

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

Infantry

Item number: 23/63/15

Title: 46th Infantry Battalion

April 1917



AWM4-23/63/15

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118.

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Erase heading not required.)

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
	<u>L917.</u> <u>APRIL</u>			
	1st.		Battalion moved from WARLENCOURT to BAPAUME into billets.	No 1 Weekly Return.
	2nd		Lieut. Muriel A.J.C. transferred to 65th Battalion. 6th Division, ENGLAND. 4 O/R. arrived from 4th A.D.B.D. Capt. H.S. Davis resumed DUTY reporting back from 4th Div.	No 2 Syllabus of Training School.
	4th.		Battalion moved from BAPAUME taking over dug-outs occupied by the 13th Battalion near Monument Commemoratif (sheet 57 C - H 20 a.)	No 3 Monthly List of Officers
	6th.		5 O/R arrived from 4th A.D.B.D.	
	7th.		Battalion moved to forward area taking over portion of the Front Line near NOREUIL C 5 a 05 to U 28 c 8.2. D. Company in the front line, B Company in support, C and A Companies in reserve. Battalion H.Q. C 4 c 3 l.	No 5 Map of Ecoust- St-Mein.
	10th.		The Brigade in conjunction with the 4th Aust. Inf. Brigade was to attack the HINDENBURG line immediately East of BULLECOURT. In accordance therewith the 46th Battalion which was to attack the first objective (U 29 a 7 7 to U 28 b 5 9) occupied the jumping off trench (U 28 d) ready to move at 4.30 a.m. Just prior to ZERO orders were received to cancel the attack. The 46th Battalion then withdrew back to the village of VRAUCOURT C 19 d. In the withdrawal 2nd. Lieut. J.H. Barnes was wounded.	
	11th.		<u>PROMOTIONS.</u> To be 2nd. Lieuts. 4520 Sgt James A.V. 2027 T/Sgt. Walker F. 4324 Sgt Waight C. Orders having been received to carry out the operation abandoned the previous day the Battalion moved up over night and re-occupied the jumping off trench ready to move at 4.30 a.m. This operation was to be supported on the 12th Brigade front by Four Tanks - others operating on the 4th Infantry Brigade front.	

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118. 98

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices																				
	1917. APRIL. 11th.		<p>46th Battalion preceded by 4 Tanks was to attack the first objective (U 29 a 7 7) to (U 28 b 5 9). The Tanks were to move on to the second line of trenches which was the objective of the 48th Battalion. Two Tanks were then to manoeuvre down to U 28 b 5 9 and proceed along a line of trenches skirting the East of the village of BULLECOURT and thence along the South of the village to the South Western corner thereof. The 46th Battalion was to move along the trench as a mopping up party behind these tanks. None of the Tanks on the 12th Inf Bde front succeeded in reaching the wire in front of the first objective - hence the 46th Battalion having entered the objective were unable to carry out the latter part of this Programme - both objectives were successively taken by the 12th Inf. Bde, but owing to overwhelming counter attack about 11.30 a.m. both objectives had to be abandoned - 46th Battalion withdrawing to the railway cutting C 4 b (vide attached orders and report). At 9.30 p.m. the Battalion moved back to VRAUCOURT.</p> <p><u>CASUALTIES.</u></p> <table style="margin-left: 40px;"> <tr> <td>KILLED</td> <td>2</td> <td>Officers</td> <td>41</td> <td>O/R</td> </tr> <tr> <td>MISSING</td> <td>2</td> <td>"</td> <td>98</td> <td>"</td> </tr> <tr> <td>WOUNDED & MISSING</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>38</td> <td>"</td> </tr> <tr> <td>WOUNDED.</td> <td>5</td> <td>"</td> <td>201</td> <td>"</td> </tr> </table> <p>Officers Engaged in the above operation Lieutenant Colonel, H.K. Denham, Major V.J. Waine, Captain Davidson, Captain Boddington, Captain Davis, Captain Kimber, Captain Vanstan, Lieutenants Bull, masters Pentland, Speer, Stanton., 2nd. Lieuts. Bishop, Coulson, Ridgwell, Waight, Walker.</p>	KILLED	2	Officers	41	O/R	MISSING	2	"	98	"	WOUNDED & MISSING			38	"	WOUNDED.	5	"	201	"	
KILLED	2	Officers	41	O/R																				
MISSING	2	"	98	"																				
WOUNDED & MISSING			38	"																				
WOUNDED.	5	"	201	"																				
	12th.		<p>The Battalion moved back from Vraucourt to Bapaume entraining for ALBERT and then marched to Cruifix Camp, FRICOURT, (ALBERT sheet - F 3 b). The Battalion Pack dump at VRAUCOURT was blown up by a mine at 7.30 p.m. casualties entailed therein 3 killed and 2 wounded.</p>																					
	13/17		<p>In Camp at FRICOURT.</p>																					

