

AWM4

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

Machine Guns

Item number: 24/23/3

**Title: 23rd Australian Machine Gun
Company**

October 1917



AWM4-24/23/3

WAR DIARY

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

Army Form C. 2118.

23rd M.G.C.

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
France	1/10/17	6am.	<p>23rd M. G. Co. (A.I.F.) relieved the 233rd M. G. Co. in the FREZENBERG SECTOR east of YPRES. Guns were in position as follows (Reference Map ZONNEBERE 28NE1) 'A' section. 2 guns at VAN ISACKERE Fm (Block House) D 21a 2065 2 guns in Reserve about D 26b 2.6; 'B' section. 4 guns about D 26a 22.04 for "S.O.S" Barrage; 'C' section. 4 guns about D 26a 13.17 for "S.O.S" Barrage; 'D' section. 4 guns at VAMPIR D 26a 05.47. Company Hd. Qrs were at MILL COTT (not shown on above map) (Ref. Map POLYGON WOOD) I 5a 17.70</p> <p>The strength of the Coy on going into the line was 12 officers (including 1 attached) and 169 O/Ranks.</p> <p>The day was quiet except for two practice barrages put down by our artillery which drew mild retaliation from the enemy. VAMPIR was heavily shelled.</p> <p>During the day, orders were received for an attack which was to be made by the Division.</p>	<p>Alto Capt.</p>

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In the line	2.10.17		<p>Reconnaissance of ground on which the Company was to operate in the attack was made by the CO. and gun positions chosen. The plan of attack of the 23rd M.G. Co was as follows:- The Company, with together with the 9th A.M.G. Co and 8 guns of the 10th M.G. Co, were allotted for barrage work. Two barrages were to be formed:- The first to cover the advance of the infantry to the "red line" and the second to cover the advance to the "Blue line" or final objectives and then to form a protective barrage in front of the captured position. The first was to be put down by the 23rd M.G. Co and 8 guns of the 10th M.G. Co; while 8 guns of the 23rd M.G. Co, 8 guns of the 10th M.G. Co and 16 guns of the 9th M.G. Co. were allotted to the second barrage. For the first Barrages, the guns were formed into batteries each consisting of 8 guns. The 23rd M.G. Co supplied "B" &</p>	<p>126 Capt.</p>

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
			<p>"C" Batteries in the first Barrage and "C" Battery in the 2nd Barrage. "B" Battery was placed under command of Lt. A. L. Chambers & "C" Battery under command of Lieut S. L. Wedd. The CO. 23rd M.G. Co. (Capt. D. A. Whitehead) placed was in charge of the M.G. Group (A, B & C Batteries) in the first Barrage and No 2 M.G. Group ("C" & "D" Batteries) in the second Barrage.</p> <p>The dispositions of the Batteries were made as follows (-Reference ZOWNEBEKE 28 NE.1 and Sketch plan attached) (PLAN "A")</p> <p>For the first barrage, "B" Battery occupied the position D20c 30.35 to D20c 25.45 & "C" Battery from D20c 20.76 to D20c 17.90.</p> <p>During the night of the 2nd/3rd October M.G. slits were drag along these positions and the guns were in position before daylight 3rd October.</p> <p>The day was comparatively quiet. At night ^{3-4/10/17} enemy artillery brought heavy fire to bear at around "C" Batt.</p>	
	3/10/17			

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118. ¹⁷⁴0

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	4.10.17.		<p>Zero hour was at 6 a.m. At 6.5 a.m. the M. G. Barrage commenced and was carried out as shown in Sketch Plan and lift table attached. At 7.11 a.m. "C" Battery ceased fire and moved forward to its second position for the second barrage. "C" Battery took up a position along line D 21 a 2042 to D 21 a 30.28 and laid out lines for barrage as shown.</p> <p>At 8.10 a.m. "B" Battery ceased fire and went into Reserve under orders of D.M.G.O. At 8.10 a.m. "C" Battery opened fire and carried out barrage (as shown in sketch and table attached) finally establishing the S.O.S. Barrage along line.</p> <p>No casualties occurred during the first barrage or in moving up into position for 2nd Barrage.</p> <p>During the day and night 4-5/10/17 the M. G. positions were shelled heavily by enemy artillery. One M. Gun</p>	<p>(PLAN "B") (APPENDIX "C") (SEE PLAN "A") (PLAN "D") (APPENDIX "E")</p> <p><i>[Signature]</i> Capt</p>

WAR DIARY

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~~INTELLIGENCE~~ SUMMARY.

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
			<p>was destroyed by an enemy shell. This gun was replaced from the Reserve. During the night 4th-5th October the S.O.S. signal was answered on ^{sic} four occasions.</p>	
	5.10.17.		<p>During day the enemy was comparatively quiet; but was shelling around the positions continually throughout the night 5th-6th October. During the night the S.O.S. signal was ^{sent up +} replied to on three occasions.</p>	
	6.10.17.		<p>The Company was relieved by the 203rd M. G. Co. The total casualties during period 1st to 6th October were:- Killed 3 of which 2 were Wounded 9.</p>	
	8.10.17		<p>The company marched back to camp at BRANDHOEK. Checking of all stores and equipment. Preparations to proceed into the line. Orders received for proceeding to Concentration Camp. Lieut. D. A. Whitehead transferred to 23rd Machine Gun Co from 9th Machine Gun Co promoted Captain dated 1-10-17.</p>	

[Signature]
Capt

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118. 16/0

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~~OF~~
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Reference <u>thus ZONNEBEKE 28 N.E</u> Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
<u>BRANDHOEK</u>	9-10-17		The 9 th was spent in reorganisation and packing stores prior to move on the 10 th . Orders were issued for Transport and company to be ready for the line of march by 7-30 A.M.	
<u>HUSSAR FARM</u>	10-10-17		The company moved out of camp at <u>BRANDHOEK</u> at 7-30 A.M. proceeding via <u>VLAMERTINGHE - YPRES</u> to concentration camp at <u>HUSSAR FARM I4 c 70.60</u> . The spot chosen was in the remains of the subsidiary line of the old original trench system of this sector. 15 Tents were allotted to this Unit and were to have been delivered on the 9 th . These were not delivered however, and the men were scattered in dug-outs, plenty of which were to be found around. As subsequent operations showed, this proved far more suitable owing to frequent bombing attacks that were made by the enemy on this area both night & day. Orders had been received to take over barrage position from the 204 th company at about <u>BEECHAM D16 a 60.20</u> - the C.O. therefore got in touch with the C.O. of the 204 th Coy. who was established	<p>RM Capt</p>

WAR DIARY

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Place	Date	Hour	Reference Sheet <u>ZONNEBEKE 29NE</u> Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
<u>HUSSAR FARM.</u>	10/10/17.		<p>at the Signal Office at <u>LEVI COTT</u> D21 a 63.30, who made all arrangements for relief the following morning. 16 Guns should have been in position at <u>BEECHAM</u>, but the C.O. 204th stated that there were only 8 at the most, and possibly only 4 actually in position, and very little S.A.A. Accordingly Sections 2 + 3 under <u>Lieut. Coleman</u>, with <u>Lieut. Walker</u> & <u>Lieut. Mathison</u> as Section Officers were detailed to be ready to move into the line at 5 AM the following morning.</p> <p>Transport lines were established and vehicles parked as well as conditions of ground would allow.</p>	
	11/10/17.		<p>At 5 A.M. two sections previously detailed moved up to <u>LEVI COTT</u> and found that some hitch had taken place as regards relief. It appears that unknown to the C.O. 204th, ^{barriage} other guns had moved forward to take up a defensive position covering Infantry holding the line, these guns were relieved by C.O. 11th Aust. Machine Gun Co. Our guns therefore</p>	<p>capt</p>

