

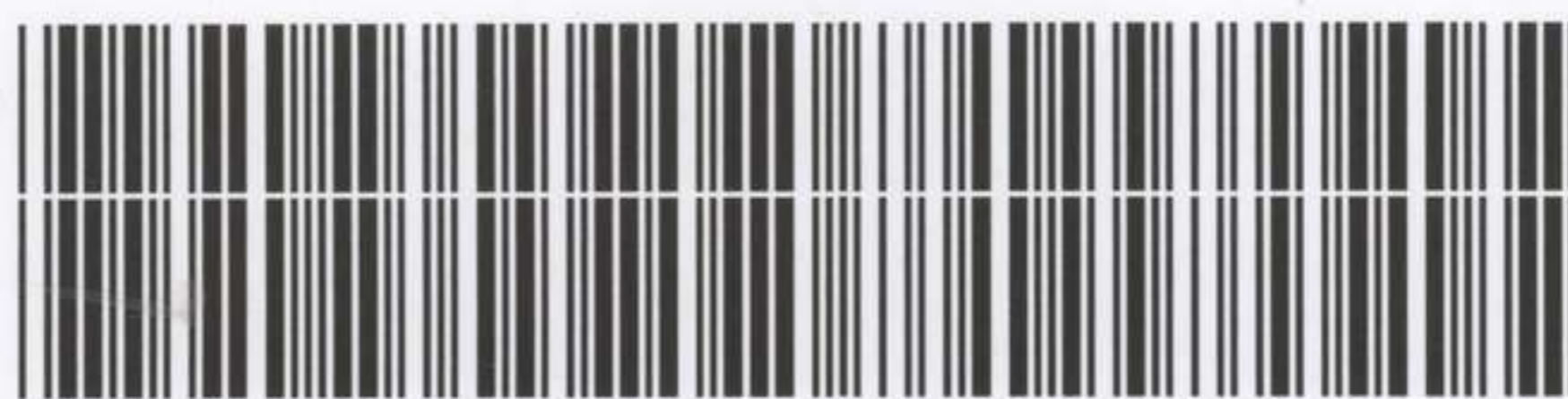
AWM4
Australian Imperial Force unit war diaries,
1914-18 War

Infantry

Item number: 23/68/16

Title: 51st Infantry Battalion

June 1917



AWM4-23/68/16

WAR DIARY

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

Army Form C. 2118.

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.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
1917.	June		<u>51st Bn A.I.F.</u>	
S. 28.a.	1-3 th		Reference Maps Sheets. 36, 1/40,000 and 28 S.W. 1/20,000.	
	4		Supplying working parties - remainder training.	
	6		Bn, less transport personnel & Band, moves to NEUVE EGLISE area and goes into HILLSIDE CAMP at T. 14.C. vide Bn Order No 23 copy att'd marked I	<u>I.</u>
	7		Bn order No 23(a) issued giving instructions for coming operations, copy " II	<u>II</u>
	7-12		During previous week all offs & N.C.O.s reconnoitred the front area and all communications thereto in Sector concerned.	
	15		Attack on MESSINES Ridge commenced, zero hour 3.10 pm. New Zero at which time the 13th A.I. Bde were to capture the GREEN LINE was altered from Zero + 10 to + 12.	
	12		Copy of report on operations covering period 7-12th attached marked III	<u>III</u>
	13-16		Copy of effective strength Return attached marked IV	<u>IV</u>
			Bn moved from forward area to Camp at DE SEUL - tents & shelters	
			Training by Coys and and reorganization of Platoons.	
			Details returned from MORBECQUE Camp on 13th.	

B.B. Risley LIEUT. COL.
COMMANDING 51st BATTALION

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118.