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118 208

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or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	<u>1917</u> APRIL			
	15th		2nd. Lieut. Crichton 47th Battalion attached for Duty. 12 O/R arrived from 4th A.D.B.D. 1 O/R/ from ROUEN.	
	17th		Battalion moved to BRESLE into billets.	
	19th		81 O/R/ from the 4th A.D.B.D. 1 O/R Taken on the Strength (No. 2195 Pte Bruhn N - previously struck off as a deserter).	
	24th.		1 O/R. from 24th Battalion. AIF. 2 O/R. from Signalling Reinforcements. Captain W. Devine attached for Duty - R.C. Chaplain. Captain N. Clack transferred to 16th Bde.	
	25th.		20 O/R from 4th A.D.B.D. 3 Officers from 4th A.D.B.D. - 2nd. Lieuts. T.C. Carter and C.E. Palstra Captain J.J. McPherson (taken on strength from Supernumerary list.)	
	30th.		BATTALION in Billets at BRESLE. <u>From 4th A.D.B.D.</u> Captain W.E. Brooks and Captain F.M. Couchman 17 O/Ranks.	

John G. G. G.
.....Major
Acting CO. 46th Battalion.

SYLLABUS of TRAINING.

46th. BATTALION.

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Date	6.45 - 7.45 a.m.	9 a.m. - 10.45 a.m.	11 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.	2 p.m. - 3.30 p.m.	
<u>1917.</u>					
<u>APRIL.</u>					
Thursday 19th.		PLATOON DRILL	COMPANY CLOSE ORDER DRILL	EXTENDED ORDER DRILL	
Friday 20th.	B a y o n e t & P h y s i c a l T r a i n i n g & F i g h t i n g .	MUSKETRY INSTRUCTION	RIFLE EXERCISES	GUARDS & SENTRIES.	
Saturday 21st.		COMPANIES AT DISPOSAL OF	COMPANY COMMANDERS	KIT INSPECTION - PLATOON DRILL	
Sunday 22nd.		Church	Parade.	Half Holiday	
Monday 23rd.		MUSKETRY INSTRUCTION	RIFLE EXERCISES	COMPANIES IN ADVANCED & REAR GUARDS.	
Tuesday 24th.		COMPANY	IN	ATTACK	COMPANY DRILL
Wednesday 25th.		BATTALION	in	ATTACK.	MUSKETRY INSTRUCTION & RIFLE EXERCISES.
Thursday 26th.		COMPANIES	in	RAPID DEPLOYMENT	COMPANIES AT DISPOSAL OF COMPANY COMMANDERS
Friday 27th.		GUARDS & SENTRIES	RIFLE EXERCISES	EXTENDED ORDER DRILL	
Saturday 28th.	COMPANY DRILL	COMPANIES AT DISPOSAL of	COMPANY COMMANDERS	KIT INSPECTION COMPANY DRILL.	

All specialists will be trained under Specialist Officers - Musketry will be carried on.

18/4/17

.....Major
acting C.O. 46th. Battalion; A.I.E.

Appendix No. 2

598
for attack on "HINDENBERG" line near BULLECOURT.

9/4/1917.

Reference - Trench Map ECOUST-ST-MIEN. & sheet 5 1 B.

