

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

Infantry

Item number: 23/68/4

Title: 51st Infantry Battalion

June 1916



AWM4-23/68/4

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.

Vol. I.

WAR DIARY

51st Bn.

Army Form C. 2118.

Sheet 10

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

13th Bde.

G.I.F.

Vol II

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
SERAPEUM. (Railhead)	June 1 st		Hqrs & B. Co. left front line at 0500 & marched into Railhead. Whole Bn thus collected in Brigade Camp.	
	1 st - 3 rd		Under orders to move to FRANCE - Time spent in refitting & equipping	
	4 th		Bn left in two trains from SERAPEUM WEST SIDING. 1 st Train Whole Bn less 3 officers & 170 of D Co. 2 nd Train 3 officers 170 of D Co.	
			Bn marched in very hot, dusty weather - leaving Railhead at 1430 - 1 st Train left 1845. Dress - M.O. with 1 blanket & w. p. sheet. Khaki drill worn - serge carried in Kib. bags - Trained in open trucks to Gabbary Quay - ALEXANDRIA	and
	5 th		Bn embarked by 0800 on board H.M.T. "Ivernia" - complete to war establishment (less 2 officers).	
	6 th		Left harbour at 0900	
	7 th - 10 th		Good voyage - Anti-submarine measures adopted. Machine guns practised firing - Lifebelts worn by all ranks throughout. Dress changed to service dress & Kib. bags stowed & left on board for return to Egypt.	and
	11 th		MARSEILLES 0700 - Went into harbour 1700 - Night spent disembarking stores.	
	12 th		Bn entrained & left in one train at 1024 - (Less Transport Details for ABBEVILLE - see App I)	and

Vol I

WAR DIARY

51st Bn.

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.

Sheet 21

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

A. I. F.

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
FRANCE	June 1916			
	13 th	14 th	Troop train - Meals at fixed 'Halte-Repas' -	
		14 th	2230 - Bn detrained at CAESTRE - full strength less 1 sick left at ABBEVILLE) see App I	App I.
	15 th		Went into billets at MOULNACKER - For Bn Distribution see App II.	App II.
MOULNACKER	16 th	17 th	Training resumed - Route-marching & musketry	amR
	18 th		Divine Services - Bn Equipment completing, LEWIS guns & gas helmets issued	amR.
	19 th		Bn ordered to move - Moved off 1120 (See Appendix III A & B).	App III A & B
			Arrived N of SAILLY at 1700 - Went into billets about CUL DE SAC farm (G. 9210)	Trained Map 36 NW.
N. SAILLY			Distribution to Billets see App. IV	App IV.
	20 th		Officers reconnaissance of 3 rd Inf. Bde front-line trenches.	amR.
	21 st		Further reconnaissance. No. 17 'Scout' Platoon & No 18 Grenade Platoon formed	
			Personnel detailed for Anti-gas, Light Mortar Battery & Bde Intelligence Section.	amR.
	22 nd		Date of commencement of relief of 10 th Bn in the front line -	
			System of relief is to take over a company every alternate night.	
	Night 22/23		B Co. moved in - for orders see App V -	App V.
	23 rd		Training in anti-gas measures continued - Billets inspected by (1 st) Army Corps Commander.	
Night 24 th /25 th			B Co. moved in in relief - also other advanced details (listening groups etc) see App VI.	App VI.

amR. to be

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.

VOL I.

Sheet 12.

WAR DIARY

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

51st Bn.

AIF.

Army Form C. 2118.

461

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
PETILLON SECTOR (2 nd Army)	June.			
	26 th - 27 th		Hogers + C. Coy moved into front-line, i.e. Subsector held is the right subsector of right sector 1 st Aust Div - & "Right Bn" 13 th Inf Bde - Temporarily incorporated in 1 st Div. Position N. c 8.3 - N. c 9.4.	Ref. Trend Maps 1:10,000 <u>amR</u>
	Night 28-29 th		A Coy came in from billets, thus completing relief of 10 th Bn.	
	26 - 30 th		During this period, several bouts of heavy shelling were experienced, the weather was continuously wet - Much work on the breastworks had to be done - For system of working parties see App. VII. Casualties to date. Killed 5 Died of wounds 1 Wounded 17 - One officer Lt E.R. Tobias wounded. Officers were detached at various dates to schools of Bombing, Sniping, Mortars, M. Gun etc. For action of Bn in case of attack in the subsector - see App. VIII. The relief of the 10 th Bn was carried out without a single casualty - the system of changing alternate companies worked well. General health & condition of the men greatly improved since leaving Egypt. For strength & distribution of Bn at this time see App. IX.	App VII. App VIII. App IX.
				Am Ross Lt Col. OC

51st.Battalion. *App I*

13th.Aus.Inf.Bde.

