

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

Machine Guns

Item number: 24/17/31

Title: 12th Australian Machine Gun
Company

September 1918



AWM4-24/17/31

CONFIDENTIAL.

ORIGINAL.

~~DUPLICATE.~~

~~TRIPLICATE.~~



Australian Imperial Force.

WAR DIARY

OF

12TH AUST. MACHINE GUN COY.

FOR

SEPTEMBER 1918

Signature of Officer compiling

*(Sgd) G. F. Taylor, Capt.
(Sgd) E. M. Callimore Lt.
A. R. Spinnell Lt.*

Signature of Officer Commanding

*A. R. Spinnell Lt.
Op 11 M. 1918*

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.

WAR DIARY
or
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.
(Erase heading not required.)

12TH AUSTRALIAN
MACHINE GUN
COMPANY.
No.
Date

Army Form C. 2118.

213

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
LONGUEAU	September 1		bloudy day. R b Church Parade held in LONGUEAU church at 9.0 A.M. b of E Parade on Parade ground of 4 th Aust Pioneer Bn at 11.0 A.M. Lieut. O'REILLY and 2 O.R returned from G.H.Q Small Arms School, CAMIERS. Strength of boy: - 8 OFF 157 O.R	
	2		Training carried on as per syllabus. The 4 th Aust Pioneer Bn held sports in the afternoon, to which the company was invited. Light showers of rain fell during the afternoon. Strength of boy 10 OFF 160 O.R	
	3		Day cloudy. During the morning the company carried out Syllabus of training. Afternoon, hot baths and change of clothing. Capt. TAYLOR attended conference at Battalion H.Q at 2.30 P.M. a board of enquiry was held in boy. O.R. consisting of Capt. LANGBORNE, Lieut. PORTIN and Lieut. PRENDERGAST for the purpose of enquiring into the loss of a limber on 27-4-18. Capt TAYLOR gave evidence. Lieut. PRENDERGAST attended a meeting at Bn H.Q as sports representative for the boy.	
	4		Weather fine. During the morning the boy attended the range to fire stoppage practices. The afternoon was devoted to sports. At 2.30 pm the Officers attended the Transport lines, whence an exhibition was held on 1 limber, scaled pattern, 2 pack horses & method of carrying pack saddles, transport shelters and drivers gear. Capt CARROLL, m.c. illustrated the method of removing limber wheels, ect.	

A6945 Wt. W11422/M1160 350,000 12/16 D. D. & L. Forms/C./2118/14.

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1

WAR DIARY

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

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12th AUSTRALIAN
MACHINE GUN
COMPANY

No.

Date.

Army Form C. 2118.

(21)
3

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
LONGUEAU	September 5		Weather very fine. Coy attended range and fired practice 1 and 2 and part I.G. M. G. C. The afternoon was devoted to overhauling mobile bulk S.A. A. a company commander's meeting was held at Bn. H. Q. Mess at 9.30 a.m. Strength of Coy: - 10 OFF 158 O.R.	
	6		Very hot day. Full marching Order Parade at 9.30 A.M., remainder of morning Parade devoted to stoppages, mechanism and description. Afternoon parade - Swimming	
BARLEUX	7		Lieut. TROTMAN visited Wholesale B. E. F. Canteen at AMIENS. Coy moved by motor lorry to BARLEUX - Sheet G.R.C. Rd 90.90. Unit embussed at 9.30 at LONGUEAU, reaching destination at 2 P.M. Roads very dusty. On arrival at destination all hands started to dig themselves in, in old sunken road, which was the site of much heavy fighting in 1918. Plenty of timber and material was available in village. Transport with Coy.	
	8		Day spent in getting all hands comfortable. Many enemy aeroplanes were over during the night and dropped numerous bombs in close proximity of camp, exploded one of the abandoned dumps, which caused a few casualties in units camped near by.	
CATELET	9		Coy. moved at 2.30 p.m. under arrangements of 12th Aust. Inf. Bde. to camp at CATELET (P. 8. 360.80). Transport parked at BRUSLE (J. 34. a) under Bn. T. O. The camp occupied by the Coy was previously a German Corps H. Q., but the enemy had destroyed a number of the huts before clearing off. However, adequate shelter was found for the men. Heavy rain fell during the night, Capt. TAYLOR visited 13th Coy. H. Q. which was well in advance. Lieut. HATCHER 81 O.R. transferred to 24th Aust. M. G. Coy. Strength of Coy 9 OFF 152 O.R.	
	10		Orders received for Coy. to take over disposition of 13th Aust. M. G. Coy at P. 21 d 90.90 and an advance party of 10 officers & 4 O.R. proceeded to there at 2.30 p.m. + more cancelled at 3.0 P.M. - the Coy remaining in same location. Capt. TAYLOR visited 12th Aust. Inf. Bde. H. Q. in afternoon. Very heavy showers, with gusts of wind during the day.	APPENDIX NO. 1. Operation Order