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
<u>BEECHAM</u>	11.10.17		<p>Spence Hill <u>ZONNEBEKE 28 N.E</u></p> <p>remained at <u>LEVI</u>. Steps for ammunition supply were immediately put in hand - 4 Limbers accompanied by 8 Pack animals drew ammunition at 6 A.M. and moved along <u>YPRES-ZONNEBEKE</u> road to where it crosses railway at D26.6.90.40. Here a dump was formed, and the ammunition transferred to pack animals which moved along the northern side of the railway embankment as far as <u>ZONNEBEKE STATION</u>, from where they followed the road to <u>VAN ISACKERE FARM</u>, and established a dump at about D21.2.50.45, this being as far as it was then possible for pack animals to move. The pack train worked till dark, and was able to establish a large dump of well over 200,000 rounds at this point, drawn from small dumps that had been left on the <u>YPRES-ZONNEBEKE</u> road from the last two operations. A second attempt was made later in the day to send more ammunition by limber from boy Headquarters at <u>HUSSAR FARM</u> - these limbers failed to get there owing to the congestion on the road.</p>	

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Place	Date	Hour	Reference Sheet <u>ZONNEBEKE 28 N.E.</u> Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
<u>BEECHAM</u>	11.10.17		<p>The ammunition was transferred to pack animals. I 4 h 30.40. The latter were held up for three hours at about <u>MILL COTT</u> I 5 a 10.75 by enemy shelling at <u>BAVARIA HOUSE</u> (VERLORENBOEK COTT) C 30. e. 10.10.</p> <p>Orders were received at 1 P.M. that the 23rd M.G. Coy. was to form two batteries of 8 Guns (A & B) in a first barrage which consisted of 32 Guns in all. On completion of first barrage, these guns were to advance to take up a position to cover the further advance of the infantry. The situations of batteries of <u>first barrage</u> were fixed as follows, viz: "A" Battery <u>SEINE</u> D 16 d 30.45. "B" Battery <u>BEECHAM</u> D 16 a 60.20. <u>Second barrage</u>. "A" Battery D 12 c 65.15. "B" Battery D 12. c 65.50.</p> <p>At 4 P.M. company Headquarters was moved to <u>LEVI COTT</u> and Fire charts with Lift Tables were issued to Battery Commanders. The remaining 8 Guns were ordered up at 5 P.M. and Sections moved out to Battery position. Guns were "laid off" just prior to dusk. Lumber containing 8 Guns was hit by a shell at about D 26 h. 70.42</p>	

T2134. Wt. W708-776. 500000. 4/15. Sir J. C. & S.

[Signature]
Capt.

WAR DIARY

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Army Form C. 2118.

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~~OR~~
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Reference <u>See ZONNEBEKE 28 N E</u> Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	11.10.17		and 5 Guns were put out of action. This was immediately reported to D.M.G.O. and these Guns were replaced by guns from the 10 th M.G. Coy.	
<u>BEECHAM</u>	12.10.17		<p><u>Action.</u> First barrage was fired at zero plus 6 - the rate of fire had to be reduced to 50 rounds to enable a sufficient supply to be kept in hand for the defence. There is nothing special of tactical or technical interest to report as regards fire with the exception that the shortage of "clino" causes unnecessary exposure to Officers and N.C.Os. This barrage ceased fire at zero plus 3 hours, and preparations were made to advance. A road was first attempted to the left of the cemetery, but as the enemy's barrage was so thick, this road was abandoned. The railway was tried, not then being under shell fire. When entering the cutting, an enemy aeroplane flew exceedingly low over the advancing batteries. Concentrated fire of 5.9s quickly followed - the cutting was immediately abandoned, and the batteries retired with remarkable few casualties. The Officers in charge of the battery on reconstituting the position found that our infantry had not yet reached</p>	<p>PLAN "F"</p> <p><i>(Signature)</i></p>

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118. 120

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

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Place	Date	Hour	Reference Sheet <u>ZONNEBEKE 28 N.E.</u> Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
<u>BEECHAM</u>	12/10/17		<p>their objectives. Information was immediately sent to Group Commander at <u>LEVI COTT</u> who ordered the battery to "stand by" and advance if the situation permitted. Later when it became clear that our infantry had not got beyond the blue line, the battery was ordered back to its original position, and to prepare to put down a defensive barrage. Definite information was not received until the afternoon, whereby a new barrage line could not be fixed. The batteries remained as a defensive barrage at their old positions.</p>	
do	13/10/17		<p>Guns had now taken up defensive position, and the day was spent in improving and consolidating. An order was received from D.M.G.O. that half the guns could be withdrawn - four guns from each battery were therefore removed.</p>	
do	14/10/17		<p>The day was again spent in improving the positions. This was very difficult owing to continued rain, and a large amount of soakage on digging any depth. Several men were evacuated sick this day. A supply of dry socks was sent up with rations.</p>	<p>11 Capt</p>

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118. 1310

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Reference Sheet <u>ZONNEBEKE 29NE</u> Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
<u>BEECHAM.</u>	15.10.17		No. 144 Sections relieved No. 253. The positions were subjected to shell fire throughout the day. S.O.S. line was adjusted to conform with the advance of our infantry posts.	
do.	16.10.17		Intermittent shelling throughout the day, and heavy bombardment of gas at night, but prompt measures on the part of Section Officers regarding wearing of gas helmets reduced casualties to one.	
do.	17.10.17		S.O.S. line again adjusted as two new posts were pushed out on the right flank of the Division. Normal gas bombardment at night.	
do.	18.10.17		No. 253 Section relieved No. 144 at 3.30 P.M. Gun positions were again heavily shelled throughout the night.	
do.	19.10.17		Pack animals now being able to work as far as <u>SEINE</u> , a reserve dump of 20,000 rounds per gun was established at each position. Positions were greatly improved, and were much drier by use of tarpaulins. During the afternoon an Infantry Batt. dug in behind gun positions, and as a result positions were heavily shelled with H.E. and gas throughout the night. Box Respirators had to be worn continuously for three hours.	

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WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118.

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(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Reference Sheet <u>ZONNEBEKE, 28 NE</u> Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
<u>BEECHAM.</u>	20.10.17		Enemy's aircraft flew low over gun positions, but no artillery action followed. Shelling normal throughout the night.	
<u>BEECHAM</u>	21.10.17		S.O.S. line was again altered as three new posts had been established in front. At 4 P.M. Guns were relieved by the 10 th Canadian M.G. Coy. The two sections marched back to <u>HUSSAR FARM</u> .	
<u>HUSSAR FARM</u>	22.10.17		In preparation to move off, Timbers had been packed during the day. Movement orders had been received the day previous - 50 men were to move by train from <u>YPRES</u> to <u>WIZERNES</u> (<u>HAZEBROUCK 5A</u>). This party under Lieut. Colman entrained at <u>YPRES STATION</u> at 8-25 A.M., arriving at <u>WIZERNES</u> at 2 P.M. - marched to <u>CLETY</u> , thence by bus to billets at <u>FAUQUEMBERGUES</u> . Transport under Lieut. Rossano moved out at 9-30 A.M., great difficulty being experienced owing to the muddy nature of the ground. Transport marched with the 10 th + 11 th M.G. Coys, and 9 th , 10 th + 11 th Field Ambulance under orders Capt. Wardell, 10 th M.G. Coy. Transport had to be clear of <u>VLAMERTINGHE</u> by 11-30 A.M. took being three days, billeting first night at <u>EECKE</u> , second night at <u>RENESECURE AREA</u> .	