1. The 46th Battalion will take & hold the first objective from U 29 a 7 7 to U 28 b 5.9
 The 48th Battln. will take & hold 2nd objective from U 23 c 7.1 to U 28 d 5.4.
 The 47th Battalion will pass over the 1st & 2nd objectives & occupy the 3rd objective - to be defined later.
2. This operation will be carried out in conjunction with the 4th Bde on our Right & with Artillery Barrage.
3. Proposed Barrage Table:-

ZERO plus 16	Barrage lifts off 1st Objective and comes down between 1st & 2nd objectives.
" " 24	Barrage begins to creep back to 2nd objective.
" " 33	Barrage lifts off 2nd objective and comes down 200 yards beyond 2nd objective.
" " 38	Barrage lifts back another 200 yards.
" " 60	Barrage begins to creep back to final objective

Machine Gun Company will engage specially defined Targets between U 28 a 4 1 and U 28 b 2.9
4. The 46th Battalion will jump off from the trench which has been dug U 29 c 0 5 to U 28 d 1.7
5. "A" Coy. will detail 2 complete Platoons under Lieut. Stanton to report to O.C. "B" Coy - these will be attached to "B" Coy & will receive all orders from O.C. "B" Coy., during the operation.
6. Jumping Off Trench is allotted as follows:-

B. Coy. U 28 d 1.7	to	U 28 d 5.5
C. " U 28 d 5.5.	to	U 28 d 75.45
D. " U 28 d 75.45	to	U 29 c 05.
7. Objectives.

B. Coy. U 28 b 5.9	to	U 23 c 0.0
C. " U 23 c 0.0.	to	U 29 a 35.95
D. " U 29 a 35.95	to	U 29 a 7. 7.

"B" Coy will deal with all communication trenches in its sector & establish a block on its Left flank.
 "C" Coy will deal with the communication trenches in its sector.
 "D" Coy will deal with the communication trenches at U 29 a 35.95 and U 29 a 7.7.
8. The LEWIS GUN Officer will see that one extra Lewis gun from "A" Coy is handed over to both C & D Coys. These extra guns will be worked by C & D Coy. Gunners.
9. Dress. Fighting Order.
 Each man will carry 2 Mills Hand Grenades - these to form nucleus of Bomb store after reaching objective. 200 rounds per man will be carried.
 Each man will carry 2 sand Bags in his belt. 20 shovels per Coy will be carried - these will be carried on the back slipped under the Haversack. 24 Hours Rations & Iron rations will be carried.

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APPENDIX

9 cont.

Water Bottles to be Filled.

Bombers will carry as many bombs as possible.

Lewis gunners will carry as many filled magazines as possible.

10. A battalion dump has been formed at the railway at C 4 d 5.3.

11. O.C. "A" Coy. will detail a carrying party of 3 N.C.Os & 30 O/R to report to Lieut. Barnes at the Battalion dump 30 minutes before ZERO.

Signed by

H. K. Denham Lt. Colonel,
.....

C.O. 46th Battalion.

for attack on the "HINDENBERG" line near BULLECOURT.

Reference Map - Trench Map Ecoust-ST-Mien and sheet 51 P.

10/4/1917.

1. 46th Battalion will take the 1st objective.
48th Battalion will take the 2nd objective.
2. Zero hour 4.30 a.m. 11th inst.
3. Tanks will co-operate. The Infantry will not advance until 15 minutes after the Tanks pass the Jumping Off Trench and will move right forward into the objective following behind the Tanks.
4. After the Tanks take the two objectives Two Tanks will manoeuvre and work down to about U 28 a 5 9 and then work down the Trench in a S.W. direction to U 28 a 3 1 and thence in a N.W. direction along the trench skirting BULLECOURT.
5. On taking the 1st objective "D" Coy. will establish a strong block on our Right and try and connect up with the Brigade on our right. "B" Coy will watch for the movements of the Tanks & will follow the two tanks from U 28 a 5 9 in their S.W. direction and subsequent N. W. direction (as described in para.4) as a moping up party. When the Tanks enter BULLECOURT at about U 28 a 3 1 a special signal of 3 Green Flares fired in quick succession will be sent up by "B" Coy., ~~as a~~ on this signal the 185th Brig. will move forward. "B" Coy. will follow as Mopers up behind the Tanks until the 185th Brigade reaches the trench skirting BULLECOURT but in no case will they follow further than U 27 b 0 5. 6 5. On meeting the 185th Brigade "B" Coy will withdraw along the trench and help hold the captured trench with their Left flank at U 28 a 3 1 and their Right Flank in touch with "C" Coy. 46th Battalion. As "B" Coy mops up as herein described "C" & "D" Coys will open out to their Left and establish posts all along captured trench.
6. Contact Aeroplanes will fly over Captured area at 6.30 a.m. & 8 a.m. at which hours Flares will be Lit and contact signals shown.
7. Prisoners to Battalion H.Q. U 28 d 3 0.
8. Reports will be forwarded as frequently as possible.