(A8004) Wt. W1771/M2-31 750,000 5/17 Sch. 52 Forms/C2118/14

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WAR DIARY

OR

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

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Army Form C. 2118.

(3)

213

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Q21 C70.70	September 11		Wet showery day. Coy. moved under Brigade arrangements to position at Q21 C70.70, immediately in front of the ruined village of VRAINCES, where sufficient building material for all hands to make themselves comfortable by dark. Capt. TAYLOR reconnoitred line to be held in case of enemy attack. Transport remained in same position only 9 limbers moved with unit. Positions were selected for guns in case of emergency. B.C.D. Section to go forward - A section in reserve at disposal of G.O. C. 12 th Aust Inf Bde.	
	12		Very windy & showery day. Farther reconnaissance by D. B. and Section Officers. The Coy. paid in the afternoon by Lieut. MARTIN. Lieut. MALLARD left Coy to proceed to PARIS on leave. The D. B. went to 12 th Bde. H. Post noon. Very wet night. During the night a number of gas shells fell a few hundred yards from the Coy, causing no damage.	
	13		Weather somewhat finer. D.B. and all Officers reconnoitred positions at present occupied by 24 th Aust M. G. Bn. At 7 P.M. light shelling in proximity of Coy bivouacs. Eleven artillery horses, which moved in during the morning were wounded. Splendid news of French-American success on VERDUN front received. Enemy bombing machines very active in early part of night. Four were brought down by our chasing machines. Two bombs fell very close to Coy bivouacs. Transport moved to stables at Q13. d80.60 also killed and 4 M. G. Bns. went up on 13 th Bde front & unit stood by in case of attack on large scale.	

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WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

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12TH AUSTRALIAN
MACHINE GUN
CO. 12TH AUSTRALIAN

No.

Date

Army Form C. 2118.

(4)

213

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	September			
	14		<p>Fine day. 50% of boy constructed gun positions along line of defence. D. B. visited 12th Aust A.I. Bde at noon. Lieut G. MARTIN left boy for transport duty to AUSTRALIA. Lieut HATCHER, O.B. 24th Aust M.G. Coy visited boy H.Q. during the day. Bathing parade at 4.0 P.M. for the troops. The D. B. attended conference at Bdr. H.Q. at 8 P.M. A fine issue of Comforts was received from the Aust Comforts Fund.</p>	
	15		<p>Fine bright. Our aircraft very active. Enemy H.V. gun shelled heavy battery position near by, causing several casualties to the crews. Three of our captive balloons were observed to be brought down in flames by hostile aircraft. Lt. Col. MURRAY V.C., D.S.O., D.C.M. held Orderly Room at 12.30 P.M. Lieut UPTON visited boy in evening. Lieut TROTMAN & I.N.C.O. reconnoitred forward positions of 13th Aust M.G. Coy. Foot-ball (Aust Rules) match was played against 108th Battery, A.F.A. resulted in a win for the Machine Gunners by 1 point. Small delivery of Aust mail. Some enemy bombing planes were over early in the night, but no bombs were dropped in vicinity of camp. Strength of Company - 7 OFF 158 O.R.</p>	
	16		<p>Very hot, windy. Respirators and field dressings inspected. Working party under Lieut E Upton constructed forward positions for boy H.Q. at R. 8 a.m. 9.9. D. B. attended a conference of Unit Commanders at 12th Aust Inf. Bde. H.Q. at 4.0 P.M. Conference was in reference to forthcoming offensive operations on the 18th inst. "A" Section, under 2/Lieut TROTMAN.</p>	

A6945 Wt. W11422/M1160 350,000 12/16 D. D. & L. Forms/C.2118/14.