(Signature)
Capt.

T2134. Wt. W708-776. 500000. 4/15. Sir J. C. & S.

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WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118.

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

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Place	Date	Hour	Reference <u>Sheet ZONNEBEKE 28NE</u> Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
FAUQUEMBERGUES	22.10.17		Remainder of the Company with water cart and books cart moved by train from <u>VLAMERTINGHE</u> at 9:30 p.m. This party also acted as loading party for supply column. - detrained at <u>WIZERNES</u> , marched to <u>FAUQUEMBERGUES</u> .	
	22.10.17 to 31.10.17		Reorganisation of company - men being rested as much as possible. - short route marches each day.	<i>[Signature]</i> Capt.

WAR DIARY

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
			<u>LIST OF APPENDICES WITH WAR DIARY</u> <u>23RD AUST. MACHINE GUN CO.</u> <u>OCTOBER 1917</u>	
			1. PLAN "A" (ORIGINAL COPY ONLY) VAN ISACKERE showing positions 1 st and 2 nd Barrages, 4 th October 1917.	✓
			2. PLAN "B" Tracing of Lifts, 1 st Barrage, 4 th October 1917.	✓
			3. Appendix "C" Specimen Lift Table, 1 st Barrage, 4 th October 1917.	✓
			4. PLAN "D" Tracing of Lifts, 2 nd Barrage, 4 th October 1917.	✓
			5. Appendix "E" Specimen Lift Table, 2 nd Barrage, 4 th October 1917.	✓
			6. Plan "F" Tracing of Lifts, 1 st + 2 nd Barrages, 12 th October 1917.	✓
			7. Appendix "G" Divisional Instructions, Action on Machine Guns, 4 th October 1917.	✓
			8. Appendix "H" Divisional Instructions, Machine Gun Action (Final instruction) 4 th Oct. 1917.	✓
			9. Appendix "I" Divisional Instructions, Action of Machine Guns, 12 th October 1917.	✓
			10. Appendix "J" Report on Action of 23 RD Machine Gun Co. 4 th + 12 th October 1917.	✓
			11. Appendix "K" D.M.G.O's Report, Operations 4 th + 12 th October 1917.	✓
			12. Appendix "L" Company Orders No. 7.	✓
			13. Appendix "M" Company Orders No. 8.	✓
			14. Appendix "N" (ORIGINAL COPY ONLY) General Map of Operations 4 th + 12 th October 1917.	✓

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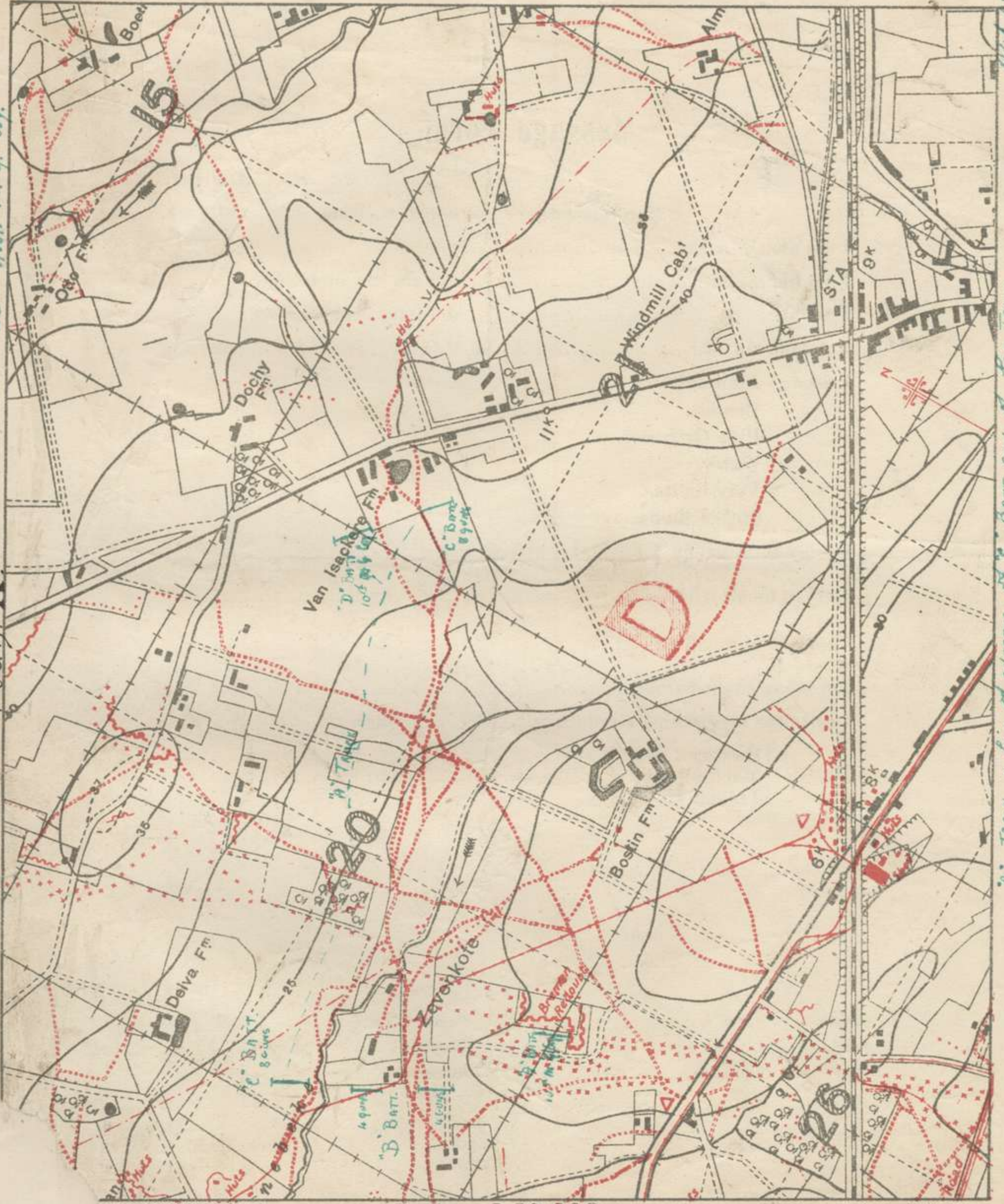
APPENDIX. F.3.

F

M. G. Coy.

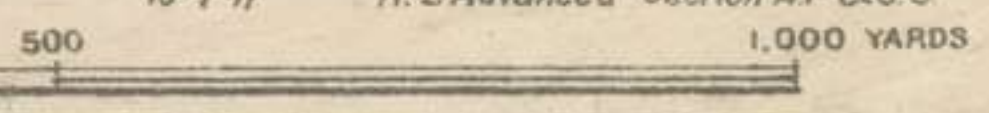
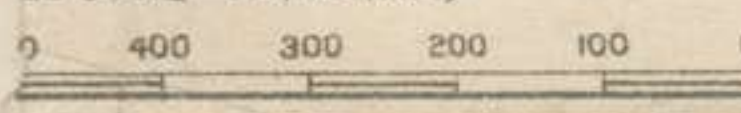
23rd Avon M. G. Coy.

Plan "A"



7. Trench = line of advance of 2 Batt and of 1917

LD SURVEY COX. RE. (1944) Scale. 1:10,000. 10-7-17 No 2 Advanced Section AP & S.S. 1,000 YARDS



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Message Form.

.....Division.

Map reference or mark own position on Map at back.