SIGNED

H. K. Denham... Lt. Colonel,

C. C. 46th Battalion

BULLECOURT - 11/4/17.

Reference - Trench Map ECOUST-ST-MEIN & sheet 51 B.

1. The objective allotted to the 46th Battalion was the first line from U 29 a 7 7 to U 28 b 5 9 The 48th Battalion being allotted an objective in the 2nd line from U 23 c 71 to U 22 d 54
2. Preliminary operation orders were written out, read over to, and notes made thereon by all Company Commanders (Copy attached hereto) - and the whole scheme carefully explained to them. On the evening of the 10th certain changes in the mode of attack as laid down by higher authority necessitated further orders to be issued (copy attached hereto) - the scheme was again carefully explained by me, personally, to the company commanders concerned and a copy of these orders handed by me to them.
3. The jumping off trench was occupied and all preparations ready by 3Q30 a.m. on the morning of the 11th inst. At 5.10 a.m. Capt. Davis, who commanded the centre sector of the attack, spoke to me on the telephone to the following effect - "Only One Tank has passed our jumping off trench we can't see any of the others - are we to advance?" I at once ordered the advance and communicated my action at once to 12th Brigade H.Q.
4. At 5.45 a.m. Lieut. Pentland returned from the Right of our objective and reported that 30 men had been killed on the enemy's wire, the trench was full of the enemy, and he did not know what happened to the rest of the attacking party. A few minutes later I received the following message from Major Waine, who commanded the Right sector "part of First line taken by 46th - the 48th have taken part of the 2nd line. Will let you know something more definite later - 48th want reinforcements also ourselves". I at once sent off a carrying party of 30 with Bombs & Rifle grenades, and issued an order at 6 a.m. to the O.C. "A" Company 47th Battalion to the following effect - "Move your company up at once to reinforce. Half to 1st objective U29 a 7 7 to U 23 c 00. Other half company to second objective U 23 c 5 2 to U 23 c 0 4", and notified Brigade and C.O. 48th of my action.

- At 6.10 a.m. a message from the front line - timed 5.56 a.m. was received stating that GABY had taken 2nd objective but Germans were counter attacking and GAIN was holding. This was notified to Brigade.
5. About 6.30 a.m. "A" Company 47th Battalion moved through to reinforce as previously ordered. As they passed through the Battalion advanced dump they took therefrom 600 Mills Hand Grenades for the First line troops - this being over and above the two per man carried by them.
6. At 6.30 a.m. a verbal message (Corporal Wilkinson) purporting to come from Captain Beddington from the Left Flank stated "Have taken 1st objective and got as far round as the South West corner BULLECOURT" - this was communicated to Brigade.
7. At 6.25 a.m. a message was sent from the Front line by Major Waine (received 6.40 a.m.) as follows:- "Running out of Bombs & Rifle Grenades - 48th holding part of 2nd line - we are being bombed on both flanks - our casualties very heavy". On receipt thereof every available man was sent up carrying supplies of Bombs. Subsequently I applied to Brigade verbally - per phone - for a carrying party and later 1 Officer & 50 others 47th Battalion passed through for the Front line carrying supplies of Mills Hand Grenades.
8. At 5.56 a.m. a message was sent by Lieut. Masters stating that the 12th Brigade held the 2nd objective - the Germans were counter attacking - and asking for Rifle Grenades & Lewis Gun ammunition.
9. About 10 a.m. a message was received from Major Waine as follows:- "Must have more ammunition, Bombs & Rifle Grenades. Vickers requires 4 gallons Water and at least 6000 rounds S.A.A. Enemy massing in RIENCOURT - Rifle Grenades most important". 4 Petrol tins of water were forwarded at once - no one available for further stores. Nothing further was heard from the front line but at about 11.15 a.m. our men were seen evacuating the objective which fact was at once communicated verbally by me to Brigade. A few minutes later a heavy barrage commenced on the enemy trenches.
10. The troops from the Front line fell back from the positions held by our own men near the railway.