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4

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WAR DIARY

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

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12TH AUSTRALIAN
MACHINE GUN
COMPANY.

No.

Date

Army Form C. 2118.

51
213

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	September			
	16		relieved forward guns of 13 th Aust M.G. Coy. Very heavy storm, accompanied by severe thunder and lightning during the night. Several enemy bombing machines crossed our lines during the night & bombed vicinity.	
	17		Weather fine. Preparations made for attack to-morrow. 'A' Section allotted to 48 th Aust Inf Bn for attack and to advance with Infantry. 'C & D' Section allotted to 45 th Aust Inf Bn and B' to 46 th Aust Inf Bn. The men were issued with comforts and cigarettes. Coy H.Q. moved to Railway Cutting R8 at 10.15 before 8.0 AM. Personnel remained in same houses & prepared to move forward with their respective battalions at 2.0 AM. Enemy bombing machines very active. Strength of Coy 7 OFF. 157 O.R.	
	18		Sections moved forward to time, as previously arranged. 'A' Sect (2/Lieut. TROTTMAN) with 48 th Aust Inf Bn detached themselves from the left sector and joined the 48 th Aust Inf Bn at Z-30, on the hopping off tape. 'B', 'C' & 'D' Sections moved off at 2.0 AM - gear being transported on pack horses. All Sections joined their Battalions in good time. The day was very wet and going bad. Some of the guns got well ahead of the Infantry. Casualties sustained during the attack: Lieut Prendergast and 10 O.R. The O.C. went round positions in the evening. S.A.A. expenditure: - 20,000 rounds during the day.	APPENDIX No 2 operation Report 18 th - 22 nd

A6945 Wt. W11422/M1160 350,000 12/16 D. D. & L. Forms/C.2118/14.

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WAR DIARY

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12TH AUSTRALIAN
MACHINE GUN
COMPANY

No.

Date.

Army Form A 2118.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	September			
	19		<p>Time clear day. Hostile artillery active. The D. B. visited all the positions. "I" section moved forward to front line under Lieut. RICHARDS (24th Aust. M.G. Coy). Lieut O'REILLY wounded. Capt TAYLOR wounded at duty. 2 O.R. killed in action + Indirect fire was carried out during the night.</p>	
	20		<p>Enemy artillery quiet, only scatterings shelling. The D. B. got into touch with the English Unit on the Right. Showery day. Lt. Col. MURRAY, V.C., D.S.O., D.C.M. visited the gun positions. Strength of Boy, 6 OFF. 161 O.R.</p>	
	21		<p>Capt TAYLOR relinquished command of Boy at noon, on account of returning to AUSTRALIA. Lt. CULLIMORE assumed command. Shelling very scattered. Small quantity of Green + Gas put over. No casualties. Weather fine. Very moonlight night. Lt. CULLIMORE, M.C. visited guns with English officers of the relief Coy. at night. 1 N.C.O. & 4 gunners per section of 46th M.G. Bn. (being advanced party of relief) went forward to guns & stayed there for the night. An equal number of our men were withdrawn. Casualties by H.E. shell, bpl McLean, Ptes Scott & Ringin. Strength of Boy 5 OFF. 162 O.R.</p>	
	22		<p>Boy was relieved by 2 coys of 46th M.G. Bn (British) - B' Coy. relieving 4 right-hand guns in support line & 4 righthand guns of forward line + C' Coy relieved 4 guns in support line & 4 guns in forward line. The last 4 guns of C' Coy arrived an hour late & when found by Lieut. TROTMAN's guides it was ascertained that their limbers had</p>	

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WAR DIARY

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

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12th INFANTRY
DIAGONAL
CO. 1st BATT.

Army Form C. 2118.