I am at.....

I am at.....and am consolidating.

I am at.....and have consolidated.

Am held up at.....by M.G. at.....

I need :—Ammunition.

- Bombs.
- Rifle Grenades.
- Water.
- Very lights.
- Stokes shells.

Enemy forming up for counter-attack at.....

I am in touch with.....on ^{Right} _{Left} at.....

I am not in touch on ^{Right.} _{Left.}

Am being shelled from.....

I estimate my present strength at.....rifles.

Hostile { Battery
Machine Gun } active at.....
Trench Mortar

Time a.m. (p.m.)
 Date.....
 Place.....

Name.....
 Platoon..... Company.....
 Battalion.....

Ref sheet GRAVENSTAFEL Edition I
Scale 1/10000

SKETCH
PLAN
B.

D

15

20

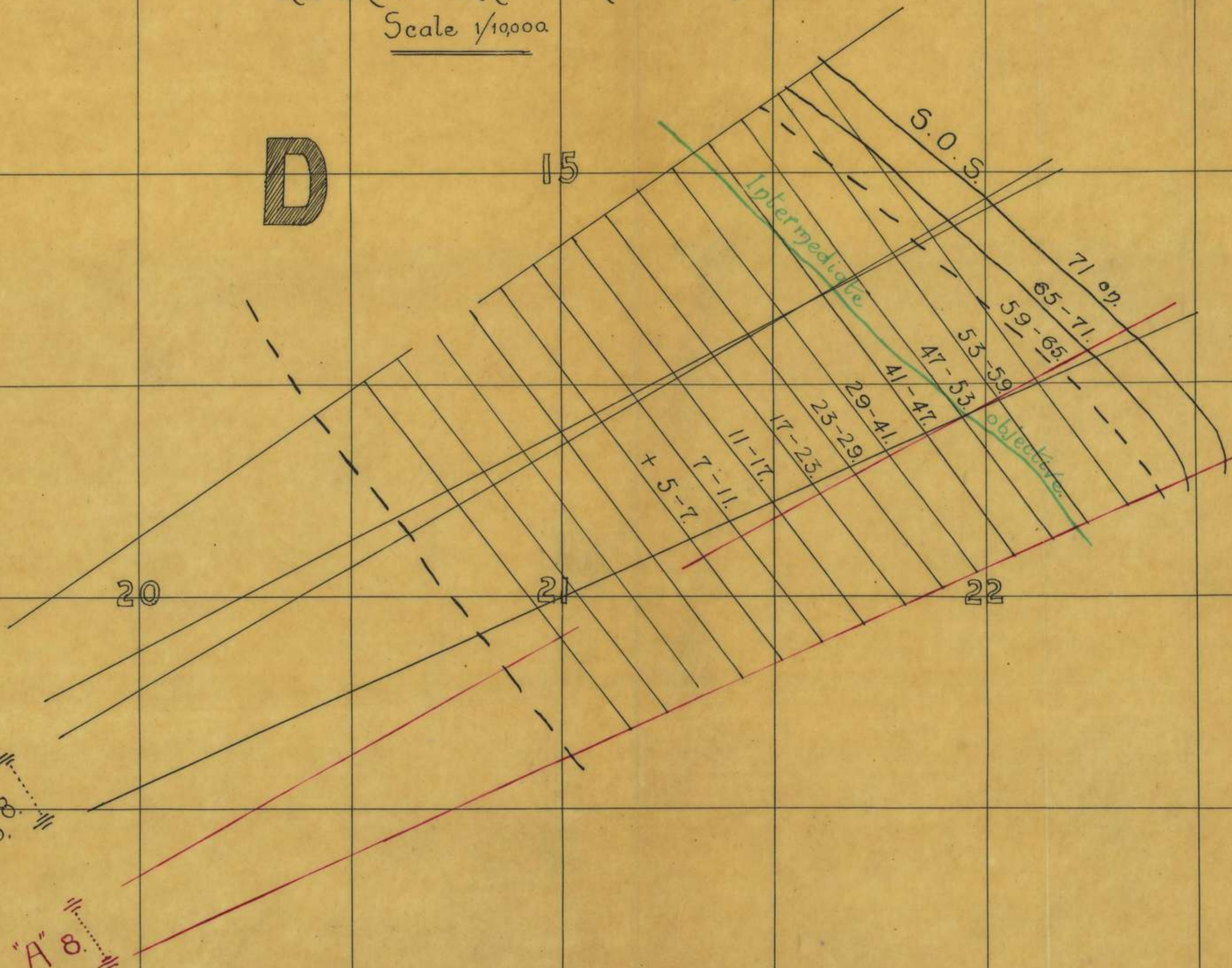
21

22

|| 8 ||
C
|| 8 ||
B
|| 8 ||
A

Black - action 23rd A.M.G.Co.
Red - action other do. do Coys.

AWM4 24/23/3



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APPENDIX. 3.

"C" BATTERY, No. 1. GUN.Appendix "C".FIRST BARRAGE.

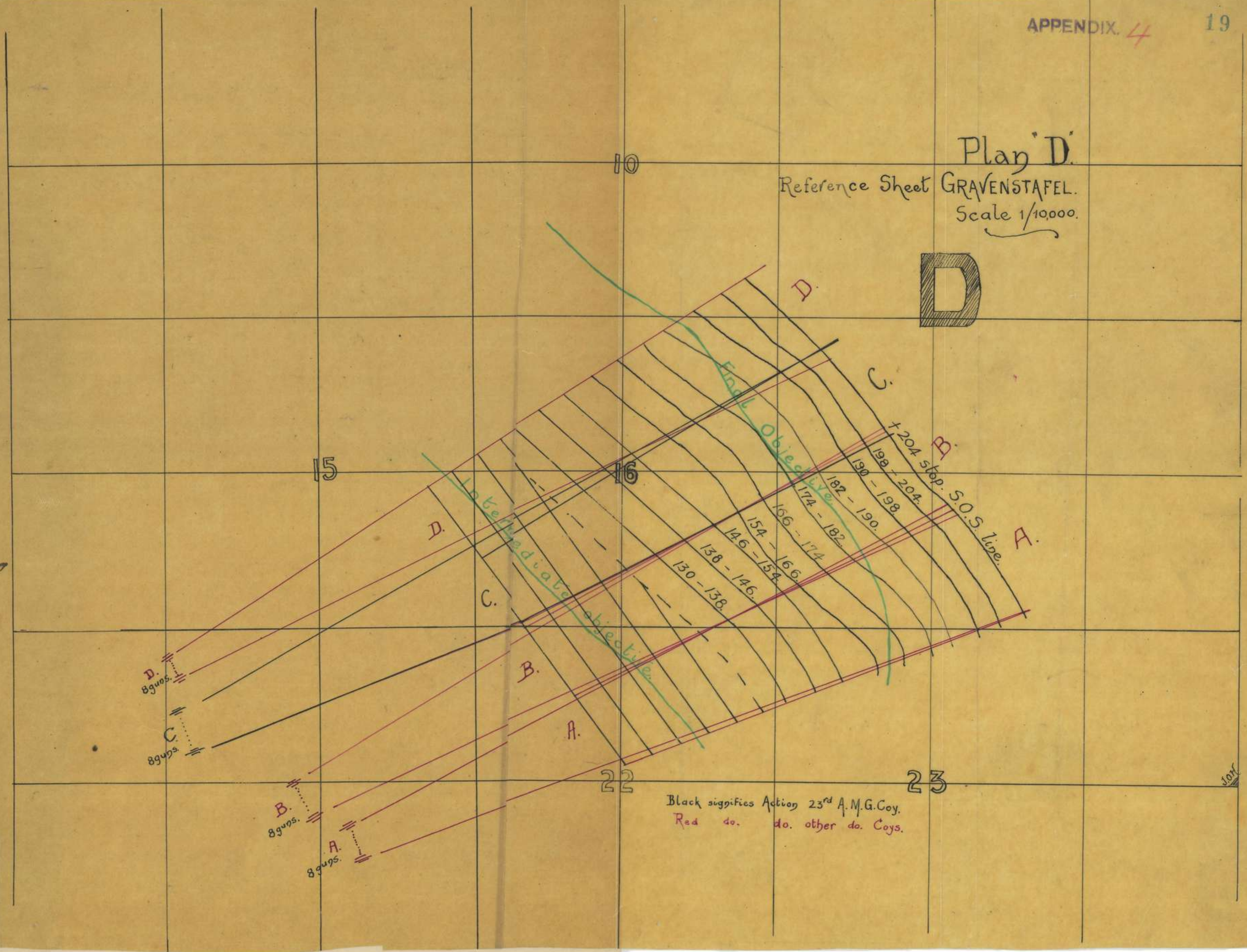
<u>Lift No.</u>	<u>Elev.</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Rate per min.</u>	<u>Mark</u>
Start,	2° 35'	Plus 5 to Plus 7	250	
1	2° 57'	7--11	75	
2	3° 21'	11--17	"	
3	4° 3'	17--23	"	
4	4° 16'	23--29	"	
5	4° 43'	29--41	"	
6	5° 22'	41--47	"	
7	6°	47--53	"	
8	6° 41'	53--59	"	
9	7° 27'	59--65	"	
10	9° 11'	65--71	"	