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

2

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
DE SEUL	JUNE 17		Bn moves to ST OMER Area with remainder of B'de by motor transport leaving at 12.15pm & arriving at WARDRECQUES about 3.30pm. Bn billeted in & around village of WARDRECQUES.	
	18-20		Training vide Syllabus issued Copy attached marked <u>V</u>	<u>V</u>
	21		Bn returns to STEENT-JE by motor transport and goes to same billets as occupied before (MAY 17-25th) vide Bn Order 24 Copy att'd marked <u>VI</u>	<u>VI</u>
STEENT-JE (a)	24		Syllabus of Training for week ending 30/6/14 issued Copy att'd marked <u>VII</u>	<u>VII</u>
	26		Representatives from Bn attended Review held by H.R.H. Duke of CONNAUGHT in Square at BAILLEUL at 2.30pm. The following attended:- <u>Officers</u> - Lieut Col. C. C. RIDLEY, D.S.O. <u>Other Ranks</u> :- 1631. CSM. BROOKS, D Capt. E. AURASSEAU, M.C. 2751 L/Cpl. NEWMAN, H.B. Lieut. F. SMITH, M.C. 4085 Pte. ALLEN, W. 4811 " HAYNES, H.E.	
(a)	Sheet 36 a, 1/40,000, F12 a.8.6.		All these OR's had just been awarded Military medals in connection with recent operations in front of MESSINES	
			B. B. Ridley LIEUT. COL. COMMANDING 51st BATTALION	

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118.

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.

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

(3)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices												
STEENT-JE	JUNE 30		<p>Bn moves to DESEUL area vide Bn order 37 - Copy attached marked <u>VIII</u></p> <p>and goes into BULFORD CAMP (T.20.C.4.1 Sheet 28 S.W.).</p> <p>Training for week carried out vide Syllabus - Copy attached marked <u>IX</u></p> <p>Copy of Daily Strength Return attached marked <u>X</u></p> <p><u>Casualties for month:-</u></p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Officers</th> <th colspan="2">Other Ranks</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Killed.</th> <th>Wounded.</th> <th>Killed.</th> <th>Wounded.</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2 (a)</td> <td>3.</td> <td>22.</td> <td>78.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>(a) Lieut. A. L. REID.</p> <p>2/11 E. SELKIRK.</p>	Officers		Other Ranks		Killed.	Wounded.	Killed.	Wounded.	2 (a)	3.	22.	78.	<p><u>VIII</u></p> <p><u>IX</u></p> <p><u>X</u></p>
Officers		Other Ranks														
Killed.	Wounded.	Killed.	Wounded.													
2 (a)	3.	22.	78.													
<p>B. B. Ridley. LIEUT. COL. COMMANDING 1st BATTALION</p>																

51st Battalion
13th Aus Inf Bde.
4/6/17

51st Battalion Order No 23

Reference Map Sheet 36

1. The Battalion, less Transport personnel and Band will move to NEUVE EGLISE on 4th June. The camp will be at T 14 c.
2. "D" Company will move at 9 a.m. and prepare the Camp. Remainder of the Battalion will move as follows:-

Headquarters	2 p.m.
"A" Company	2.5. p.m.
"B" "	2.15. p.m.
"C" "	2.25. p.m.

Intervals of 100 yards will ~~max~~ be maintained between platoons. Route via S 21 b 7.0 and road through S 22 and S 23.

3. Transport personnel and the Band will move to Brigade Transport Lines A. 11 d 4.5. at 2.45 p.m.
4. 4 cooks 2 water carts, Officers Mess cart and one limber will remain with the Battalion at NEUVE EGLISE. ^{Malkin Cart} Remainder of 1st Line Transport will move to Brigade Transport Lines.
5. Baggage Arrangements.
All Officers' valises, signalling gear, tents, trench shelters and canteen stores will be dumped at Q.M's store by 9.a.m.
6. Routine.

Reveille	6 a.m.
Strike Tents	6.30 a.m.
Breakfast	7.15 a.m.
Sick parade	7.45 a.m.

Shouch
Captain & Adjutant
51st Battalion

473 War diary.

SECRET.

COPY NO. 6

51st. Battalion,
13th. Aust. Inf. Bde.
6th. June 1917.