213

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	September 22		<p>Collected Lt. PONTIN's guides lead their relief to the front line. Pte SIDEY then went forward, detaining "B" Coy's limbers to bring out remaining guns. During the relief heavy hostile bombardment was put up on support line, the result of which 1 O.R. was wounded and 3 guns were put out of action, their barrel casing being pierced. A & B Sections filed out to Coy H.Q., the limber proceeding to transport lines, arriving at midnight. Front line guns, under Lieut. PONTIN, arrived at 4.0 A.M. All ranks had a hot supper served on arrival. Strength of Coy 4 OFF 158 O.R.</p>	
FLAUCOURT. G25 NA Centre.	23		<p>Coy. marched to billets at FLAUCOURT (G25 NA centre), billets consisting of dug-outs and old trenches. Lieut. TRIMBLE (& batman) reported back from Corps School and assumed command of Coy. D. C. attended conference at Battalion H.Q. at 7.0 P.M. Lieut. MALLARD returned from PARIS leave. The day was showery.</p>	
DISSY G2E34C2080	24		<p>Breakfast at 6.0 A.M. Coy fell in and marched to HERBECOURT (G2E H25.90.90), where the Battalion embussed for DISSY (G2E 34C 2080), reaching destination at 3.0 P.M. The billets were not very good, but the inhabitants of the village were very hospitable. Lieut. CULLIMORE, M.C., Sergeants PUGH M.M., MILLER M.M., SCHAPER, Bpl PRITCHARD and Pte CALVAN remained at HERBECOURT, reporting to Battalion H.Q. before proceeding to join the AMERICAN MISSION. The transport on this occasion were Battalionised.</p>	

W. J. P. Smith

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WAR DIARY
or
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.
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12th Sept 1914
MACHINE GUN
69 BR.

Army Form C. 2118.

8

213

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	September			
	24		and moved per road for rear areas, Transport Sgt NICHOLLS being in charge of Boys Transport. On arrival at DISSY. Lieut. PONTIN left for U.K. leave. During the night rain fell steadily. Strength of Coy: - 4 OFF 155 OR.	
	25		No work was done to-day, the men being kept busy cleaning up their equipment and clothing. As the billets were rather scattered, "B" & "D" sections exchanged their billets for a large cellar at the Chateau, it being more comfortable and rain proof. Transport arrived at 5-0-P.M. and good horse lines and limber park were found quite close to the Orderly Room.	
LE MESGE 62 nd IA Centre	26		The day broke fine & warm. In the morning the gun gear was partly cleaned and limbers repacked ready for the move at 2-0-P.M. for LE MESGE (62 nd IA. Centre), that village providing better belleting accommodation. The distance was only 5 Kilometres, so that by 4-0 P.M. all sections were comfortably settled down once more. The Coy. moved with the Coy. and horse lines were found alongside the river. As stabling accommodation was plentiful, all horses were stabled in the village at night.	
	27		The morning was passed in cleaning all gun gear, taking shortages of clothing, equipment and gun gear. It was found that during the relief of gun teams in the line 3 gun barrels were perforated in the barrel casing by shell fire. In the afternoon	

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WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

12 Army Form C. 2118.
213
CO. 19
No.
Date.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	September			
	27		a sports meeting was held in the boy. to form a selection committee for Rugby Association and Australian Rules Football & In the Syllabus of Training drawn up by the boy, the morning is devoted to work under section officers and the afternoon to Recreational training. Strength of boy. 4 OFF 1CA OR.	W. P. M. L. L.
	28		Rain fell lightly during last night, but the day proved fine. Syllabus of Training was adhered to.	W. P. M. L. L.
	29		Church Parade was well attended. Parade was held at I.I.S.C. halfway between the villages of LEMESGE & RIENCOURT, for the Battalion.	W. P. M. L. L.
	30		The weather continued showery. 5 N.C.O.s, detailed to attend Battalion Infantry School, reported to Lieut. Pent, 24th Aust M.G. Coy and 3 O.R for the Signal School reported to Sgt TEMPLETON, m.m., Battalion H.Q. Syllabus of Training adhered to & 40 of the boy. attended educational class, held at the "Cafe Modern" in the afternoon. Strength of Boy. 4 OFF	W. P. M. L. L.

WAR DIARY

OF

APPENDIX

12TH AUSTR. MACHINE GUN COY

FOR

SEPTEMBER 1918

LIST OF APPENDICES.

No.

Subject.

1. Operation Order No 18.
2. Operation Report, 18th - 22nd Sep. 1918.



12th. AUSTRALIAN MACHINE GUN COMPANY.

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Report on operations from September 18th. to September 22nd. 1918.