No. 10 to be put on by "CLINO".

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Plan D

Reference Sheet GRAVENSTAFEL.
Scale 1/10,000.



APPENDIX. 5

"C" BATTERY, No. 1. GUN.Appendix "E".SECOND BARRAGE.

<u>Lift No.</u>	<u>Elev.</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Rate per min.</u>	<u>Mark</u>
Start,	3°	Plus 130 to 138	75	
1	3° 21'	138 to 146	"	
2	3° 47'	146 to 154	"	
3	4° 16'	154 to 166	"	
4	4° 43'	166 to 174	"	
5	5° 22'	174 to 182	"	
6	6°	182 to 190	"	
7	6° 41'	190 to 198	"	
8	7° 27'	198 to 204	"	
9	8° 16'	204 to 205	"	

No. 9 lift to be put on by "Clino".

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Plan "F."

Black signifies Action 23rd A.M.G. Coy.
 Red do. do. other do. do. Coys.



THIRD AUSTRALIAN DIVISION.

Divisional Headquarters,
2nd. October, 1917.

S.G. 336/215.

Appendix G.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE OFFENSIVE.ACTION OF MACHINE GUNS.I. RESOURCES.

The number of guns available will be 64 provided from the following Units:-

9th. M.G. Coy.	16
10th. "	16
11th. "	16
23rd. "	16
Total,	<u>64.</u>

II. ORGANISATION AND DISTRIBUTION.

The Machine guns will form two "Barrages", one of 24 guns and one of 32 guns: and 8 guns will be allotted to each of the 10th. and 11th. Brigades, for the purpose of consolidation. The first barrage will be composed of 16 guns of the 23rd. M.G. Coy. plus 8 of the 10th. M.G. Coy.: and the second barrage will be composed of 16 guns of the 9th. M.G. Coy. plus the 8 of the 10th. M.G. Coy.: and 8 of the 23rd. M.G. Coy., which were formerly on the first barrage. These guns will have to bound forward at a time to be notified later. When the first barrage finishes, 8 guns of the 23rd. M.G. Coy. will become a reserve to be held in the hands of the D.M.G.O.

Eight guns of the 10th. M.G. Coy. will be placed at the disposal of the 10th. Aust. Inf. Brigade for purposes of consolidation, and eight guns of the 11th. M.G. Coy. will be placed at the disposal of the 11th. Aust. Inf. Brigade for purposes of consolidation; the balance of the guns of the 11th. M.G. Coy. remaining in reserve.

The disposition of the guns of each barrage is shown on tracings A. and B. The exact position of each gun must be selected by the Company Commander concerned.

The guns will be grouped into 4-8 gun batteries, and will be lettered consecutively.

III. FUNCTIONS.

The function of any battery or group of guns must not be altered without reference to Divisional Headquarters.

- (1) The minimum safety clearance over our own troops must be maintained.
- (2) Movement during the whole operation must be reduced to the absolute minimum.

IV. DELEGATION OF RESPONSIBILITY.

The D.M.G.O. will be responsible for:-

1. Co-ordination and supervision of the machine gun barrages.
- II. Liaison between batteries within the Division; liaison between Divisions on our Right and Left, also with Corps Machine Gun Officer.
- III. The place where the D.M.G.O. will be stationed will be notified later.

The Senior Officer with each Group of barrage guns will command that group.

He will be responsible for:-

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- I. Control and direction of the Batteries of his group.
 - II. Liaison between Brigade Headquarters and D.M.G.O.
 - III. All matters of command and administration within his group.
 - IV. He will not leave his Headquarters without the permission of the D.M.G.O.
In case of such absence a Senior M.G. Officer must take his place.
 - V. He will refer all matters requiring co-ordination with, or affecting, the Batteries outside his control to the D.M.G.O.

Battery Commanders will be selected by Group Commanders in consultation with Company Commanders.

They will be responsible for:-

1. Elevation and direction of fire from guns of their Batteries.
2. Fire efficiency of their Batteries (i.e. keeping the whole area allotted to their batteries under effective fire).
3. Rates of fire and expenditure of S.A.A.
4. Timing of lifts.
5. Safety clearances.
6. Supply of oil and water.
7. In the event of having to move to new position subsequent rapid opening of fire. Opening of fire to be immediately reported to Group Commanders.
8. Compilation and personal checking of indirect overhead fire sheet. (See Appendix III. and page 88 Infantry Machine Gun Training 1917).

V. RECORDS.

Indirect Fire Sheet will be checked by the Battery and Group Commander personally in each case.

All matters of interest to the Machine Gun Corps should be jotted down in a notebook as soon as possible after occurring.

VI. ACTION.

Fire will be opened at ZERO plus 5 minutes and fire rapid until ZERO plus 7 minutes when all guns will lift 100 yds. Rates of fire will then be reduced to 75 rounds per minute and lifts carried out as per Sketch Plan "A" until ZERO plus 71 when the guns to form the second barrage will move forward to their new positions. The remaining guns

will continue to fire until ZERO plus ~~120~~ 130 minutes when No.1. Barrage will cease.

At ZERO plus 130 minutes, No.11. Barrage will commence and lift as shown in sketch plan "B" until the first S.O.S. line is reached, when a standing barrage will be put down. The Standing barrage will continue from ZERO plus 193 minutes until ZERO plus 313 minutes. Rests for cleaning, oiling, etc. must be arranged.

On the S.O.S. call all guns will immediately open fire on their S.O.S. lines, and fire rapid for 10 minutes and then 50 rounds per gun per minute for 20

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minutes.

After 30 minutes as above, the guns will cease fire unless a further S.O.S. signal be sent up.

VII. S. A. A.

Ten thousand rounds per gun must be maintained at Battery positions.

Two thousand rounds per gun in belts must always be available with each gun; belts must be refilled as fired and not allowed to remain empty.

