

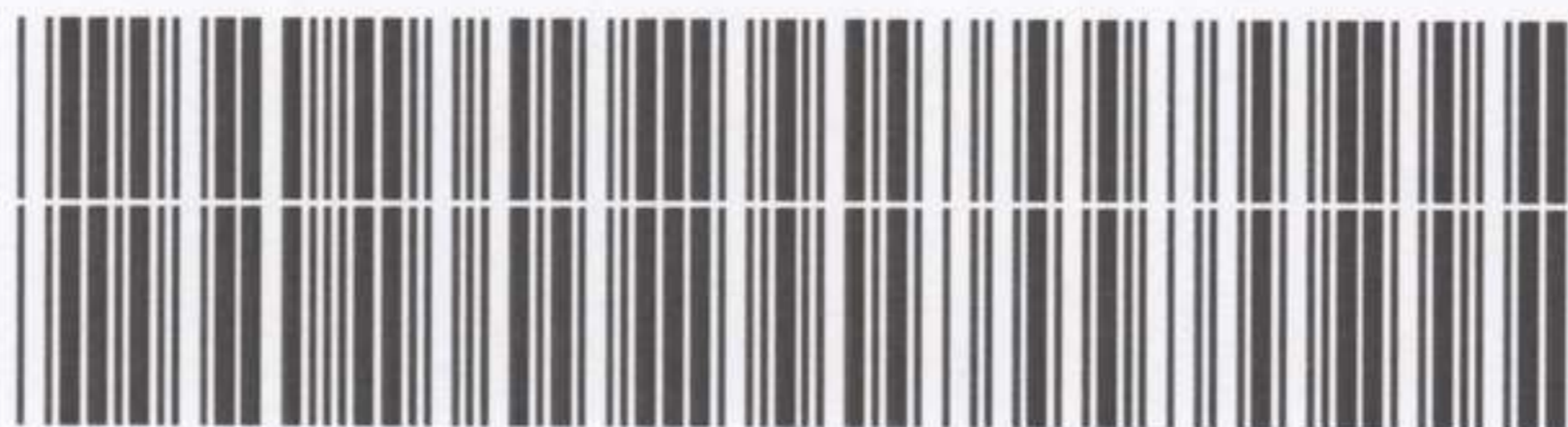
AWM4
Australian Imperial Force unit war diaries,
1914-18 War

Engineers

Item number: 14/8/18

Title: Headquarters 2nd Australian
Divisional Engineers

March 1918



AWM4-14/8/18

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ORIGINAL.
DUPLICATE.
TRIPLICATE.



Australian Imperial Force.

WAR DIARY

OF

Headquarters, Divisional Engineers,
SECOND AUSTRALIAN DIVISION.

FOR

MARCH 1918.

191

Signature of Officer compiling Officer Commanding.

Signature of Officer Commanding *J. Chelitto* Lt. Col.,
C.R.E. Second Australian Division.

Confidential

Original

WAR DIARY

Sheet 1.

Army Form C. 2118

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F. S. Regs., Part II. and the Staff Manual respectively. Title Pages will be prepared in manuscript.



INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Erase heading not required.)

March
~~February~~ 1918.

Headqrs.