51st. BATTALION ORDER NO. 23(a).

Reference Map

Sheet 28. S.W. 1/20,000.

1. The Second Army has been ordered to capture the MESSINES-WYTCHAEDE ridge. The attack will be made on Z day at Zero hour.
2. The task allotted to the 13th. Aust. Inf. Bde. is to capture and consolidate the GREEN LINE from O.28.B.4.2. to O.34.b.3.5. The 49th Battalion will be on the right and the 52nd Battalion on the left, the frontage being evenly divided. The 50th and 51st Battalions will be in Brigade Reserve. The attack on the GREEN LINE will be made at NEW ZERO plus 20 minutes.
3. At ZERO plus 5 hours 30 minutes the Battalion will move from its present position and will proceed by Z 1 route which has already been reconnoitred by Company Commanders to NUGENT support where it will remain until further orders are received. The Company boundaries in the trench have been marked, and the order from the right will be A.B.C.D. Battalion H. Q., and R.A.P will be at FORT OSBORNE.(U.1.c.1.5.).
4. Two Lewis Guns and teams per Company will be withdrawn from Companies and will come into Battalion Reserve. They will report at Zero plus 5 hours (prior to the move from HILLSIDE CAMP), and will be attached temporarily to Battalion H.Q.
5. In order that there may be no confusion or delay in moving forward to any part of the Brigade front when required, the following steps will be taken to keep in touch with the movements of the attacking Battalions of the Brigade.
 - (a) 6 Guides will go forward with the Headquarters of the 52nd Battalion and will note particularly the position of the 52nd Battalion H.Q., and the general disposition of the Companies and will then return to Battalion H.Q. FORT OSBORNE.
 - (b) 2 Guides will act in a similar manner with the 49th Battalion.
 - (c) The Intelligence Officer and one officer per Company will go forward to the MESSINES ridge after the arrival of the Battalion in NUGENT support and will make a general reconnaissance of the Brigade area, noting particularly the best approaches to the left sector and will rejoin the Battalion before NEW ZERO. Reports to be forwarded to Battalion H.Q. as soon as possible.
6. Communication between Company and Battalion H.Q. will be by Runner. In the event of the Battalion becoming involved in the attack and finding itself in the outpost line- Green Flares will be lit to mark the foremost positions when called for by contact aeroplanes.
7. Arrangements for the synchronization of watches will be notified later.

J. Gould
Captain and Adjutant.
51st. Battalion.

DISTRIBUTION.

1. A Coy.
2. B Coy.
3. C Coy.
4. D Coy.

5. File.
6. War Diary.
7. 13th A.I.Bde.
8. Int. Offr.
9. Q.M.
10. Sig. Offr.
11. 52nd. Btn.
12. 49th. Btn.

51st Battalion
13th Aus. Inf. Bde.
6/6/17

Instructions issued in connection with Battalion Order No 23

1. Equipment.

Fighting Order with haversack on back will be worn. Mess tin, two day's complete rations and unexpired portion of third day's ration, two sandbags, box respirator, P.H. helmet, one pair of socks, and waterproof sheet will be carried in the approved regimental pattern. Wire cutting men will have their cutters attached to them by a piece of string. Each man will carry one extra bandolier of S.A.A. Two detonated Mills Grenades per man will be carried - One in each pocket - except in the case of Runners. Green Flares. 20 per Company. S.O.S. Flares. 6 " " The Signal is one Red flare (1 1/2" Very) Picks and Shovels. as issued to Companies. All ranks will wear a pink arm-band on the right arm above the elbow.

2. Water.

Every precaution must be taken to conserve the water in the water-bottle. Every man will have his water-bottle filled when he starts. Each Company will have 50 extra water-bottles which will be distributed and will also have 18 petrol tins of water which will be carried to WULVERGHEM on a limber and will then be carried forward under Company arrangements. This water will not be touched until NEW ZERO when instructions will be issued.