VIII. COMMUNICATION.

Group Commanders must keep in touch with Divisional Headquarters through Brigade Headquarters. In addition, a system of runners must be maintained.

All guns must be in position by daylight, 3rd. instant.

All infantry must be informed that the Machine Gun Barrage does not open until ZERO plus 5 minutes. At that, it moves 400 yards in front of the Infantry.

(Signed) Geo. F. Wieck, Major,
For Lieut.-Colonel,
General Staff.

DISTRIBUTION.

G.O.C.	"G" Staff.
9th. Aust. Inf. Bde.	9th. M. G. Coy.
10th. " " "	10th. : :
11th. " " "	11th. " "
C.M.G.O. " "	23rd. " "

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Appendix H.

THIRD AUSTRALIAN DIVISION.

S.G. 336/235

S E C R E T.Divisional Headquarters,
3rd. October, 1917.MACHINE GUN ACTION. FINAL INSTRUCTIONS.

To be read in conjunction with S.G. 336/215 dated 2-10-17.

- COMMUNICATION. 1. It is notified for the information of Group Commanders that the Cable Head is situated North of BOSTIN FARM D.20 .d.70 .40 .
The importance of maintaining a sufficient system of runners must be borne in mind.
- SITUATION OF D.M.G.O. 2. The D.M.G.O. will be situated at Divisional Headquarters. Close touch must be kept up by Group Commanders by wire from nearest Brigade Headquarters.
- REPORTS. 3. Reports will be sent to D.M.G.O. every hour. Special reports as occasion demands.
- SYNCHRONISATION of WATCHES. 4. After watches have been synchronised with D.M.G.O. to-day they must again be synchronised at least once before ZERO.
- SKETCH PLANS. 5. Amended Sketch Plan "B" is issued to all concerned herewith.
- HARASSING FIRE. 6. When the Final Objective has been reached guns of No.2. Barrage will employ harassing and searching fire for two hours with 50% of guns.
Special attention will be paid to the Railway Cutting North of 17. Central by the guns of "A" and "B" Batteries.
During this period all guns must be prepared to jump back to their S.O.S. line in the event of the S.O.S. being called for.
- ACTION OF 2nd. AUST. DIVISION. 7. All Ranks must be warned that the 2nd. Aust. Division on our Right intend to use short bursts on Strombos Horn as an S.O.S. Signal in the event of mist being so bad as to prevent ordinary S.O.S. Signals being seen. All troops must be warned of this in order not to assume that a Gas Attack is being made.

(Signed) J. M. Wells, Major,

For Lieut.-Colonel,
General Staff.

T.C.

DISTRIBUTION.

G.O.C.	9th. A.M.G. Coy.
"G" Staff.	10th. "
9th. Aust. Inf. Bde.	11th. "
10th. " " "	23rd. "
11th. " " "	C.M.G.O. (for information).

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THIRD AUSTRALIAN DIVISION.

S.G. 400/10.

S E C R E T.

Divisional Headquarters,
11th. October, 1917.

ACTION OF MACHINE GUNS ON "A" DAY.

1. DISTRIBUTION.

The Machine Guns of the Division will form two barrages each of 32 guns; and eight guns will be allotted to each of the 9th. and 10th. Aust. Inf. Bdes. for the purpose of consolidation.

No. 1. Barrage will be composed as under:-

23rd. A.M.G. Coy.	16 guns,
9th. "	8 "
10th. "	8 "

No. 2. Barrage will be composed as under:-

11th. A.M.G. Coy.	16 guns,
23rd. "	16 "

The disposition of the guns for each barrage is shown on sketch plan attached.

O.C. 11th. A.M.G. Coy. will arrange to move his guns forward into position as close behind our Infantry as possible.

O.C. 23rd. A.M.G. Coy. will cease fire at ZERO plus 3 hours and move forward to new positions.

Guns in each barrage will be grouped into 8-gun Batteries and each two Batteries will be commanded by the Senior Officer present.

On completion of the first Barrage "C" and "D" Batteries of the first Barrage will become Divisional Reserve.

2. ACTION.

Rapid fire will be opened for first barrage at ZERO plus 6 minutes and will continue until ZERO plus 8 minutes when all guns will lift 100 yds. and fire will be reduced to 75 rounds per minute.

The first barrage will cease at ZERO plus 3 hours.

The second barrage will put down a Protective Barrage at ZERO plus 6 hours 46 minutes on a line 400 yards in advance of the final objective and will remain on this line for 30 minutes (rate of fire 75 rounds per minute). It will then lift and search to extreme range for two hours with 50% of guns. All guns will then be laid on S.O.S. line. During the period that searching fire is being employed all guns must be ready to jump back to the S.O.S. line if the S.O.S. should be called for.

3. S.O.S.

S.O.S. action will be the same as for Operations on the 4th. instant.

4. POSITION OF 2nd. BARRAGE.

The approximate positions for guns of the second barrage are as follows:-

11th. M.G. Coy.					
1 Battery	8 guns	at about		D.5.d.9.2.	
1 "	8 "	" "	" "	D.12.a.10.35	
23rd. A.M.G. Coy.					
1 Battery	8 Guns	at about		D.12.c.35.15	
1 "	8 "	" "	" "	D.12.c.4.7.	

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4. PREVIOUS ORDERS.

Special attention must be paid to all orders which were issued for Operations on the 4th. instant re S.A.A., Communications, Records, Reports and Runners.

5. SYNCHRONISATION OF WATCHES.

Watches must be synchronised at nearest Brigade Headquarters.

6. REPORTS.

Reports must be forwarded each hour.

(Signed) J. M. Wells,

Major,
D.M.G.O., Third Australian Division.

DISTRIBUTION.

- 1. G.O.C.
- 2. "G" Staff.
- 3. 9th. Aust. Inf. Bde.
- 4. 10th. " " "
- 5. 11th. " " "
- 6. 9th. A.M.G. Coy.
- 7. 10th. "
- 8. 11th. "
- 9. 23rd. "
- 10. D.M.G.O.

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RETURN ON THE ACTION OF THE
23rd. MACHINE GUN COMPANY,
4th. OCTOBER, 1917.

Appendix 28

1. RECONNAISSANCE. This Company arrived in the forward area on the morning of the 1st. October, 1917, and took over defensive barrage positions from the 23rd. Machine Gun Company. Instructions arrived on the afternoon of the 2nd.

Preliminary reconnaissance of the ground for first barrage position was made that afternoon, and also telescopic examination of forward positions, which were then approximately our front line, and could not be approached during the day. This gave satisfactory results and positions of all batteries were definitely fixed on the morning of the 3rd. First barrage positions were laid out by Battery Commanders during the afternoon of the 3rd.

2. POSITIONS. A. FIRST BARRAGE. This Company had two batteries of eight, being respectively "B" and "C" Batteries in the group, "A" Battery being supplied by the 10th. M. G. Co. "B" Battery approximately D.20.c.30.40, "C" Battery D.20.c.20.30. The prolongation of a hedge was used to fix Battery position. As these positions were under observation from balloons and aeroplanes, no digging was commenced until night. During the night positions were dug on the "slit" principle as near as the ground permitted, and were all completed by 2 a.m.

B. SECOND BARRAGE. On arrival on the ground, the position of the Battery was quite easy to recognise. This position was dug similar to the first barrage under fire.