DIVISIONAL ENGINEERS
2nd Australian Division

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Colembert (Pas de Calais)	1st		Nothing special to record.	
	5th		Commencement of relief of Engineers and Pioneers of 3rd Aust. Div. by Engineers and Pioneers of 2nd Aust. Div. 5th Field Company relieved 11th Field Company today.	
	7th		6th and 7th Field Companies relieved 10th and 9th Field Coys. respectively today. 2nd Pioneers also relieved 3rd Pioneers.	
	8th		H.Q.D.E. moved from Colembert to Ravelsberg (near Bailleul) to take over from H.Q.D.E. 3rd Aust. Div. The disposition of Companies in the line at present is:- 6th Field Coy. in left sector with 6th A.I.Bde.; 5th Field Coy. in right sector with 5th A.I.Bde.; 7th Field Coy. in reserve, employed on Corps Defences, still under Lt. Col. Clogstoun. Pioneers are disposed similarly to when previously in this sector.	
	11th 13th		Major Reid, who has been acting for C.R.E. during his absence on leave, rejoined 5th Coy. On 10th and 11th March NIEPPE was shelled - Pioneers had a number of casualties, and are, in consequence, moving into bivouacs on the outskirts of NIEPPE. From information received the German offensive ^{was} expected on the 10th, but did not eventuate. A heavy bombardment on morning of 11th to the South when a number of the 38th British Division, who are on our right, ^{was} raided. Our front is the same as we previously held, except that the Southern Divisional boundary has been slightly altered to follow the course of the River LYS. The 3rd Aust. Division, which this Division has just relieved, carried out several successful raids, and this perhaps accounts for the Artillery activity ^{being} greater than it was when we were previously holding this front in both front and back areas. BAILLEUL was shelled yesterday and STEENWERCK was shelled on 11th. On 11th Major GWYTHER, O.C., 184 Tunnelling Company called and discussed work in progress, especially in CATACOMBS dugouts where alterations are proposed in the ventilation system. The dugouts are to be divided into blocks which are to hold between 200 & 300 men, and ventilation to be provided by fans drawing through filters to purify the air, in case of exterior air being contaminated with gas. There is a proposal also for construction of a Brigade Headquarters at GASOMETER Corner, and O.C. Tunnelling Coy. ^{is} to test ground by bores. Major SANBROOK, R.M.O., went on leave to England today, being relieved by Capt. WHISH, 5th Field Ambulance. Chief work is still concentrated on defensive preparations in anticipation of German offensive. The question of the moment is when and where will this offensive take place. It is also suggested that possibly or probably no such offensive will take place at all. C.R.E. visited C.E.'s office yesterday to discuss proposed improvements regarding ventilation of CATACOMBS dugouts and minor matters. Today, with Major BORWICK, G.S.O. 2, visited Majors WEBB and HARRIS and discussed work in hand. Tonight, received instructions from G.O.C. to employ Pioneers to open up front line trench	

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Sheet 2.

Army Form C. 2118

WAR DIARY

March 1918.

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Erase heading not required.)

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F. S. Regs., Part II. and the Staff Manual respectively. Title Pages will be prepared in manuscript.

Logis
DIVISIONAL ENGINEERS
2nd Australian Division

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Ravelsberg near BAILLEUL.	13th	continued.	- trench connecting 5th and 6th Brigades, work to be done in one night. Instructed C.O., Pioneers to have reconnaissance made tonight so as to have work done tomorrow night. The condition of the ground is better than during last period in the line owing to it having dried up to a certain extent.	<i>ma</i>
	14th		Raining in the morning, cleared in afternoon. With A.D.M.S. went to RED LODGE to decide on a site for proposed tunnelled dugout for Advanced Dressing Station close to present A.D.S. at UNDERHILL FARM which is in the Farm building; latter is not secure against a direct hit. Decided on a suitable place but 184 Tunnelling Coy. have at present no men to spare so cannot start immediately. Pioneers are to open up front line trench connecting 5th and 6th Brigades tonight. 1st Australian Division were raided unsuccessfully last night by the enemy. 5th Australian Division made two small successful raids.	<i>ma</i>
	15th		With Major WEBB, went over portion of Corps Zone Defences. Lt. Col. Clogstoun, who is in technical charge of the work in this zone, is at present on leave and no one seems to have any clear idea as to what the complete scheme is, and the latest plans have not been found. Started from Southern end of River LYS and worked up towards PLOEGSTBERT Wood. Several (about 6) concrete blockhouses have been completed and 2 or 3 are under construction. The design is one prepared by Major Harris, 6th Field Coy.; it provides shelter only as there are no loopholes or means of observation without going outside. The object was to provide shelter for Company Headquarters and Machine Gun crews. The switch line from S.E. of PLOEGSTBERT Wood to old subsidiary line has been developed into a very conspicuous breast-work by 3rd Aust. Div., and under Lt. Col. Clogstoun's instruction, and now forms part of the front line of the second zone system. Posts are being developed at points along its length by revetting its face making shallow trench. NIEPPE shelled again this morning. 7th Field Company moved to new camp near CANTEEN Corner yesterday.	<i>ma</i>
	16th		Weekly conference of Field Company commanders and C.O., Pioneer Bn.- discussed work in progress generally. Arranged for 7th Field Company to carry out construction of ammunition shelters required by C.R.A. O.C. 184 Tunnelling Coy. also called in. He is to go on with dugouts for Advanced dressing station near UNDERHILL Farm, and will commence shafts for Advanced Brigade H.Q. at GASOMETER Corner; this latter work to be completed by 5th Field Coy. if the ground is found to be easy to work.	<i>ma</i>
	17th		Called at 5th & 6th Bde. H.Qrs. also 5th Field Coy. H.Q.	<i>ma</i>
	19th		Went forward with Major REID into part of his sector, chiefly through support line; latter is in good condition, revetted and duckboarded. Major Harris called in in afternoon and discussed the subject of wells in the forward area and progress of LA BASSE VILLE Defences.	<i>ma</i>