GENERAL REMARKS.

1. From the attached report of Lieut Stanton it would appear that most of the casualties occurred between the jumping off trench and the objective - owing to a heavy Machine Gun fire from the objective but more especially to Machine Gun fire from the Trenches skirting the East side of BULLECOURT and from BULLECOURT itself. Our Troops advancing would have to move about 700 yards with a heavy enfilade Machine Gun fire from this Left Flank.
2. On the Left Flank there seems to have been a continued Bombing contest with varied success.
On the Right a similar Bombing contest took place until about 11 a.m. when owing to a shortage of Bombs and a heavy counter attack by the enemy the troops on this flank were forced to retire down the trench and eventually to evacuate.
3. During the whole operation the enemy had a trench Mortar situated somewhere in BULLECOURT which did considerable damage to our troops in the Left sector of the objective.
4. The failure to hold the Line seems to me to have been due to the difficulty in getting supplies to the Front line owing to all carrying parties having to pass through the heavy enfilade Machine gun fire previously referred to.
5. A Battalion forward dump had been established at Advanced Battalion H.Q. U28 d 30 containing approximately the following stores:-
 - 4500 No. 5 Mills Hand Grenades
 - 800 Mills No. 23 Rifle Grenades.
 - 50000 Rounds of S.A.A.Of these stores my carrying party took up 720 Mills Hand Grenades 360 Mills Rifle Grenades and about 5000 Rounds of S.A.A. before all were killed or wounded.
6. The attacking party over and above the 2 Mills Grenades per man took with them a further 500 Mills Hand Grenades.
The company of the 47th took with them 600 additional Hand Grenades.
Later a carrying party of 50 men from the 47th Battalion carried forward another 600 Mills Hand grenades.
7. Each man in the attack carried 220 rounds of SAA, 2 Bombs per man, each Company Bomber carried 6 Mills No. 5 Hand Grenades and each company had 72 No. 23 Rifle Bombs.

8. CASUALTIES.

KILLED	2 Officers	35 O/Ranks
WOUNDED	5 "	133 O/Ranks
Wounded) &) Missing)		47 "
MISSING	1 Officer	147 "
PRISONER	1 "	

The following are the names of the officers:-

- PRISONER Major V.J.Waine
- KILLED Capt.H.S.Davis
- " F.E.Boddington
- MISSING 2nd.Lieut.L.P.Ridgwell.
- WOUNDED Capt.L.J.Kimber
- Lieut W.C.Pentland
- " CH.Speer
- " W.F.H.Master
- 2nd.Lt.V.R.Bishop.

9. Trenches in the "HINDENBURG" Line. These are of the usual type about 7 feet deep 2 feet wide at the bottom - Buck-boarded & Drained - and 6 to 8 feet wide at the top. There are numerous Machine Gun Emplacements - no sign of concrete whatsoever.

10. DUGOUTS. Of the usual deep type about 30 feet underground - boarded but not concrete.

Signed -

HK.DENHAM Lt.Colonel,
CO, 46th Battalion.

