

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

Infantry

Item number: 23/65/13

Title: 48th Infantry Battalion

February 1917



AWM4-23/65/13

48. Bm

620

WAR DIARY

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Erase heading not required.)

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
ALBURY Camp	2/2/17		Health of the Battalion good. all available men employed on Railway and Road work. weather continues fine but cold. great improvement in the wood supply the men are feeling the benefit of it.	
	6/2/17		Visited a French Training Camp yesterday and witnessed their method of attack. I was much impressed with their keenness and very smart turnout. I do not consider that the firing of the Automatic Rifle from the hip during the advance is an advantage. over rough ground it is very doubtful whether any shots would be effective. also the waste of ammunition is considerable and would be of more value driving off Counter attacks. The Rifle Grenade carriage is a splendid idea I like their Grenade attachment better than the one we use. The 37 mm Gun is also very valuable in trench warfare. It reminds me of the Pom. Poms. and would be very useful for dealing with machine guns and trench mortar positions. The demonstration was very instructive.	Payment to be made to Col.
	9/2/17		Brigade moved into the front line tonight. This Battalion remains in Reserve on Corps works. Weather still keeps cold and dry our men are standing it exceedingly well. Health good.	11 Col.

WAR DIARY

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
<p>Townsville Camp</p>	<p>15/2/17 16/2/17 17/2/17</p>		<p>Moved into this Camp on the 15th inst. 4 officers 250 OR. moved into front line for work. Weather warmer than setting in. The 48th Bw move into front line area tonight and relieve the 47th Bw. Rain set in tonight. weather much warmer. ground getting muddy. Letter received from CO ANZAC Light Railways. Expressing great appreciation of the good work done by this Battalion while supplying working parties during the past month. Men on the whole in good health, left 20 who were suffering from Bronchitis and sore feet in this Camp to assist Quartermaster and supply necessary gear.</p>	
<p>BULLS TRENCH.</p>	<p>18/2/17 19/2/17</p>		<p>Very quiet all night in this sector. Very heavy Artillery strike by Boche on the Left Division front. at about 6.30 am. heavy fog during day. work proceeding on Fire and Communication trenches. Visited front line during the night. also new works running from GOODWIN'S POST to N 21 a POINT 24 this should make a good defensive line when completed. Mud is very bad due to recent Thaw and rain. We hold an excellent position in BAYONET TRENCH N 20 N 20 B. 50.9 There are a number of Dogouts, mostly broken in. One used as a signal station is to be choned out tonight. a large quantity of sticks are available, but have plug unsecured and are therefore dangerous.</p>	<p>Playwood to Leane H. G. C C 48/12</p>

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
BULLS TRENCH Bn. HQS.	20 2 17		<p>Enemy exceedingly quiet. Very few shells fell in the vicinity of Bulls HQS. during the past three days. Work proceeding in POSSUM RESERVE. CHACK CONE very satisfactorily. New trench completed to an average depth of 5 feet up to point N21a. O24 near Cross Roads. It has yet to be deepened and drained but is quite good to hold, and will now be occupied day and night. It has a splendid field of fuel. and is a great improvement on old position in GRASS TRENCH.</p>	
BULLS TRENCH.	21 2 17		<p>Enemy very active during night with trench mortar a large number of PINEAPPLE bombs falling near GOODWILL POST. during today his shells has been more active than usual. Pushed out Lewis Gun along right bank of Sunken Road. to point N21a 5.6. So as to keep in touch with 45th Bn left. N21a 80.65. an effort will be made tonight to assist the advance of the 45th Bn. to establish a block at N21a 70.75. weather still very damp and ground bad. However the health of the Battalion is good on the whole a number of men are suffering with colds. Feet appear to be in a fairly good condition so far. Our Patrols keep very active, and report very few Enemy Potentials observed. and when they are met they do not wait. The Enemy moral has very much deteriorated. He will not stand.</p>	<p>Very much to be expected N21a C 45th Bn</p>

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BULLS TRENCH.	22 17		<p>Enemy Artillery and Trench mortars very heavy during last night and again this morning at BOAWINS POST, FRITZ FOLLY, and GRASS LAKE. Much quieter during this afternoon. Men selected to attack PARK Trench especially exercised in the use of Rifle Grenades. Weather wet and ground very muddy... attack under existing conditions exceedingly hard on account of the depth of mud on the ground. at Both Officers and men have been especially selected for the work in that the ground has been thoroughly reconnoitered during the past four nights, and finally selected Scouts will be used to lead the attackers into position. Everything possible has been done to ensure success. The men are in great heart.</p> <p>The attack on the Enemy's trench did not succeed. due to Causes I will point out. I have had the ground thoroughly reconnoitered during the past five days. by LT WATSON and Special Scout parties. They reported the ground very much cut up by shell fire and bombs, with in front of Trench between SUN KEN ROADS. reference map 1/2500 N21a 70, 75. N21a 26, 64. but were unable to ascertain whether there was a gap in the wire at the road. for that reason blankets were carried to cross the wire. Every precaution possible was taken to make the attack a success. I selected Special Officers whom I could thoroughly rely on and who knew the ground to lead the attack. Scouts also were detailed to the guide the parties into position. I had only my battery of Rifle Grenades to depend upon and it proved exceedingly effective and I am keen to use it on a future occasion. Rifle Grenade party under 2nd Lieut. STORACH formed along the</p>	<p>by wire to be at Co 48th Bn.</p>