Confidential

WAR DIARY

Sheet 3.

Army Form 2118 00

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.

or
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

March 1918.

Headquarters.

DIVISION ENGINEERS
2nd Aust. & Tan. Division

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Ravelsberg.	19th		<p>Considerable importance is attached to LA BASSE VILLE and work is being concentrated on improvement of defences there, chiefly in improvement of cellar accommodation, linking up posts and revetting trenches. A considerable amount of Trench Mortar shelling in the whole of LA BASSE VILLE and vicinity. G.O.C. wishes to have a trench dug between UMPIRE Support and Front line to serve as an emergency Communication trench through which troops can get into LA BASSE VILLE. Ground is bad and water level about 2 feet 6 ins. and it will be very difficult to get at all a good trench. It has been raining heavily all day and will be impossible at present, but I am directing Pioneers to have reconnaissance made to select best site. 5th Brigade to be relieved by 7th Bde. on 21st but XXX Field Coys. will not change. From a continuity of works point of view this is desirable though it upsets the regularity of working Coys. with usual brigades, and gives 5th Field Company a long spell in the front line. However with the present conditions in this sector it does not throw a very severe strain upon them. A high velocity gun has been shelling the railway and valley North of our H.Q. during the last two days. Bailleul is also shelled at intervals. The German offensive is still awaited though here we have no information as to when or where likely to occur. It is not anticipated that their main attack, however, will take place on this front.</p> <p>Raining early in the morning, dull all day, fine and clear at night with half-moon. Went up with Major Harris and Lt. Carleton to do 6th Brigade sector. Walked out along VANCOUVER Tramway track to UMPIRE Support thence to TROIS TILLEULS blockhouse at which two men were at work cutting a hole in rear; thence to ULTIMO AVENUE and along this to LA BASSE VILLE. The Pioneers were at work on maintenance of this trench in LA BASSE VILLE. Trenches have been cleared out a considerable amount in LA BASSE VILLE and accommodation improved. X Trench off ULTIMO AVENUE, cut by 3rd Div. and camouflaged by covering with timber and debris, is not very satisfactory as it is likely to be seriously blocked if hit by a shell through the timber on top falling into the trench. Proposed to remove timber and camouflage with ordinary camouflage netting only. Walked back along ULTIMO AVENUE, which is in fairly good condition, along UNEVEN Support which has been largely revetted and duckboarded and fire-stepped, and will shortly be complete right through; also inspected UNTIDY Strong Point and O.P. for Field Artillery which was commenced by Major Webb near ST YVES. From ST YVES went back along tramway to RACINE dump, found Pioneers had no party at work on repairing of trucks and have done nothing to repair duckwalk track from HYDE PARK CORNER towards ST YVES, which they had been instructed to do a couple of days previously; picked up car at HYDE PARK CORNER. Lieut. Davies 6th Field Company, slightly wounded by shell-fire yesterday while working in EGMONT AVENUE - shell-splinter head, evacuated C.C.S. but rejoined four days later. Brig. Genl. FOOTE, new C.E., with Capt. SHELDON, Staff Officer, called in afternoon, asked that this Div. should undertake the job of alteration to ventilation of CATACOMBS.</p>	<p><i>See</i></p> <p><i>See</i></p>
	20th			