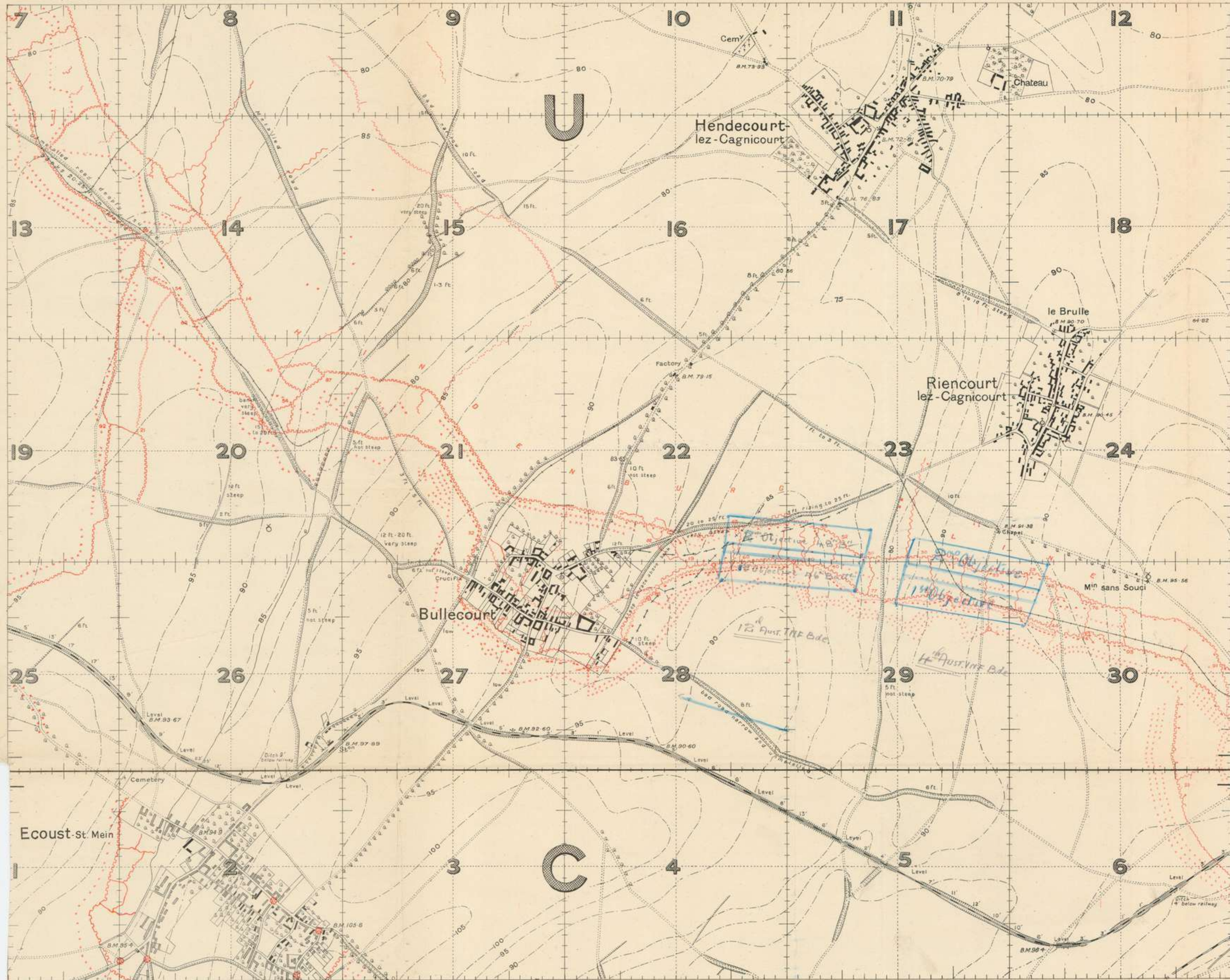
13/4/17

598
10-5

1:10,000

ECOUST-ST. MEIN

EDITION I.



57th Field Survey C.E.R.E., (843) 31-3-17.

SCALE - 1:10,000

TRENCHES CORRECTED FROM INFORMATION RECEIVED UP TO 1-4-17.