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Bulls Road 1	23 2 17		<p>Left bank of Sunken Road. N 21a 30.45. N 21a 55.60 and placed bouge along Enemy's trench, the effect of this was soon apparent as S.O.S. signal was fired and horn kept sounding which proved he was suffering Cervicalia. at 12 midnight 22/23 I received a message that attackers were in position. 12.15 on that the advance was commenced 12.36 on Bombers have entered trench. from then on to 1.22 on messages continued to arrive that everything was going well. on inquiry I was informed that no one had returned from the attackers with a message since 12.36 on. I became anxious and insisted on trench being maintained. It was then I found that things were not satisfactory, however the reason will be seen. The Bombers made their way towards Enemy trench and struck strong wire entanglements they crossed two lots and then came near the Roche trench in front of which was very thick wire running right to parapet. The trench was full of Roche menning the parapet. Flares were continually sent up and the men had to lie flat against the wire. This and the very thick fog saved them being observed, the bombers found it impossible to get through the wire. The Enemy fired across it continually, the men had to lie still for over two hours, this accounts for the fact that Scouts sent forward by O.C. attacks to connect could not find them. but reported trench strongly manned. Consolidating Party was close behind Bombers, inside wire. It was only by crawling that men were able to get away at all. the thick fog saved them. these men were wounded, but were got away. The ground in front of Roche line is only</p>	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Playard & beam N 21a C 489</p>

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Bulls Road Flers	23 2/17		<p>A mass of shell holes filled with liquid mud no road exists. Many lines were stuck up to their middle and had to be pulled out. Officers consider trench must be good as Enemy appeared to move without difficulty. It is heavily mined and he appeared to be expecting attack. Rifles were covered with mud and it was impossible to use them. OC attacks thought the attack was proceeding satisfactorily because he could see the Bombs exploding. These however were fired by the Rifle Grenadiers, although my men were unable to secure Enemy trenches yet in my opinion they materially assisted the Battalion on the night to gain their objective as a large force of the Enemy was held on our front, preventing his sending reinforcements to the right.</p>	Raymond to Lewis 28th
MAMETZ	25 2/17	Refuge 10000	<p>The 48th Bw occupied PORK TRENCH on the night of the 24th of February. This trench had been specially reconstructed during the previous 5 days with a view to its capture. The information I received was that except for position near N 20 B. S. S. it was lightly held, an attempt was made on the night of 22/23 but failed owing to reasons given previously. Scouts on duty night 23rd reported that trench was very quiet until about 8.30 when a good deal of movement was observed. I therefore decided to send a special Officers Patrol and Bombing party out from our line on the night between 6 pm and 8 pm with orders to capture the trench up to a point beyond Section R 100</p>	W 48th

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
MAMETZ	25/2/17		<p>and arranged to push forward posts to occupy immediately it was taken. Observation posts were placed at 6pm to report Enemy flares. These were reported until 7.45 pm from different points in the trench, at 8.15 pm the patrols entered the trench and worked along across the Sanket Ross. No 25.65. from here they advanced continuously along trench nothing was seen of the Enemy by this patrol, although Post No 5.8 reported Enemy patrol seen in front. Patrol worked forward to No 6.1.9 and block was placed at No 6.4.9. Just forward of BACON TRENCH the trench is in splendid order and appears to have been cleaned out recently, over 27 dug outs some of them with double entrances were counted. at least 300 men could be accommodated. The trench was duck boarded in places. Flares, Ammunition and tools also a large quantity of Grenades were in the trench. It gives us a much stronger position, and can be held with less men than the old line. also there will now be ample cover for the troops. 58th Bn. relieved the 48th Bn on the night 24/25th relief completed.</p>	<p>Playground here by Camp</p>
BECOURT	26/2/17		<p>2.40 am. Battalion moved to MAMETZ BRIGADE CAMP. Feet inspection carried out, cleaning of arms clothing + Equipment, drying socks etc. moved to to BECOURT Camp at 10 am today. Camp very dirty. Inspections. Physical training. Boy scout Fighting carried out.</p>	

SECRET

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE

Copy No 7

48th Battalion Operation Order No 50
by Lieut-Col R.L. Leane D.S.O., M.C
Commanding Officer

February 22nd 1917.

REFERENCE MAP

Trench Map N 21 (5 7c) $\frac{1}{3500}$

SITUATION

Front line is held by the 4th Australian Division
1st Anzac Corps. 45th Battalion 13th Australian Infantry
Brigade is on our right. 50th Battalion 13th Australian
Infantry Brigade is on our left.