15-6-16

13th.Aus.Inf.Bde.

MARCHING IN STATE.

	Officers	O/Ranks,
Number Marched In (Includes Chaplain.)	27	956
Number admitted to Hospital (In France)		1
Number on detached duty	2	35
	29	992

Detached duty is as follows.

- 1 Officer at Marseilles (Entraining Officer)
 - 1 Officer 24 Other Ranks. Transport Abbeville
 - 11 Other Ranks. On Japanese Princess
 - 2 Officers 35 Other Ranks.
- 2/Lieutenant F.Smith.
2/Lieutenant W.H.N.PATRICK

Am Rold
Lieutenant-Colonel.
O.C. 51st.Battalion.

App II

51st. Battalion.

13th. Aus. Inf. Bde.

19-6-16

DISTRIBUTION OF COMPANIES IN BILLETS.

Officers Other Ranks.

"A" Company.		6	212
"B" Company		5	218
"Headquarters" and Part of "C" Company		6	201
"C" Company	2 Platoons.	7	114
"D" Company	1 Platoon	1	53
"D" Company	3 Platoons	2	158

Am B

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

13th. Australian Infantry Brigade.

19/6/16.

Copy No. *4*.

Reference Map HAZEBROUCK 5A 1/100000.

Move. (1) Reference Circular Memo. 13 (Secret) issued yesterday - The move therein referred to will take place today 19th. inst.

Advance Parties. (2) Advance parties composed as under will report at Brigade Headquarters at 0830 19th. inst. ready to proceed by motor lorry to new area and take over billets.

Each Battalion	1	Officer and 4 N.C.O's.
Machine Gun Company	1	" " 1 "
B.H.Q. and Signal	1	" " 1 "
Section	1	" " 1 "
13th. Field Company	1	" " 1 "

Columns (3) The Brigade will march in two separate columns as follows and in order shown:-

"A" - B.H.Q., Signal Section, 49th. Battalion, 50th. Battalion and 3rd. Field Company Engineers.

"B" - 51st. Battalion, 52nd. Battalion and Machine Gun Company.

Command. (4) "A" Column - Lt.Col. F.W. HURCOMBE 50th. Battalion
"B" Column - Lt.Col. M.F. BEEVOR 52nd. Battalion

Starting Point (5) "A" Column - Point on main road opposite Church situated about centre of STRAZEELE VILLAGE. 13th. Field Company Engineers will join column at STRAZEELE STATION.

"B" Column - Cross roads about 400 yards SOUTH of MOOLENACKER (Sheet 27, X 19 C 2.9.).

Time. (6) Heads of columns will pass Starting points at following times:-
"A" Column - 1100 "B" Column - 1130.

Route. (7) The following routes will be followed:-
"A" Column - STRAZEELE - STRAZEELE STN. - VIEUX BERQUIN - ESTAIRES - SAILLY.

"B" Column - MERRIS - VIEUX BERQUIN - ESTAIRES - SAILLY.

After passing point to be notified later Companies will march at 2 minutes interval.

Baggage. (8) All baggage will be concentrated in dumps at Battalion Headquarters and a guide for each dump knowing approximate weight sent to Brigade Headquarters at 1000, where Motor transport will be available.

Rations etc. (9) Unconsumed portion will be carried in haversacks and water-bottles filled. Further instructions will be issued later if necessary.
Blanket and waterproof sheet will be carried by men.

Schools (10) Personnel detailed for Schools in accordance with:-
(a) B.M. 6 of 15th. inst. (2) Circ. Memo. 2 of 16th. inst. and (c) Circ. Memo. 3 of 16th. inst. -- will proceed without alteration.
Those under (b) and (c) will wait at Brigade Headquarters until 1400 when Motor lorries will call for them.

Ob Ridley Major,
Brigade Major, 13th. Australian Infantry Brigade.
P. T. O.