3. Transport.

Lewis Guns and magazines will be taken to WULVERGHEM by limber and will then be carried forward by hand. These limbers will precede the Companies so that the Lewis Gun teams can join them and go in with their platoons.

[Signature]
Captain
Adjutant 51st Battalion.

473

War Diary

Headquarters,
51st Battalion,
13/6/17.

Appendix No 3

7

Headquarters,
13th Aus. Inf. Bde.

Report on operations 6th - 18th June.

1 Preliminary instructions for the attack on the MESSINES Ridge were received on 30/5/17 and the final orders at 11.00 a.m. on 6th June. Between these dates reconnaissances of our own forward area and the approaches thereto, and as far as was possible of the ground over which the attack was to take place were made by all Officers and N.C.O's.

2 The 51st Battalion was in Brigade Reserve and as a Battalion only played a minor part in the operations.

3. The Battalion moved off from HILLSIDE CAMP at NEUVE EGLISE at 8.40 a.m. on 7th June and moved by Z 1 route and CALGARY AVENUE to NUGENT SUPPORT, and was in position there at 11.05 a.m.

At 9.5 p.m. two Companies were ordered to reinforce the 52nd Battalion and "B" and "C" Companies were sent. At 10.10 p.m. "D" Company was sent to reinforce the 49th Battalion, and at 11.35 p.m. "A" Company was also ordered to reinforce the 49th Battalion. At 2.30 a.m. on 8th June, Lieutenant-Colonel C.C. RIDLEY D.S.O. was ordered to take over command of the 52nd Battalion in the place of Lt-Col. POPE who was wounded, and he proceeded at once to the 52nd Battalion Headquarters. On the night of 8th June in consequence of a readjustment in the line the Companies were redispensed as follows :- "A" and "C" Companies to 49th Battalion, "B" and "D" Companies to 52nd Battalion.

On the night of 9th/10th June the 49th and 52nd Battalions were relieved and the detached Companies rejoined the Battalion and were stationed in their old positions in NUGENT SUPPORT.

On the night of 11th/12th June the Battalion relieved the 16th Battalion in reserve trenches at U 2 d. The relief was complete at 12.30 a.m. on 12th June.

At 12 noon on 13th June, the Battalion moved back to DE SEULE.

4. Although the Battalion, as a complete Unit, did not take any part in the fighting yet at one time practically the whole of the Brigade Front was held by the four Companies of the 51st Battalion, and the two Battalion-s that were officially in the line were commanded - the 52nd Battn by Lieut-Col. C.C. RIDLEY and the 49th Battn by Major A.H. ROWE - so in order to trace the history of the Battalion the following notes on the operations between 8th and 11th June are added :-

Lieut-Col. RIDLEY assumed command of the 52nd Battn at 4.10 a.m. on the 8th June. On the way up from Brigade Headquarters it was ascertained from the O.C. 49th Battn that his Battn was not occupying its proper frontage but had followed the 52nd Battn to the Left, and moreover that he was only in touch with one Company. On arrival at the 52nd Battn Headquarters, Lieut.-Col. RIDLEY accompanied by Capt. STUBBINGS who had acted as C.O. until his arrival, proceeded to the front line, and it was found that the line ran as follows :- from O 28 c 8.8 along trench to dugout at 28 a 9.2 thence through wire via 28 a 7.7 to 28 G 85.05 and along trench to O 28 G 2.8. The troops holding this line comprised of Companies of the 49th, 51st and 52nd Battalions, and Lincolns who were more or less organized as Companies but were otherwise mixed. The position is shown on attached sketch.

One platoon of 51st Battn that was at O 28 a 4.1. was ordered to establish a strong point at O 28 c 4.8 to guard the right flank which was done. This post commanded the valley between the actual Brigade Right and the Left of the 12th Brigade the gap being also covered by 4 Vickers guns.

At 4.30 p.m. orders were received to withdraw all troops who were outside the Brigade Area and use them to fill in the gap on the right.