The enemy are holding trenches extending across our Brig-
ade front.

INTENTION

The 45th and 48th Battalions will attack the Enemy's
Trench at "Zero", ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ 22nd/23rd. (Time notified later)
The 45th Battalion will bomb along trench from N 21a 80.65
to Sunken Road N 21a 70.75.
The 48th Battalion will then continue the attack from this
point bombing along the trench and establishing a block
as far forward as possible, objective being N 21a 10.65. The
ground secured will be held. O.C. attack will arrange to
immediately securely man the trench as the attack proceeds
establishing Lewis Gun and Bombing Posts.

DISTRIBUTION

O.C. Attack.
Capt M.S. Brearly

Bombing Platoon. 2/Lieut W.C. Sheldon and 30 o/ranks.
Rifle Grenadiers. 2/Lieut J.W. Stabback and 30 o/ranks
Two Lewis Gun Teams under direct orders O.C. Attack.
Consolidating Party Lieut D.E. Lindsay and 30 o/ranks.

OBJECTIVE
48th Bn.

O.C. "B" Coy will furnish the necessary traffic controls
at GOODWIN'S POST and supply PRISONERS ESCORT and GUARD
Enemy's Trench from N 21a. 70.75 to N 21a 10.65

ASSEMBLY

The undermentioned will assemble at BULL'S TRENCH at 8pm
on night 22nd and move to their position in SUNKEN ROAD
near POINT 024.
Bombing Platoon under 2/Lieut Sheldon
Rifle Grenadiers Platoon under 2/Lieut Stabback
Consolidating Party under Lieut Lindsay
Lewis Gunners (2 teams) under Sergt Shepherdson
All troops to be in position 30 minutes before Zero

ACTION

The advance along objective will be timed to continue
immediately after 45th Bn secure enemy trench ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~
N 21a 80.65 to N 21a 70.75.
ZERO. Intense bombardment of enemy lines by stokes mortars
barrage creeps along trench to N 21a 70.75.
The 12th M.G. Coy will barrage points as follows by indirect
fire from zero hour:-
(a) N. 15c. 90. 20. to N 15. d. 40. 90. (searching Road)
(b) N. 21. b. 65. 25. to N. 21. b. 70. 99 (" ")
(c) N. 21. a. 30. 99 * N. 15. c. 40. 90 (" ")

48th Rifle Grenade Platoon will barrage Enemy Trench N 21
a 70.75 to N 21a 20.64. from SUNKEN ROAD N 21a. 35.50 to
N 21 a 55.65. Immediately the 45th Bn secure their object-
ive trench will be flashed towards O.C. Attack.
Bombing Platoon under Lieut Sheldon will immediately enter
trench and bomb towards objective.
Ten Rifle Grenadiers will follow on in rear of bombers the
remainder will take up position in SUNKEN ROAD N 21 a 28.45
and continue barrag e along enemy trench N 21 a 30 65. N 21a
10.65

Operation order No 59 (continued)

Lewis Guns will be placed to sweep JUNCTION of trench and SUNKEN ROAD N 21a 68.75 and N21a 38.64 Lewis Guns N21a Strong Point will barrage enemy front line

DEFENCE

Trench g-ained will be consolidated at once, blocks established and strong point constructed. Lewis Guns will be pushed forward and bombing parties established.

SCOUTS

Lieut W. Watson will detail scouts to guide parties into position. He will also be responsible that touch is maintained between the 45th Btn and O.C Attack.

COMMUNICATION

Capt Fairley will connect O.C. Attack with GOODWIN'S POST He will be responsible that communication is kept up with Battalion Headquarters, and establish Relay Stations at GOODWIN'S POST, FRITZ FOLLY and CHEESE ROAD.

DRESS

Fighting order, water bottles filled, meal 24 hrs carried. Each Bomber and Rifle Grenadier will carry 20 bombs or Rifle Grenades Consolidating Party will carry 5 Sand also pick and shovel

CARRYING PARTY

Carrying Party under Lieut Morris will report at 6 pm to Senior Major to carry ammunition, bombs, and material to GOODWIN'S POST One Officer. Two N.C.O's . 60 o/ranks.

DUMPS

Forward Dump of Mills Bombs, Rifle grenades, and ammunition will be established at N 21 a Point 24. Refilling point GOODWIN'S POST.

SILENCE

Strict silence must be maintained until the actual attack

WATCHES

Watches will be Synchronised at 5 p.m and 8 p.m

MESSAGES

All messages to be sent to Batn Headquarters BULL'S TRENCH

SIGNALS

Green Lights will be fired to show point captured in groups of two

RETIRE

The word retire is not to be used .The Germans sometimes use it to create confusion amongst our men.

Poyner to Lewis Lieut-Colonel
Commanding 48th Battalion.

- Copy No 1 File
 - 2,3 War Diary
 - 4 12th Aust Inf Bgde.
 - 5 45th Battalion
 - 6 "B" Coy
 - 7 O.C. Attack.
 - 8 "Sigs" O.C
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