Copy No.	1	issued to	File
"	"	2	" 49th. Battalion
"	"	3	" 50th. "
"	"	4	" 51st. "
"	"	5	" 52nd. "
"	"	6	" Machine Gun Company
"	"	7	" 13th. Field Company Engineers
"	"	8	" 4th. Australian Division.

App III B
✓

OPERATION ORDER NO.1.
by Lieut-Colonel M.F. BEEVOR.
O. C. "B" Column, 13th Infantry Brigade A.I.F.

Copy No.....

June 19th 1918.

MOVE BY ROAD. 1. The Column will march to SAILLY, via MERRIS, VIEUX
BERQUIN & ESTHARES.

STARTING POINT. 2. Starting Point - Cross road about 400 yards SOUTH of
MOOLENACKER.

TIME. 3. The head of the Column will pass the Starting Point at
1130.

ORDER OF MARCH. 4. As in the margin.
51st Battn,
52nd Battn.
M.G. Coy.

HALTS. 5. The first halt will be at 1150, for 10 minutes, the
Column moving on at 1200. Halt for Lunch at 1250, moving
out at 1400.

REPORTS. 6. Reports to head of Column.
Reports of progress, etc will be sent to O.C. at each
halt, and at such other times as may be necessary.

Copy No. L. Filed.

" " 2. 51st Bn

" " 3. 52nd Bn.

" " 4. 13th M.G. Coy.

M. F. Beavor Lt-Colonel.
O.C., "B" Column, 13th Infantry Bde.

51st Battalion,

13th Aus. Inf. Bde.,

29-6-1916.

13th AUS. INF. BDE:

MARCHING IN STATE

Officers O/Ranks

Marched in (includes Chaplain)

24 886

Totals on Strength of Unit

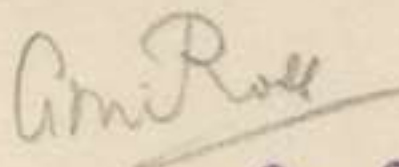
29 992

Difference

5 106

Transport at ABBEVILLE (2/Lieut. Pattrick W.)	1	35
Woodchopping (2/Lieut. Louch T.S.)	1	40
Leave in England (Lieut. McCallum D.)		
(2/Lieut Clifford A.G.)	2	6
On Guard at Moolenacker (baggage etc.)		6
Brigade Messengers (Signallers)		2
In Detention		1
Schools of Instruction (2Lieut. Morell H.H.)	1	2
In Hospital (unable to march)		12
" " (sick)		1
Absent without leave		1

5 106



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

BATTALION OPERATION MEMORANDUM No. 1

by

Lieutenant-Colonel A. M. Ross, D. S. O.
Commanding 51st Battalion, A. I. F.

Ref. Map
HAZEBROUCK 5 A.

22-6-1916.

1. Relief of the 10th Battalion is to commence tonight 22/23rd.

2; MOVES.

(a) D Coy to relieve left company 10th Battalion.

(b) LEWIS GUN SECTION }
SCOUT PLATOON } UNDER 2/LIEUT. SMITH (To relieve
GRENADE PLATOON } (same details
(10th Battln.

(c) 1 N.C.O. and 3 Signallers. Battalion do.
Signallers

3. ROUTE.

SAILLY - ROUGE DE BOUT.

Starting Point.

River Bridge over LYS, 500 yards N. of SAILLY CHURCH.

Time to pass.

2130.

4. Battalion Grenade Platoon is to assemble at Battalion Headquarters at 2030.

Dress - Marching-order; blanket and water-proof sheet.

5. Stretcher-bearers are detailed to Companies from today.

6; Transport will be arranged later. This will pick up kettles, baggage, etc., which must be ready in billets by 1900.

7. O's C. Coys and Detachments are to take all due precautions and adopt suitable formations when approaching trenches.
Guides from 10th Battalion will meet D. Coy at ROUGE DE BOUT at 2230.

Captain.

Adjutant, 51st Battalion.

App. VI

Lieutenant-Colonel A. M. ROSS, D. S. O.
Commanding 51st Battalion, A.I.F.

24-6-1916.

MOVES. 2. (a) "B" Coy to relieve right centre Coy. 10th Battalion.
To report Capt B.E. Bardwell,
(b) "C" Coy details 12 O/Ranks } O.C.B Coy 1900 24-6-16.
Pioneers 6 " }
Both parties (Pioneers and C. Coy details) to report on
arrival at Front Line to Senior Major, 51st Battalion.

Starting-point: River Bridge over Lys 500 yards N. of Sailly Church.