At 6.00 p.m. orders were issued (copy annexed) and by means of this minor operation it was intended to join up with the Right Brigade and consolidate a position along the Brigade front proper and also to reorganise the scattered units of the 3 Battalions.

While the move to the position of deployment was in progress the enemy commenced a very heavy bombardment of the whole area inflicting fairly heavy casualties and causing the troops in the open to scatter, thus interfering with the operation which was only carried out as far as "A" and "C" Companies were concerned.

"D" Company with only 30 men reached the position of deployment, but as no one came on their left they dug in just in rear.

"B" Company were delayed by the shell fire and when they arrived on the jumping off mark they could not gain touch with either flank and returned to their original position before dawn.

The position on morning of 8th is marked on attached sketch in red. On the night of 8th/10th all three Battalions were relieved by 7th Brigade (1st Wilts and 10th Cheshires) and reorganised.

5. Medical arrangements.

R.A.P. was originally at FORT OSBORNE (U 1 c 3.5) but when all the Companies were detached a R.A.P. was established at U 27 c 3.8 near 52nd Battalion Headquarters and the majority of the wounded of the Battalion passed through this Dressing Station.

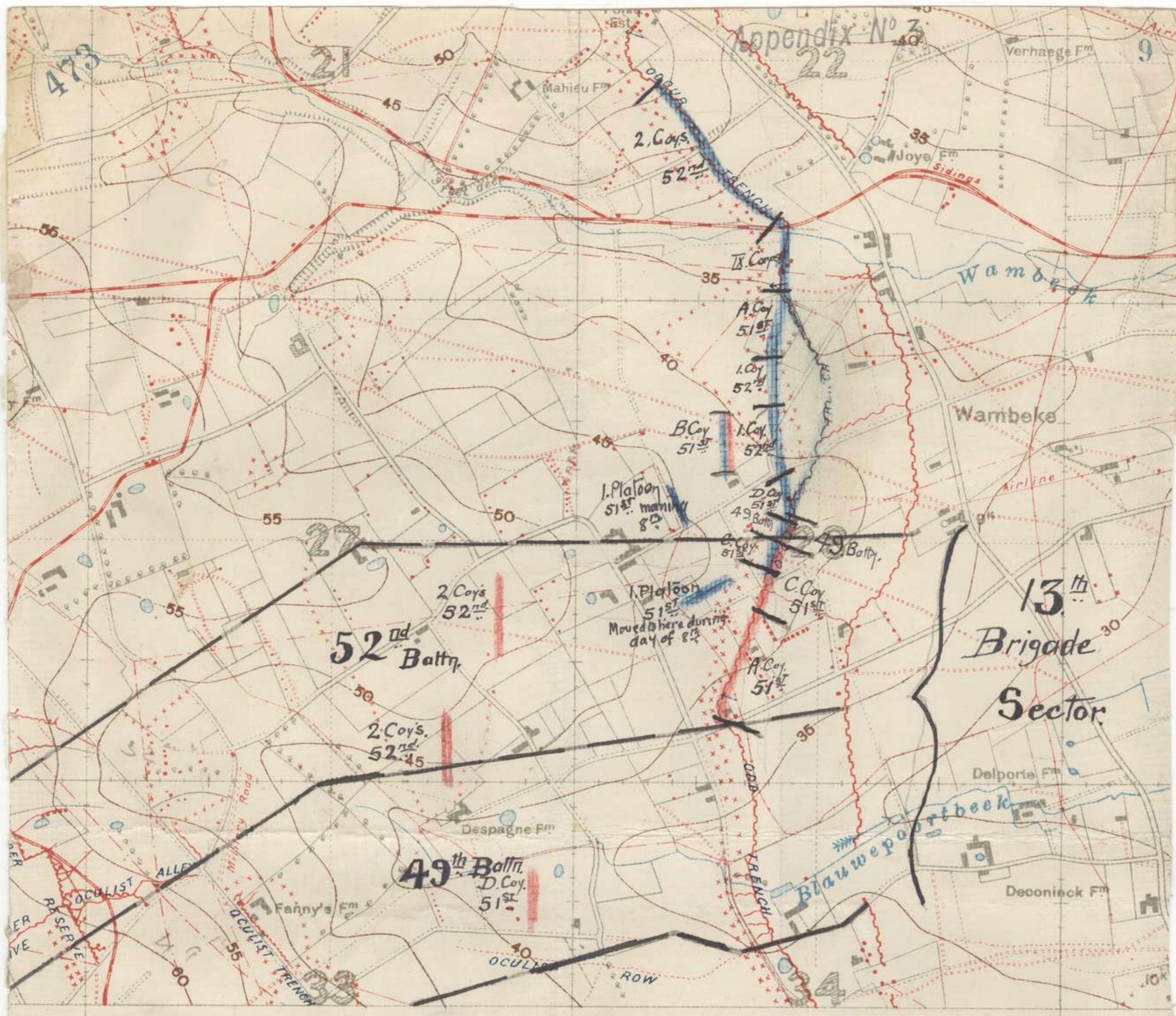
6. Casualties.

