' Coy moved up West side of LE BARQUE + cleared + occupied MALT TRENCH. 'B' Coy established a post of 1 officer + 25 men at N. I. C. 1.2. in RED CUT RD. 'D' Coy moved up on eastern side of village + systematically cleared it up + reestablished a post at QUARRY at N. I. C. 6.4 thus surrounding both LE BARQUE & LIGNY. at 1800 in co-operation with 11 <sup>th</sup> Bn. we established strong posts at N. I. C. 8.5 + N. I. D. 6.7. thus capturing LIGNY-THILLOX which was cleared by 11 <sup>th</sup> Bn. Relieved by 4 <sup>th</sup> Bn at 2340. Moved back to No. 3 Camp. BAZENTIT-LE-PETIT. CAPT. J.E. NEWLAND, H. WEBBER & 2 <sup>nd</sup> LT. M. BENSLEY wounded.	<u>CMW</u>
			Total casualties whilst in line:- Killed 1 officer 27 other ranks. wounded 9 officers 61 other ranks. Missing 2 other ranks.	Appendix Report on operations attached.

J.H. Elliott  
to Col.  
Comdg. 12<sup>th</sup> Bn.



## 12th. BATTALION, 3rd. INFANTRY BRIGADE, A.I.F.

## REPORT ON OPERATIONS 25/27th FEBRUARY 1917.

REFERENCE MAP. LE SARS to LOUPART WOOD and LE BARQUE 1/10000.

- 25 - 2 - 17. - 0900. 12th. Battalion received orders to relieve 10th Battalion as Left Battalion in the Line.  
 1300. 10th. Battalion attacked from GIRD TRENCH and captured WHEAT TRENCH.  
 1600. "C" and "D" Companies relieved 10th. Battalion except 40 men in WHEAT TRENCH. Capt. L. E. Burt and Lieuts E. W. D. Laing, F. E. Priddey, F. Marriott and S. W. Dobson wounded.  
 "A" and "B" Companies in support in GIRD TRENCH.  
 2200. "B" Company moved to WHEAT TRENCH. Relief complete
- 26 - 2 - 17. Operation Order received from 18th Battalion that they were attacking MALT TRENCH AND BATTERY COPSE at 13-30.  
 1630. After Artillery bombardment MALT TRENCH was occupied by 12th. Battalion from BLUE CUT ROAD at M.12.D.8.6. to M.12 Central, without opposition except Machine Gun fire from BATTERY COPSE. Nothing seen of 18th. Battalion.  
 1830. "A" Company moved to WHEAT TRENCH.  
 2130 Following orders ~~received~~ verbally to Company Commanders (confirmed in writing) for attack on LIGNY and LE BARQUE at dawn on 27th inst.  
 "C" Company to clear LE BARQUE, act as Battalion Reserve and after completion of operation, to establish a post of 1 Officer and 20 other Ranks at N.7.A.0.5. remainder of Company to withdraw to WHEAT TRENCH.  
 "A" Company to move up left W. side of LE BARQUE, clear and occupy BARK TRENCH.  
 "B" Coy (25) men) to move to RED CUT ROAD and establish a post at N.1.C.1.2.  
 "D" Company to move on right (E) of RED CUT ROAD, clear LIGNY and establish a post at QUARRY N.I.C.6.4.
- 27 - 2 - 17. 0600. The operation was successfully carried out just at dawn. It was found that during the night 26/27th the enemy had evacuated MALT TRENCH from BATTERY COPSE to ALBERT-BAPAUME ROAD.

The chief opposition was from an enemy strong post at Junction of MISTY WAY and WARLENCOURT ROAD at M.12.B.6.8 which was rushed by "A" Company after a short and sharp bombing encounter, 3 of the enemy being killed in the post and about 8 more being shot by L.M.G fire whilst retreating towards "STONE" at Junction of MISTY WAY and MAIN ROAD. Capt. J. E. NEWLAND and Lieut M. BENSLEY wounded.

The village of LIGNY was cleared and a series of posts established on a line BARK TRENCH to N.1.C.1.3, North of QUARRY, through word LIGNY to E of WEDDING LANE at N.7.B.5.7. Hostile M.Gs and Snipers were active, fire coming from TRAP or TRIP TRENCHES on CHALK CUT and from THILLOY.

11th Battalion subsequently came into the line near the word LIGNY.

0900. Capt. H. WEBBER wounded in LIGNY.

1300. Posts were established at N.1.C.8.5. and N.1.D.6.7. without opposition.

THILLOY occupied by 11th. Battalion.

2340 Relief of 12th. Battalion by 4th. Battalion reported complete.

*C. H. Elliott Lt. Col.*  
*boundg. 12<sup>th</sup> Feb.*

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 CASUALTIES. 8 Officers and 66 Other Ranks.

STRENGTH OF COMPANIES. (effective rifles exclusive of carrying parties, fatigues, detached &c)

"A" Coy. (1 Platoon at Corps school)	80.
"B" Coy. 2 Platoons on Brigade and Div. fatigues)	-
"C" Coy.	50.
"D" Coy.	130.
	140.

COMMUNICATIONS. 2 wires laid by Battalion Signal Section from Battalion H.Q. about M.17.D. central to WHEAT TRENCH, thence by runner.

SUPPLIES. Sent at night via BLUE CUT ROAD.

*H. Elliott*

.....Lt. Col.  
 Commanding 12th. Battalion