Time to Pass: 2130

DRESS 4. The dress for move will be marching order with blankets.

TRANSPORT 5. A wagon will call at billets to collect baggage and officers' kits, which must be ready by 1900.

PRECAUTIONS 6. O's C. Coys are to take all due precautions and adopt suitable formations when nearing the trenches.

Guides from 10th Battalion will meet "B" Coy at ROUGE-DE-BOUT
at 2230.

W. H. Rowe
Captain.
Adjutant, 51st Battalion.

Copy No. 1 Filed
2 War Diary
3 10th Battalion, A.I.F.
4 C Coy. 51st Battalion.
5 B Coy. do
6 Q.M. do

BATTALION OPERATION ORDER NO. 3.

by

Lieutenant-Colonel A. M. ROSS, D.S.O.

Commanding 51st Battalion, A.I.F.

Ref Map

Hazebrouck 5a.

26-6-16.

RELIEF. 1. Relief of the 10th Battalion will continue tonight 26/27th.

MOVES. 2. "C" Company will relieve left centre Company of 10th Battalion. Battalion Head Quarters will take over from 10th Battalion H.Q. "A" Company 10th Battalion passing under the command of C.O. 51st Battalion. "A" Coy 12 O/Ranks to report to O.C. "C" Coy at 7.30 p.m.

ROUTE. 3. SAILLY - ROUGE-DE-BOUT.

Starting-point: River Bridge over Lys 500 yards N. of Sailly Church.

Time to Pass: 8.30 p.m. (Leading Platoon).

DRESS. 4. The dress for the move will be marching order with blankets and water-proof sheet.

GUIDE.

~~TRANSPORT~~. 5. Guide from 10th Battalion will meet Company at ROUGE-DE-BOUT at 9.30 p.m.

Platoons will move at ten minutes interval, at least one officer will march with the leading platoon.

PRECAUTIONS. 6. O's C. Coys are to take all due precautions and adopt suitable formations when nearing the trenches.

A. M. Ross
Captain.
Adjutant, 51st Battalion.

Issued to:-

- Copy No. 1 Filed.
2 War Diary
3 10th Battalion, A.I.F.
4 C Coy. 51st Battalion.
5 A Coy do
6 Q.M.

51st Battalion,
28-6-1916.

SYSTEM OF WORKING PARTIES.

TASKS 1. Working parties are to be regularly told off by O.C. Coys to definite hours and tasks.

The hours of work are :-

4 - 8 a.m.

7 - 8 p.m.

The order of importance of work is:-

(1) Repairs to parapets and improvement of points of military importance, such as fire steps, traverses, bomb stores, etc.

(2) Domestic improvements such as dug-outs, kitchens, etc.

PERSONNEL 2. The personnel is obtained thus:-

Morning At stand to, working parties of 10 - 12 men per platoon under a H.C.O. will commence the task allotted to them overnight by the O.C. Coy after consultation with the Senior Major or Engineer. These numbers are obtainable by taking half the night posts plus any men unemployed throughout the night: the following are not taken

(a) Half the Night Posts

(b) Day Posts.

(c) Other ranks who have been on special night duty in front such as covering parties, listening posts, patrols.

The turn over from Night to Day Posts is to take place at 8 a.m. when work finishes.

Evening Working Parties of same strength on similar lines.

SUPERVISION. 3. The Senior Major is generally responsible to the C.O.

An H.C.O. is to be in charge of each party.

The Company officer of the watch is to patrol freely from party to party.

DISCIPLINE. 4. Only the personnel referred to in para 2 (b) and (c) of the above may rest in their dug-outs between 4 - 8 a.m.

The half Night Post (i.e. para 2 (a)) under the supervision of the H.C.O. in charge group is to:-

1. Clear up the bay.

2. Clean ammunition.

3. Clean their own rifles and kit.

They are to be in the bay from stand down until relieved by Day Post.

STORES. 5. Are obtainable from dumps on requisition by O.C. Coys or Engineer Officer.

LOG BOOKS 6. Work finished, "in hand", and "proposed" is to be entered up in the Coy Log-book.

Am Ross
Lieutenant-Colonel.
O. C. 51st Battalion.