1. On the 14th. September, while the company was bivouaced in reserve at Q21c70.70, I received notice to attend a conference at the 4th. AUSTRALIAN M.G. Bn Headquarters where I was told that the Division would shortly take part in an offensive operation, and that the company would be attached to the 12th. A.I. Bde, for the attack. I was also suggested that Zero day would probably be the 18th. Consequently I at once went to see the G.O.C. 12th. Bde., who showed me the plans of the infantry attack. On the 16th. inst. the G.O.C. 12th. Bde. called a conference of unit commanders to make final arrangements, in reference to the attack, which was now definitely fixed for the 18th.

was

2. The role of the machine guns was that four guns (1 sect.) would be allotted to each battalion, the remaining section being held in reserve. Later it was decided that all four sections would go forward in the attack, and I allotted the sections as follows:-

"A" Section.	(2/Lt. TROTMAN)	to 48th. Bn.	1st. Objective, GREEN LINE
"C"	(Lt. O'REILLY)	to 45th. Bn.	2nd. " RED LINE
"D"	(Lt. PONTIN M.C.)	to 45th. Bn.	2nd. " RED LINE
"B"	(Lt. PRENDERGAST)	to 46th. Bn.	3rd. " BLUE LINE

My reasons for this distribution were as follows:- (a) The section which was attached to the 48th. Battalion was ordered to relieve the right forward section of the 13th. Company on the night of the 16/17. The location of this section was only a short distance from the assembling point of the 48th. Battalion. Therefore the personnel would not have far to carry their gear to the jumping off tapes. It was also anticipated that as serious resistance would be encountered from enemy infantry, and also his artillery during this phase of the attack would be accurate and intense, hence, as the gear was to be manhandled, it saved the risk of using pack animals.

(b). "C" and "D" sections, with the 45th. Battalion would be able to maintain touch with the infantry during the advance to their objective - (RED LINE), and finally rush the guns forward on the pack horses as soon as the first wave of infantry reached the objective, and then bring fire to bear on the enemy, who were attempting to escape or reinforce, also be able to assist by direct overhead fire the advance of the 46th. Battalion to the BLUE LINE. The guns would also be in a central position to replace casualties of "B" section, who were pushing forward with the 46th. Battalion to the BLUE LINE.

3. On the evening of the 17th. Company Head-Quarters were established in the railway cutting at R8 440.90, but the section remained at the bivouacs, as it was not intended to move before 2.0 a.m. on the 18th. Zero Hour was at 5.20 a.m. Hot breakfast was served at 2.0 a.m.

4. The transport arrangements were as follows:- "A" section moved at midnight from their forward positions and joined the 48th. Battalion at its assembly point at 4.30 a.m. The crews carried their gear, and shortly after the leaving the hop-off tape 3 of one gun crew were wounded. Lieut. TROTMAN decided to leave gun behind and proceed with remain crews, which arrived at the objective simultaneously with the second wave of the infantry. The guns were established in positions at DEANSTRENCH and several targets were engaged with good results. The fourth gun, which was left behind, was also in position an hour later. "C" & "D" sections, attached to the 45th. Battalion for advance to the RED LINE, left the bivouacs at 3.0 a.m. The gear was carried on limbers close to the assembly line of the 45th. Battalion, where it was unloaded and transferred to pack horses. The horses were loaded as follows:- 10 belt boxes, 1 tin of water and the cross-head. Gun, tripod, condenser and spare parts and remaining four belt boxes were carried with the crews. Owing to the guide losing himself, the limbers were an hour late, but this afterwards turned out to be a blessing, as the hostile barrage ~~which~~ had lost its intensity before it was reached. However the ground was good for travelling and the infantry was soon overtaken. As they moved forward they spread into three groups. Three guns under Lieut. O'REILLY went to the 1st. ...

12TH AUSTRALIAN
MACHINE GUN
COMPANY

2
APPENDIX 213
over. As they moved forward they split into three groups, Three guns under Lieut O'REILLY went to the left, three guns under Lieut PONTIN "M.C." and two guns under Sgt PUGH "M.M." to the centre. Sgt PUGH "M.M." showed great initiative and leadership in getting the guns forward in advance of the infantry, bringing destructive fire on to parties of Germans who were exposed in the open country in front of him. Four animals were wounded during the advance.