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WAR DIARY

March 1918.

Army Form C. 2118.

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F. S. Regs., Part II. and the Staff Manual respectively. Title pages will be prepared in manuscript.

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

HdQRS. Div. Engineers,
2nd Australian Division.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Ravelsberg	20th		5th Brigade to make a small raid early tomorrow morning at PONT ROUGE to endeavour to capture suspected enemy post.	<i>Que</i>
	21st		5th Bde. raid this morning did not result in the capture of any prisoners. Lt. Col. Clogstoun returned from leave yesterday and continued in charge of 2nd Zone Defences in this Divl. sector. News today that an intense bombardment on the whole of the 3rd and 5th Army fronts exclusive of Rhiems sector. Later news shews that an infantry attack has developed and the enemy is in Lagnicourt and Louveral but the position is satisfactory. The enemy is vigorously shelling the railway and valley North of here, day and night for several days, also back areas; Bailleul and other towns have been shelled. Later news at night stated enemy in possession possession of Bullecourt, Lagnicourt and Hargicourt Hargicourt. Bullecourt and Lagnicourt on one side and Hargicourt on the other side of the base of the Cambrai salient, which must be threatened by any further advance at these points; expected that attack will be resumed the following day. No news yet whether this is the real main German effort or only a feint.	<i>Que</i>
	22nd		Early this morning the enemy heavily bombarded and raided our posts in La Basse Ville. Posts practically wiped out by Artillery and Trench Mortar fire and about 12 men are missing. Considerable loss was inflicted on the enemy and a counter attack cleared the posts. Went out with C.O. Pioneer Battalion to inspect shelters being constructed by Pioneers along trench near Prowse Point- the usual type of shelter made with curved corrugated iron sheets set over cuts in side of trench and covered with earth. Accommodation at present for 500 men. A considerable amount of gas shelling in the vicinity of these shelters last night and a good many casualties were caused by effects of so called "mustard gas". Visited 6th Bde. H.Q. also Red Lodge dugouts and Advanced Dressing Station at Underhill Farm. 5th Bde. relieved by 7th Bde. in right sector yesterday. Am considering early relief of 5th Coy. by 7th Coy. so that 5th Coy. may relieve 6th Coy. when 5th Bde. go into left sector, which is expected in about 14 days time unless circumstances change.. Not much news received from battle front in South.	<i>Que</i>
	23rd		News circulated today of further development of German attack which is bad. 5th Army ** has, in two and a half days, been driven back 12 miles, and the 3rd Army have been forced to fall back correspondingly. All leave cancelled today. Weather fine and dry which is favourable to the enemy's operations as it facilitates his communications.	<i>Que</i>
	24th		News from South that 5th Army have fallen back to the line Somme-Tortille; 3rd Army appear to be holding some of the 2nd line positions. Enemy reported to have gained a footing on the left bank of the Somme at Ham. This Division yesterday received orders to take over half the front of the 5th Aust. Div., which is being withdrawn from the line. 7th Co. takes over from 8th and 15th Coys. tomorrow between the River Douve and Wambeek, and Pioneers are taking over	<i>Que</i>

Confidential

WAR DIARY

March 1918.

Army Form C. 2118.

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F. S. Regs., Part II. and the Staff Manual respectively. Title pages will be prepared in manuscript.

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

Headquarters, Div. Engineers,
Second Australian Division.