51ST BATTALION, A. I. F.Action in case of attack.
=====

GENERAL. The front line parapet is to be held at all costs. If, however, the bombardment is so intense as to make the front line untenable, then the action will be as follows:-

- (1) Troops over the length of parapet suffering heavy bombardment are if possible to be cleared away to the flanks.
- (2) Flanking fire from adjoining companies and Machine Gun is to be brought to bear on the ground over which the enemy must follow up into the breach.
- (3) (a) If no infantry attack follows, the breach is to be rebuilt as soon as possible.
- (b) If the enemy effects a lodgement temporarily, he is to be bombed out of the breach from the flanks..
- (c) If he breaks right through the general action, is to be firstly enclosed in a pocket formed by the avenues and the 300 yards line, and secondly to be immediately counter-attacked and driven out.

Therefore, in all cases, a bombing party is to be at once ~~xxx~~ placed at the head of any platoon adjoining the "broken" flank, and in all cases a bombing party is to be moved at the head of a platoon moving into an avenue or to the assistance of a neighbouring battalion.

Action in DetailA. COMPANY
FRONTAGE.

1. Should A Coy's line be breached, Nos. 3 and 4 bomb teams are to proceed to BEE POST and secure their buckets of bombs. No. 3 team will then move via V.C.AVENUE to A Coy's left flank. No. 4 team will proceed through gap of V.C.AVENUE over to BOND STREET making for A Coy's right. On reaching the firing line they will work towards one another. The support platoons of C and D Coys will move across the open to the 75 yards line. The O.C. A Coy will select suitable sectors in the 75 line where fire could be brought to bear on any part of the rear of the front line.

B. COMPANY
FRONTAGE.

2. Should B Coy's line be breached, No. 2 bomb team will move via PINNEYS AVENUE and No. 3 team via V.C.AVENUE to front line where they will work towards one another. The left flank platoon (front line) of A Coy will man the southern end of ~~PINNEYS~~ VC. AVENUE, AND THE RIGHT flank platoon will man the southern end of PINNEYS AVENUE.

The support platoons of C and D coys will move across the open to KEMPS POST, and work forward towards the front line parapet from this point.

C. & D.
COMPANIES'
FRONTAGE.

To counter a break in either Coy's frontage, Nos 1 & 2 bomb teams will secure buckets of bombs from TROU POST. No. 1 team will pass through the gap in the wire to the left of PINNEYS AVENUE and cross the open to the left of C or D Coy as required. No. 2 team will go down PINNEYS AVENUE to southern end. On reaching the front line teams will work inwards. Support platoons of C and D Coys will move down 300 yards line and take up the most effective position between TROU and LAIES RIVER POST.

LEFT
BATTALION

4. Should enemy breach the line of the battalion on our left and no attack is launched on our immediate front the support platoons of C and D Coys will man the 300 yards line between TROU and LAIES RIVER POSTS, and also BROMPTON AVENUE from the 300 yards line to the firing line. Nos. 1 and 2 bomb teams will move at the head of these platoons.

(2)

RIGHT
BATTALION

5. If the Battalion on our right is breached, the support platoons of C and D coys will move along 300 yards line to 1 A POST with the object of manning BOND STREET. Nos. 3 and 4 platoons will move at the head of these platoons

POST
GARRISON

6. In the two latter cases the platoons in garrison of BEE will stand fast and assist by fire. *Trou*

COMPANY IN
CLOSE
SUPPORT

7. The two platoons of the Company in close support in billets on RUE DE BOIS will on instructions from O.C. Battalion in trenches proceed to G Assembly trenches N.8.b.9.7. on the RUE PETILLION occupying the trenches by platoons with bombing sections on their right. The remaining two platoons at WEATHERCOCK HOUSE will move by emergency road to G Assembly trenches. Both parties will communicate immediately on arrival with Battalion Headquarters and await orders.

RESERVE
BOMBS

8. Company reserve of bombs will be carried forward by Company in close support. Bombing officer will arrange for a reserve supply of bombs to be carried forward.

Am Row
Lieutenant-Colonel.
O. C. 51st Battalion.

App 15

51st. Battalion.

13th. Aus. Inf. Bde.

30th. June 1916

Daily State.

	Officers	Other, Ranks.
Total on strength at end of last Month	28	992
Total on Strength at Present	27	969
Killed, Wounded, or Missing.	1	23
Number Effective	23	911
Detached On Wood Chopping Fatigue	1	38
At Schools of Instruction		1
In Hospital		11
On Brigade and Divisional Duties	3	8
Total on Strength.	27	969

Am Ross:

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