The total casualties for the period were

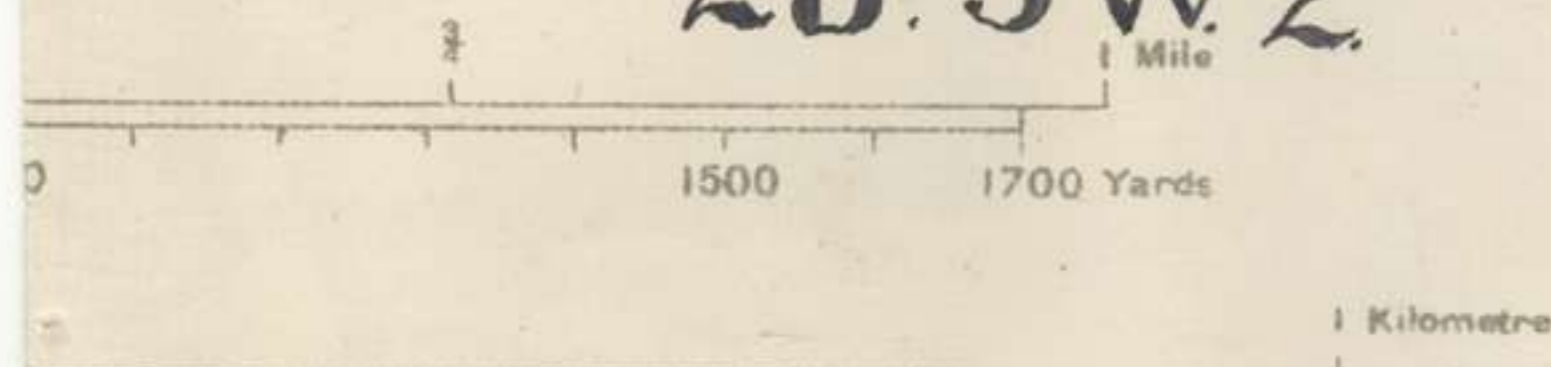
	<u>Offs.</u>	<u>O.R.'s.</u>
Killed in Action.	2	22
Wounded in Action.	3	76
Missing	<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>
	<u>5</u>	<u>102</u>

G. B. Ridley

Lieutenant-Colonel,
O.C. 51st Battalion.



Being part of TRENCH MAP.
WYTSCHAETE.
 28. SW 2



Railway Metre Gauge
 (Provisional Sign)

Denotes positions of 49th 51st & 52nd Battalions on the night of 7th-8th June 1917.

Denotes positions of same Battalions on the night 8th-9 June 1917.

Inked Lines denote positions of Companies of the different Battalions on the nights of 7th-8th-9th June 1917.

War diary

51st Battalion.

WEEKLY EFFECTIVE STRENGTH

IV

Actually with Unit	Sick	On command tempy. de- tached. Schools etc.	Total Strength	War estab.	Required to com- plete.	Remarks.
Off O.R.	Off OR	Off O.R.	Off OR.	Off O.R.	Off O.R.	
28 723	1 18	6 57	35 798	38 967	3 169	

15th June 1917.