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Ravelsberg	24th		over work in the area from 5th Pioneers. 5th Bde. are occupying this new portion of front which makes our frontage about 9,000 yards, so that all three brigades will be in line. The Pioneers will form a Divisional Reserve and will move to the neighbourhood of Wulverghem and will be withdrawn from works so as to be in hand, with the exception of details maintaining tramways and roads. A slight pause in the battle in South; French troops reported to be moving up and to be already engaged South of Ham.	
	25th		Enemy reported to have captured Peronne and crossed the Somme. French reported to have taken over line from South up to Peronne. Report received last night that Enemy is shelling Paris; this is confirmed today, and is one of the surprises of the war as the range must be 60 or 70 miles, about twice the extreme range hitherto experienced for gun fire. 5th Brigade have taken over front up to Wambeek today. Entered new arrangements that each brigade is to be responsible for work on the 2nd zone defences which falls within their sector. All surplus kit has been reduced as much as possible as when we move no extra transport will be available. No news of move yet, but it is expected as soon as troops can be sent up to relieve us. This front is still quiet. Long range guns not quite so active as they have been; they still fire into Bailleul and other targets occasionally. Weather overcast and windy. All works on this front, except defensive works, considered imminent in urgency, are to cease.	
	26th		Went out this morning with Lt. Col. Nicholson, C.R.E. Corps Troops and Lt. Col. Clogstoun, inspected 2nd zone defences between R. Douve and Wambeek in area just taken over. Only the firing line in this system is in an advanced stage; the support line has been constructed only from the Northern boundary to a point just North of Messines (Swayne's Farm); thence running in front of Messines to the Douve. practically practically nothing has been done in the way of wiring or trenches. Of the reserve line only a little has been done near the Northern boundary of the sector, and nothing behind Messines. Called on Major Webb at new camp at Wulverghem. He is commencing work on 2nd zone by thickening up wiring on Southern part of firing line. The next thing in importance is the completion of the wiring of the support line. Fine weather and no rain last night though it looked threatening and turned cold.	
	27th		Spent the morning with Lt. Col. Annand going into the question of 2nd zone defences and the allotment of work to be done in the three brigade sectors. Wish to ensure that instructions issued shall be as precise and clear as possible. Hitherto the whole matter has been rather vague and it has been difficult to obtain any clearly defined scheme on paper; only urgent works can be gone on with. News from South that enemy have captured Albert, our troops are holding line of railway embankment near the town and along the Ancre. Further South enemy have pressed on and have captured Noyon and Roye. Latest published enemy claim in captures is 963 guns and 45,000 prisoners. Weather today cold and overcast.	

March 1918.

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118.

Headquarters, Divisional Engineers,

Second Australian Division.

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F. S. Regs., Part II. and the Staff Manual respectively. Title pages will be prepared in manuscript.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Ravelsberg	27th 28th		Information received that we shall probably be moving in about two days time. Visited 5th A.I.Bde. H.Q. at Midland Farm dugout this morning. Called in to see Major Webb at Coy. H.Q. at Wulverghem nearby and with him visited Peace River (or Currie), Bell Farm dumps also dump at Lindenhoeck where there is an engine and saw. Pioneers had instructions to keep men in charge of latter. Called at Pioneer Battalion H.Q. (Spy Farm) and went on to 1st Aust. Div. H.Q. and saw Col. Martyn. Slight rain falling tonight with high wind and cold.	Quee Quee
	29th		Stormy all day. Last night's news states enemy made further advance to Montdidier and so cut the loop railway running between Amiens and Paris. Went to 1st Aust. Div. H.Q. this afternoon to hear exposition of present situation by Major General Harrington, M.G., G.S. 2nd Army; not very much news or enlightenment given beyond what we have been already told. 4th Aust. Div. have been reported as in action near Hebuterne and yesterday reported to have retaken Dernancourt. 3rd Aust. Div. also in the line on right flank of British Army joining French.	Quee
	30th		Usual weekly conference of Field Company Commanders this morning. Brig. Genl. Foott, new Chief Engineer, called and arranged to go up to the line in right brigade (7th) area tomorrow morning. G.O.C. has asked for a report to be furnished regarding the condition of wiring of the front zone with a view to improving weak parts before handing over. Lt. Col. Hodson, C.R.E. 19th Division called in afternoon re taking over area between Wambeek and Douve. His Division were in reserve near Hermies when the fighting started, and he said that sappers were chiefly used in selecting and marking out and, as far as possible, preparing positions in rear during the retreat, also on some demolition work. Raining intermittently during the afternoon.	Quee
	31st		Easter Sunday. 19th Division ^{will} have taken over sector North of the Douve tomorrow and 7th Coy. will move out with 5th A.I.Bde.. 25th Division are to take over the Divisional area South of the Douve, but the C.R.E. has not yet called. Raining a good deal last night, and threatening but not much rain today. This morning went up forward in right brigade sector with Chief Engineer, Capt. Sheldon and Major Reid.	Quee