5. B Section (46th Bn) moved forward under the same arrangements as C and D, with the exception that no limbers were utilised, the gear going forward on eight pack horses (two per gun). Under this arrangement no unnecessary fatigue was caused to personnel, who only had to carry light fighting order. Two animals were wounded on the journey forward. This must be considered remarkably light, as they were under fairly heavy fire all the way. The horses were taken to the RED LINE and unloaded. Positions were taken up in this locality as the advance of the 46th Bn was not to be continued until 10.0 p.m. Meanwhile "A" Section moved up to the RED LINE, from the GREEN LINE, thus enabling me to cover the advance of the 46th Bn by direct overhead fire from twelve guns. At 10.0 p.m. "B" section moved off with the infantry while "A", "C" and "D" sections covered the advance. Fire was maintained for ten minutes on the BLUE LINE, and then lifted to line 450 yards in advance of this which remained the S.O.S. "B" section covered the country without mishap, but on arrival a shell landed in the trench, killing two men and severely wounded Lieut. PRENDERGAST. On the following day, after reconnaissance of the sector, it was decided to send "D" section (Lieut. PONTIN, M.C.) to the front line and thus the front would be protected by 8 guns, with 8 guns in position on the red line, some 800 yards in the rear. During the afternoon of the 19th Lieut. O'REILLY was wounded, leaving me with two Officers only. The Battalion then allotted me Lieut. RICHARDS of the 24th. Company, who took charge of "B" section (forward). The guns were then controlled as follows:-

Front line	Lieut. PONTIN, M.C.	"D" Section
" "	" RICHARDS	"B" "
Red "	" TROTMAN	"A" & "C" Section.

6. At 1.0 p.m. a minor operation was carried out by the 48th Bn. on the 20th, in which the 8 guns under Lieut. TROTMAN co-operated, firing 27,000 rounds of S.A.A. During the early evening of the 19th S.A.A. was taken by limber actually to the front trenches by Lieut. CULLIMORE, M.C. to whom great credit is due. The disposition of the guns were as follows:-

and remained so until I handed over the command to Lieut. CULLIMORE, M.C. Lieut. CULLIMORE took over the command at 1.0 p.m. on the 21st.

7. S.A.A. expenditure during the tour was:-

18th.	indirect fire	5,000
	indirect "	14,000
19th.	direct "	2,000
	indirect "	27,000
20th.	direct "	nil
	indirect "	10,000
	TOTAL	58,000

A great quantity of German ammunition was fired from captured German guns from the front line, the approximate quantity being 14,000 rounds. Lieut.

8. Taking into consideration the nature of the operation casualties were extremely light, being 3 Officers and 14 other ranks. Particulars herewith:- Killed Wounded

No 353 Pte. T.C.F. MCCARTHY
No 6368 " G. THOMSON

Lieut. O'REILLY
" PRENDERGAST
No 1734 Cpl. Z.C. FOWLER
2175 " M.J. MCLEAN
291 " G. PRENTICE, M.M.
2387 Pte. A.J. BLUM
2340 " J. BEALE
232 " E.G. BELL
279 " H. BROWN
7014 " G. MUNNOCH
518 " E.S. RICHARDS



No 518 Pte. J.J. STEER
607 " J. SCOTT, M.M.
744 " A. RINGIN

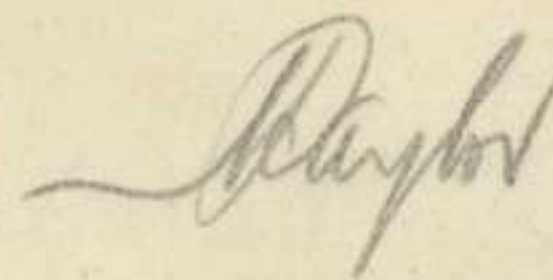
3.

WOUNDED AT DUTY
Captain A. F. TAYLOR

6 animals were wounded during the advance, 4 of which had to be destroyed.

9 Rations were excellent throughout and the cooker was pushed well forward. On the afternoon of the advance.

10. Transport arrangements were also excellent and Lieut. CULLIMORE, M.C. showed great daring and enterprise in the way in which he took S.A.A. and rations to the most forward positions. An excellent supply of comforts were available during the operations. A good supply of water was available.



Captain,
O.C. 12th. Aust. M.G.Co.