H. Kiley

Lieutenant-Colonel,
O.C. 51st Battalion.

473

War Diary

Appendix No 5

11

51st Battalion,

13th Aus. Inf. Bde.,

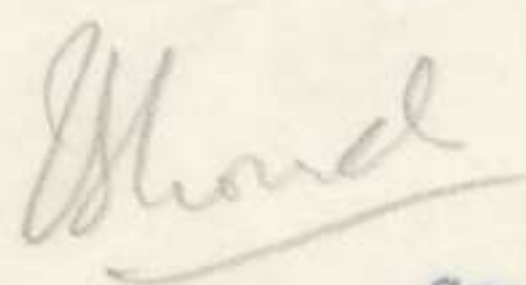
17/6/17.

V

SYLLABUS OF TRAINING FOR WEEK ENDING - June 23rd 1917.

	:8.0 to 8.25 am.	:8.25 to 8.50 am.	:9 to 9.25 am.	:9.25 to 9.50 am.	:10.0 to 11.0 a.m.
Monday	:Bayonet Fighting	:Section Drill	:Rapid Loading	:E. O. Drill	:Training of every man as a
Tuesday	:Bayonet Fighting	:Rifle Exercises	:Fire direct-ion & control	:Platoon Drill	:Bomber, Lewis Gun-
Wednesday	:Gas Drill	:Guards and Sentries	:Coy. Route March with instruction in March Discipline.		:ner, Sig-naller, Wirer or Scout.
Thursday	:Bayonet Fighting	:Rapid Load-ing.	:Platoon in attack, (open warfare)		
Friday		BATTALION ROUTE MARCH			
Saturday	:Bayonet Fighting	:Gas Drill		:Battalion Parade	

Training of N.C.O's. Companies will arrange for one hours' instruction each afternoon to N.C.O's in Map Reading, writing of messages and reports, elementary tactics and handling of a platoon in action.



Captain &
Adjutant 51st Battalion.

473

Wa. Order

51ST BATTALION ORDER NO. 24.

Appendix No 6

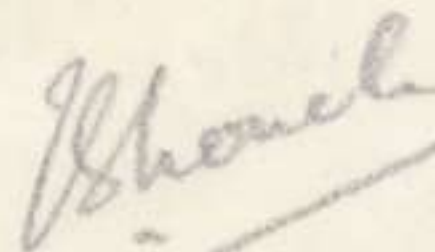
12

20th. June 1917.

1. The Battalion will move by Motor Bus to STEENTJE area on 21st. June. Coys and Details will occupy the same billets as before.
2. Coys and Details will ambus in the Square opposite Battalion H.Q. at 9.0.a.m. An Officer from each Coy, bringing a parade state, will report to the Adjutant at 8.30.a.m., when the buses will be allotted.
3. Dress. Full Marching Order with Blanket, W.P. Sheet and Steel Helmet.
4. First Line Transport including Cookers will move at 5.45.a.m., under the orders of the Transport Officer. Cookers will be moved to Transport Lines tonight.
5. Baggage Arrangements. All Officers baggage, Lewis Guns, Q.M's Stores &c will be ready to load at the Q.M's Store by 7.15.a.m. Q.M's Staff will load and go with lorries as Baggage Guard.
6. Breakfast will be cooked in Dixies, which will be carried by Coys, with them in their buses. The parties carrying the Dixies must keep with their Coys., and on no account will they be sent on to load their gear in advance.
7. Billets will be left clean and tidy and a certificate that they have been inspected and passed by an officer will be handed in to Battalion H.Q. with the Parade State at 8.30.a.m.
8. Routine.

Reveille.....6.0.a.m.
 Breakfast.....6.30.a.m.
 Sick Parade.....7.0.a.m.

.....



Captain and Adjutant,
 51st. Battalion.