J. C. Corlette

Lt. Colonel,
C.R.E. Second Australian Division.

Lt. Colonel

WAR DIARY

OF
Headquarters, Divisional Engineers,
SECOND AUSTRALIAN DIVISION.

FOR

MARCH

1918

LIST OF APPENDICES.



No.	Subject.
1.	18/36 Divisional Engineer Order No. 31. - March 1st 1918. (with addendum)
2.	18/40 Divisional Engineer Order No. 32. - March 17th 1918. (with amendment)
3.	18/48 Divisional Engineer Order No. 33. - March 24th 1918.
4.	18/52 Handing over notes to C.R.E. 19th Div. March 30th. (original only)
5.	18/56 Divisional Engineer Order No. 34. - March 31st 1918. (original only)
6.	- Handing over report to C.R.E. 25th Division by C.R.E. 2nd Aust. Div. March 31st 1918. (original and duplicate only)
7.	- Reports by Field Company Commanders on operations from 20/9/17 to 9/10/18.

* * * * *

Works Map — 16/12/17 to 29/1/18. } In original
Drainage Map — 16/12/17 to 29/1/18. } only.
Trench Map — 8/3/18 to 3/4/18.)

SECRETAppendix 1
Original
SECOND AUSTRALIAN DIVISION.

APPENDIX

Divisional Engineer Order No. 31.

Copy No. 15



Reference Maps :- HAZENBROUCK Sa. and CALAIS IS. 1/100,000.

March 1st, 1918.

1. Field Companies and Pioneers of 2nd Aust. Div. will relieve Field Companies and Pioneers of 3rd Aust. Div. between 2nd and 3th of March, 1918.
2. The 5th Field Coy. will relieve the 11th Field Coy, relief to be completed by noon 5th instant.
The 6th Field Coy. will relieve the 10th Field Coy., relief to be completed by noon 7th instant.
The 7th Field Coy. will relieve the 9th Field Coy., relief to be completed by 7th/8th instant.
The 7th Field Coy. will send 2 officers and 8 O.S.'s on 4th instant with 5th Field Coy. to reconnoitre work preparatory to taking over.
The 2nd Aust. Pioneer Bn. will relieve the 3rd Aust. Pioneer Bn., relief to be arranged direct between C.Os. and completed by midnight, 7th/8th March 1918.
3. The Field Companies will move to the Right Divisional Sector and area of the Corps front with their respective Brigade groups. C.Os. will arrange accordingly with Brigades.
- * 4. Attention is drawn to :-
Administrative Memorandum No. 198 with Appendices "A", "B", "C", and "D" attached.
5. Completion of reliefs will be advised by wire to this office.
6. D.S.H.Q. will close at COLEBERT at 10 a.m. on 5th instant and open at HAVELBERG on same date.
7. ACKNOWLEDGE.

H. Harris Lt. & Adjt.,
for C.S.E. Second Australian Division.

DISTRIBUTION.