3. AMMUNITION SUPPLY. Immediately on arrival at the forward area, the position of the dumps of S.A.A. were ascertained, and transport carried this this as far as possible per limber. This was to D.26.a.00.30 on the YPRES-ZONNEBEKE ROAD. From thence it was carried by pack horse and men to the battery position. Dumps were made by pack to a forward dump for the second barrage. This had to be done at night, but owing to the absence of tracks and general swampiness of the ground, and the fact that a stream had to be crossed, made this practically impossible, several horses being bogged. During daylight, however, after the guns had advanced, the pack was able to move forward and form a dump immediately behind gun positions at about 21.A.00.40. Splendid work was done by this pack train, and by night the battery had been supplied with rations, water, and sufficient ammunition to cover all emergencies. Work of the men and horses throughout cannot be too highly praised.

4. ACTION. A. FIRST BARRAGE. Guns opened at zero, plus 5, and fire was sustained throughout. The issue of "clinos" is not sufficient for the smooth working of "lift" and should be one per gun. There is nothing special to report on the work of both batteries.

B. SECOND BARRAGE. Left group. This was formed of two batteries of 8, one from the 23rd. M. G. Co. and one from the 10th. M. G. Co. These batteries were respectively "C" and "A" of the first barrage. "C" Battery had been specially placed on the left of the ZONNEBEKE, so that this stream would not have to be crossed in the advance. At zero, plus 71, "C" Battery ceased fire. All stores were collected as quickly as possible, and besides normal loads, the men slung one or two bandoliers to augment ammunition supply. Battery advanced in artillery formation of gun teams. Enemy's barrage appeared to be coming on a line roughly from D.20.b.00.35 to D.20.d.50.70-- appeared weak in the centre. Advantage was taken of this, and all gun teams were able to get through without a casualty. The "going" was very difficult owing to the ground being very loose under foot, and swampy in places.

Gun teams arrived at the battery position which was A.21.a.20.40 about zero, plus 125--guns were thus unable to open at timetable which was zero plus 130. Fire was opened at zero plus 145 on the "lift" laid down for that time. Men not actually firing guns were busy improving positions. At about zero, plus 130, the enemy shortened his barrage, so that it came approximately on the road at KANSAS across to ZONNEBEKE STATION. Thus the Battery was under low bursting shell fire during the whole time the position was being consolidated. Casualties however were light.

Fire was maintained for the prescribed period, and

(2)

owing to the quick following of the pack train, there was no difficulty with the ammunition supply. Later in the day rain fell, making both position and tracks very bad. This battery maintained position as a defensive barrage till the 6th, during which time several satisfactory S.O.S. shoots were put down. During the whole time this Battery was under more or less continuous fire from both shrapnel and H.E.

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ACTION OF THE 23rd. MACHINE GUN COMPANY,
12th. OCTOBER, 1917.

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1. RECONNAISSANCE. The Company moved into the forward area on the night of the 10th. On the morning of the 11th, should have taken up defensive position at BEECHAM, D.16.a.65.20, but owing to Company which was to be relieved not being in this position, the relief was not effected. This position was taken up later in the day. This battery was of 8 guns. Time for reconnaissance was very short, and had to be made by glasses from LEVI COTT, D.21.a.60.30. Reports from Battery Commanders who had moved up later confirmed the choice. This Company supplied "A" and "B" batteries in the first barrage. "A" Battery was situated at SEINE, D.16.d.20.50, "B" Battery at BEECHAM. Owing to Angles and lifts not reaching Battery Commanders till late, the guns were "laid off" in the dark. This was checked as soon as possible after daylight, and found to be very little out. The second barrage position was in enemys line and could not be reconnoitred by day. These positions were fixed from study of contours and were fixed at about VIENNA COTT. D.12.c.70.10.
 2. POSITIONS. Owing to the exceedingly short time in which to prepare positions for the first barrage, advantage was taken of a support line which was already dug through the positions mentioned. The work was rendered more difficult owing to very few men being spared for the work, as the majority were required for carrying ammunition. The second barrage position was not reached.
 3. AMMUNITION SUPPLY. This was put in hand as soon as possible, but owing to the congestion on the YPRES- ZONNEBEKE ROAD, limbers were abandoned in favour of pack horses for the whole distance. One pack train was unable to pass MILL COTT. for four hours owing to enemy shelling the route and holding up traffic. Another pack train had got into the more forward area early in the morning, and was able to draw ammunition from the remains of the forward dumps of the last two operations. This was only packed as far as LEVI COTT. as no track was available further forward, and extreme difficulty was experienced in even moving ammunition to this spot. From LEVI COTT. to the guns, all carrying had to be done by hand. "K" track was utilised for this work as the only available route. Here again carrying was greatly hampered as this was one of the approach routes of the Infantry. At about 3 a.m. very heavy rain fell, and "K" track was soon almost impassable. A more direct route was then tried via SPRINGFIELD, and gave only very little improvement. Later advantage was taken of the construction of a track from the ZONNEBEKE STATION to the SEINE, and ammunition, rations, etc. was again dumped to gun positions.
 4. ACTION. First barrage was fired at zero, plus 6--the rate of fire had to be reduced to 50 rounds per minute to enable a sufficient supply to be kept in hand for the defence. Again there is nothing special of tactical or technical interest to report as regards fire, with the exception that the shortage of "clinos" causes unnecessary exposure to Officers and N.C.Os. This barrage ceased fire at zero plus 3 hours, and preparations were made to advance. A road was first attempted to the left of the cemetery, but as the enemys barrage was so thick on this position, this road was abandoned. The railway was tried, not then being under shell fire. When entering the cutting, an enemy aeroplane flew exceedingly low over the advancing batteries. Concentrated fire of 5.9s quickly followed--the cutting was immediately abandoned, and the batteries retired with remarkably few casualties. The Officers in the charge of the battery on reconnoitring the position found that our Infantry had not yet reached their objectives. Information was immediately sent to Group Commander at LEVI COTT. who ordered the Battery to standby, and advance if the situation permitted. Later when it became clear that our Infantry had not got beyond the blue line, the battery was ordered back to its original position, and to prepare to put down a defensive barrage. Definite information was not received until the afternoon, whereby a new barrage line could not be fixed. The batteries remained as a defensive barrage at their old positions until the afternoon of the 21st. during which time the S.O.S. line was altered as our Infantry established their posts. No S.O.S. calls were answered during this period. The positions were exceedingly wet, and despite all attempts at improvement men still suffered considerably from "feet" owing to the wet.

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APPENDIX //

ACTIONS OF THE 23rd. MACHINE GUN COMPANY.4th. & 12th. OCTOBER, 1917.G E N E R A L

The operations again bring out:-

- A. The effectiveness of the Vicker's Gun for long and continued fire under most adverse weather conditions.
 - B. The great importance of ammunition supply.
 - C. The value of pack train, and also the superiority of horses over mules for this work, especially in the slippery shell hole area,
 - D. The vital importance of good and efficient tracks, without which with the men available it is almost impossible to maintain the fire of 16 guns in barrage work.
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3rd. November, 1917.

C. M. G. C.,

3rd. ANZAC CORPS.

I am forwarding herewith report on the Action of the Machine Guns of the 3rd. Aust. Division during the operations 1st. to 6th. October and 10th. to 22nd. October, 1917.

RESOURCES. For each of these operations 64 guns were available within the Division; in addition work was co-ordinated with the Division on our right and left.

The guns were employed specially for:-

- (a) Covering Fire,
- (b) Consolidating captured positions and harrassing fire.

Prior to Zero on each occasion, harrassing fire was employed on tracks, roads, etc., targets being selected from Aeroplane photographs and Intelligence summaries.

There was not so much time available as in previous operations for preparation, but, wherever possible, trench slits were dug and again proved very effective cover from view. Gun positions were camouflaged where possible, but owing to the very bad state of the ground it was not possible to get a very large supply of camouflage forward: this necessarily restricted movement near the guns during daylight.