BATTALION ORDER NO. 37.

VIII

by
Lieutenant-Colonel C.C. RIDLEY, D.S.O.
Commanding 51st. Battalion A.I.F.

In the Field.

28th. June 1917.

Reference Maps 28.S.W. 1/20,000 and 36.1/40,000.

The Battalion will move into reserve in the DE SEULE area on the 30th. inst.

Starting point. The Shrine, at crossroads 300 yards S.E. of Battalion Headquarters, where 20 metre contour crosses road.
Companies and Details will pass at following times :-

H.Q.'s and A. Coy.....	8.20.a.m.
D. Coy.....	8.21. "
B. Coy.....	8.22. "
C. Coy.....	8.23. "
Transport.....	8.25. "

A distance of 50 yards is to be maintained between Companies.
Transport 200 yards in rear of C. Coy.

Dress. Full Marching Order. Company Commanders will be mounted.
C. Company will furnish a rearguard of 1 sergeant and 10 men.
The Guard will march with D. Company.

Routine for 30th. inst.

Reveille.....	6.a.m.
Breakfast.....	6.30.a.m.
Sick Parade (A. Coy.)...	6.15.a.m.
" " (D. Coy.)...	6.30.a.m.
" " (C. Coy.)...	6.45.a.m.
" " (B. Coy.)...	7.15.a.m.

Companies and Details will send an officer to Battalion Headquarters for Brigade time at 7.a.m.

Lewis Gun Limbers will report to Companies at 7.a.m.

Cookers will be ready to move at 7.15.a.m.

Officer's Valises will be at R.Q.M. Store at 7.a.m.

Limber will collect valises from C. and D. Coys.

Marching-out states and certificates to the effect that Billets are clean will be rendered to Battalion Headquarters at 7.30.a.m.

One Scout per Company and one Headquarters Runner will report to LIEUTENANT HARWOOD at Battalion Headquarters at 7.30.a.m.

Billeting officer and party will report to STAFF CAPTAIN at DE SEULE corner - B.1.a.7.2. at 9.30.a.m.

M. J. Anderson

Captain and A/Adjutant,
51st. Battalion.

51st Battalion
13th Aus Inf Bde.
24/6/17

IX

SYLLABUS OF TRAINING FOR WEEK ENDING 30/6/17

Training of Platoons will be carried out in accordance with S.S. 143 "Instructions for the Training of Platoons for Offense". References hereunder are to this circular. [ive Action.

	8.0 - 8.25	8.25 - 8.50.	9.0 - 9.25.	9.25 - 9.50	10 - 11
Monday	Bayonet Fighting.	Musketry.	Platoon in attack Part 1. para 7.		Training of every man as a Lewis Gunner, Signaller, Scout, Bomber, Wiper or Runner.
Tuesday		BATTALION ROUTE	MARCH		
Wednesday	Bayonet Fighting.	Musketry	Outpost scheme App. VI. 2.		
Thursday	Gas Drill	Musketry	Overcoming a strong point. App. X.		
Friday		BATTALION ROUTE	MARCH.		
Saturday	Bayonet Fighting	Musketry	Battalion parade.		

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday at 11.30 a.m. lecture to all Officers and Platoon Sergeants on Message writing and practical message writing schemes.

TRAINING OF N.C.Os. One hours instruction to be given to N.C.Os each afternoon in Map Reading, use of prismatic compass, organization and handling of a platoon.

B. B. Riley

Lieutenant-Colonel
C.O. 51st Battalion.

51st Battalion

DAILY STRENGTH RETURN.

X

Actually with Unit.		Attached		Hospital		Tempy detached Schools etc		Total	Remarks
Off.	O.R.	Off.	O.R.	Off.	O.R.	Off.	O.R.	Off.	O.R.
29	712	1	6	4	34	5	69	39	821

Departures 2 O.R. To Hospital.

Arrivals Nil.

30/6/17

BB Ridley

Lieutenant-Colonel
C.O. 51st Battalion