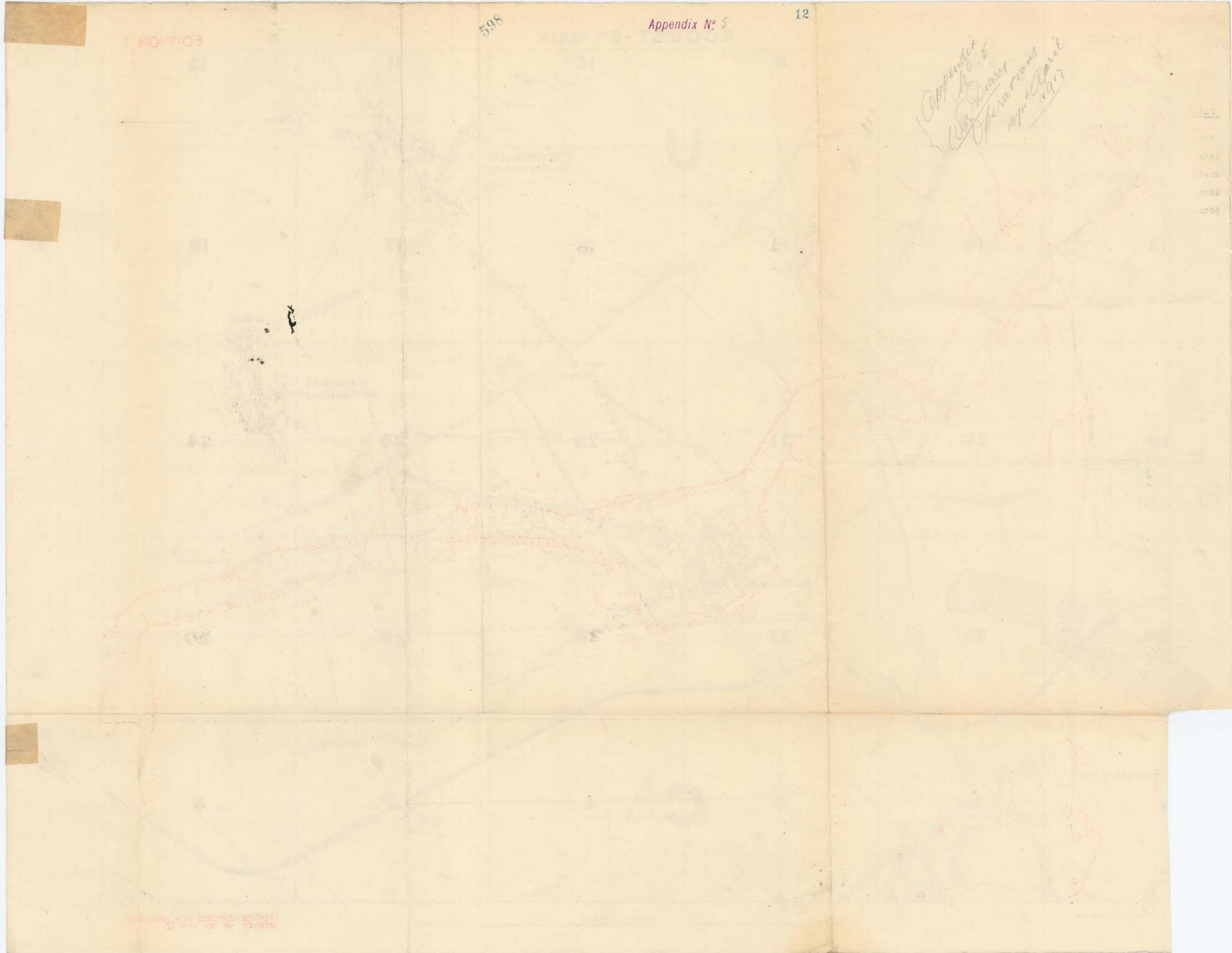
EDITION 1

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Appendix No 5

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Appendix
No 5
War Diary
Operations
19th April
1917



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46th. BATTALION. A.I.F.Weekly Strength.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Officers</u>	<u>O/R.</u>	<u>TOTAL.</u>
7th.	40	1165	1205
14th	66	830	866
21st	38	873	911
28th	43	894	937
30th.	43	892	935

30/4/1917.

.....*John J. ...* Major
Acting C.O. 46th. Battalion.

46th. BATTALION. A.I. F.

List of OFFICERS doing duty with the BATTALION.

Rank	N a m e s.	
Lt. Colonel	Denham	H.K.
Major	Edgley	J.
Captains	Clark	G.H.
	Couchman	F.M.
	McPherson	J.J.
	Brooks	W.C.
	Simonson	P.W.
	Vanstan	G.S.
Lieutenants	Payne	D.B.
	Stanton	J.A.
	Bull	L.
2nd.Lieuts.	Coulson	L.L.
	Brierley	P.C.
	Carr	T.
	Foster	R.F.
	James	A.V.
	Carter	T.C.
	Palstra	C.E.
ADJUTANT Captain	Davisdon	W.R.
Quartermaster - Hon.Lieut.	Outhwaite	R.

Officers attached;

Captain - R.M.O.	Thomas	E.B.
" R.C.Chaplain -	Devine	W.
2nd.Lieut.	Crichton	L.N. (47th Battalion)
Mons.	Butel	(Interpreter)

.....*John Edgley*.....Major
Acting C.O.46th.Battalion.