As soon as orders were issued, a careful reconnaissance of the gun position was made and gun positions marked with tins and sticks, and this largely contributed to the guns taking up their proper positions at night without confusion.

A careful reconnaissance was also made of all approaches, roads, tracks, etc. and these were specially pointed out to the transport personnel.

An ample supply of flannellette and oil was sent forward to each gun position prior to Zero. No difficulty

(2)

was experienced with water for guns, nature providing for this at each gun position.

BARRAGE GUNS (2). The work of the barrageguns was carried out in accordance with orders with the exception of the second barrage on 12th. October.

It was not possible to occupy these positions owing to the Infantry not being able to establish themselves on the BLUE LINE. These guns were therefore withdrawn and a protective S.O.S. barrage put down in front of our infantry.

CONSOLIDATING GUNS. (3). In each case eight (8) guns were allotted to each Brigade going forward, but the whole of these guns were not used: some being kept in Reserve in the hands of Brigadiers.

One Brigade detailed an Engineer party to go forward with the guns for the purpose of making Belt Filling Shelters and Gun positions. This proved a very good point and I think that this might be adopted in future with consolidating guns.

On the whole these guns got more targets than has previously been the case, although the losses in personnel and material was again much higher than those with the guns doing barrage work. On two occasions captured German Machine Guns were used with very good effect on fleeting targets. This was made possible owing to all ranks having been instructed in the use of German Guns while the Division was at rest.

Although the Guns in forward positions did well, there is still a tendency on the part of Infantry Senior Officers to want Machine Guns to do tasks which are obviously Lewis Gun tasks. Therefore I consider that more or less definite tasks should be allotted to the Machine Guns by the Brigadiers concerned.

LESSONS. (4). Supply of Ammunition was extremely difficult, but the work of the pack transport was exceptionally good. Very soon after the commencement of operations, Wagon Transport was totally abandoned, the whole of the carrying being done by pack animals. Ammunition from forward dumps to gun positions had to be carried and it was found that the best method was to

(3)

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carry it in bandoliers slung across the shoulders, each man carrying 500 rounds.

The need for Clinometers at the rate of One per gun was again very marked. A great deal of exposure and unnecessary movement is caused by an Officer having to go from one trench slit to another to relay the gun for each lift; also a great deal of time is wasted.

Electric Torches are an absolute necessity, and should be supplied at the rate of one for each Officer.

Throughout the whole of these operations it was necessary to be continually stripping the guns to remove grit and mud, also changing of barrels. This calls for a very high standard of mechanism on the part of the individual Machine Gunner, as this work has often to be done at night.

A great deal of anxiety was felt at times on account of wet Belts, but every precaution was taken, and no serious stoppage occurred on this account.

Communication, although kept up very effectively forward of Brigade Headquarters, was extremely difficult. Runners were used in each case forward of Brigade Headquarters and owing to the nature of the ground, messages took a very long time to be delivered. I strongly recommend an increase in the establishment of Signalling personnel, also an increase in the numbers of telephones.

These operations again proved the effectiveness of the Vickers Gun for long and continued fire under very adverse weather conditions, also the very great importance of Ammunition supply, and the value of the Pack Train.

.....Major.

D.H.G.O., 3rd. Australian Division

CASUALTIES.

PERIOD, 1st. to 6th. OCTOBER, 1917.

	<u>Officers.</u>			<u>O. Ranks.</u>			<u>Total.</u>		
	<u>Killed</u>	<u>Wounded</u>	<u>Missing.</u>	<u>Killed</u>	<u>Wounded</u>	<u>Msg.</u>	<u>K.</u>	<u>W.</u>	<u>M.</u>
9th. Company,	-	3	-	5	20	-	5	23	-
10th. "	-	-	-	9	22	-	9	22	-
11th. "	-	1	-	4	3	3	4	4	1
23rd. "	1	1	-	4	6	-	5	7	0
	<u>1</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>51</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>56</u>	<u>1</u>

PERIOD, 10th. to 22nd. OCTOBER, 1917.

	<u>Officers.</u>			<u>O. Ranks.</u>			<u>Total.</u>		
	<u>Killed.</u>	<u>Wounded</u>	<u>Missing</u>	<u>Killed</u>	<u>Wounded</u>	<u>Msg.</u>	<u>K.</u>	<u>W.</u>	<u>M.</u>
9th. Company,	1	-	-	5	33	-	6	33	-
10th. "	1	2	-	2	25	6	3	27	6
11th. "	1	-	-	15	15	-	16	15	-
23rd. "	1	-	-	5	6	-	6	6	-
	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>81</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>83</u>	<u>6</u>

In addition, 1 Officer and 11 Men of the 11th. Machine Gun Company were gassed (slightly).

AMMUNITION EXPENDED.PERIOD, 1st. to 6 h. OCTOBER, 1917.

9th. Company,	270,000 Rounds.
10th. "	235,200 "
11th. "	110,000 "
23rd. "	384,000 "
	<hr/>
Total,	<u>999,200</u> "

PERIOD, 10th. to 22nd. OCTOBER, 1917.

9th. Company,	340,000 Rounds.
10th. "	223,900 "
11th. "	16,000 "
23rd. "	210,000 "
	<hr/>
Total,	<u>789,900</u> "

23rd. AUSTRALIAN MACHINE GUN COMPANY.

Appendix 12.

Orders. No. 7.

By Capt. D. A. Whitehead,
Commanding.

27-10-17.

DUTIES. Orderly Officer, Lieut. Mathieson, W. H.
 " " Next for duty, Lieut. Brain, G.M.S.
 Orderly Sergeant, Sgt. Hudson, L. E.
 " " Next for duty, Sgt. Hudson, L. E.
 " Corporal, Cpl. Isaacs, D. J.
 " Next for duty, " Isaacs, D.J.

NOMENCLATURE. In future A.B.C. & D. Sections will be known as
 Nos. 1- 2- 3- & 4 Sections respectively.

CHURCH PARADES. Church of England and O.P.D. Service will be held
 in the "Girls School" FAUQUEMBERGUES, at 10-30 a.m.
 R. Catholic Service at R. C. Church, FAUQUEMBERGUES, at
 10-30 a.m.

A.L. Lamberton
Lieut.

For C.O., 23rd. Aust. M. G. Co.

23rd. AUSTRALIAN MACHINE GUN COMPANY.

Appendix ~~A~~
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Orders, No. 8.

By Capt. D. A. Whitehead,

France. 30th. October, 1917. Commanding.

DISCIPLINE.

The following punishments were awarded this day:-
No. 418, Dvr. Griffiths, J.
Conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline in that he neglected to obey the order of a Senior Officer,
Award. 20 days F.P. No. 2. Forfeits 20 days pay = £6- 0- 0

No. 482, Dvr. Pember, W.
Conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline in that he was late for duty for which he had been previously warned by his Superior Officer,
Award. 7 days F.P. No. 2. Forfeits 7 days pay = £2- 2- 0-

When not on duty, these men will be confined in cells.

LEAVE.

Until further notice no leave will be granted to Drivers.

BOOTS.

In future Boots will not be polished, but after being cleaned will be treated with Dubbing which will be issued to Sections.

D. A. Whitehead
..... Capt.
C. C., 23rd. Aust. M. G. Co.

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APPENDIX III

Appendix N

23rd A.M.G. Co.

Operations 4th Green
do. 12th Red

Guns (Batteries) \square
Dumps Δ
Tracks ---