1. C.S. Aust. Corps
2. A.Q. 2nd Aust. Division.
3. C. 2nd Aust. Div.
4. 5th Field Coy. A.S.
5. 6th " " "
6. 7th " " "
7. 5th A.I. Brigade
8. 6th " " "
9. 7th " " "
10. C.O. 2nd Aust. Pioneer Bn.
11. C.S.E. 3rd. Aust. Division.
12. File
- 13-18 War Diary.

* para 4. Attached 5th 6th and 7th Field Coys. only.

SECRET

SECOND AUSTRALIAN DIVISION.

Cop



Addendum to Divisional Engineer Order No. 31.

In order to minimize the dislocation of work on Corps Line during relief of Field Companies of Third Australian Division, the following arrangements will be carried out:-

(3rd Coy) An advanced party of 2 Officers and 8 G.R. of 7th Field Coy. will proceed with 7th Field Company on 4th instant and 80 other ranks of 7th Field Company will proceed with 6th Field Company on 5th instant. In addition, the 6th Field Company will place one section at the disposal of 7th Field Company to assist in taking over Corps Defence Line. The 9th Field Company are leaving one officer and four other ranks till 6th instant to ensure continuity of work. The relief by 6th Field Company of the 10th Field Company will be completed by midnight 7th/8th.

ACKNOWLEDGE.

[Signature] Lt. & Adjt.
for G.R.S. Second Australian Division.

Distribution same as for Div. Engr. Order No. 31.

SECOND AUSTRALIAN DIVISION.**SECRET**Divisional Engineer Order No. 32. - March 17th 1918.

Reference Maps :- Sheet 28 1/40,000
 Sheet 36 1/40,000



1. The 7th Aust. Inf. Brigade will relieve the 5th. Aust. Inf. Brigade in the right Brigade Sub-Sector of the line on March 20th and night 20th/21st. March 1918.

2. On relief units of 5th Aust. Inf. Brigade will take over and continue all duties and works performed by the Support Brigade.

3. The Field Companies will not be relieved but will continue as at present employed.

4. Acknowledge by wire.

[Signature] Lt. & Adjt.,
 for C.R.E. Second Australian Division.

DISTRIBUTION.

5th 6th & 7th Field Coys. A.E.

File

War diary. ✓

*Appendix 2
 Original*

SECRET



FIRST AMENDMENT TO SECOND AUST. DIVISIONAL ENGINEER ORDER No. 32.

Ref. Maps - Sheet 28 - 1/40,000
Sheet 36 - 1/40,000

March 18th 1918.

Relief laid down in above order has been postponed for 24 hours, hence -

for "20th March" read "21st March."
" "night 20th/21st March" read "Night 21st/22nd March."

Acknowledges

Lt. & Adjt.,
for C.R.E. Second Australian Division.

DISTRIBUTION.

As for Aust. Div. Engineer Order No. 32.

SECRET

Original
Appendix 3



SECOND AUSTRALIAN DIVISION.

Divisional Engineer Order No. 33. March 24th 1918.

Reference Maps :- Sheet 28 S.W. and S.E. (Parts of) Edition 3a, 1/30,000.

In accordance with 2nd Aust. Division Order No. 163, the following Engineer re-arrangements will be made :-

1. The 7th Field Company will take over from the 8th and 15th Field Companies of the 5th Aust. Division all works being carried out by these Companies from the RIVER DOUVE Northward to the RIVER WAMBREK. This sector of front is known as the MESSINES Sector. Relief to be complete by noon 25th instant.
2. The 7th Field Company will take over the camp occupied by 8th Field Company situated at T.6.c.8.4. Sheet 28 S.W. which will be vacated by 8th Field Company by 10.30 a.m. on 25th instant.
3. Receipts (in duplicate) of all stores and equipment taken over will be forwarded to D.R.H.Q. within 48 hours after taking over.
4. Completion of relief and location will be notified this office by wire.
5. Acknowledge.

W. H. ... Lt. & Adjt.,
for C.R.E. Second Australian Division.

DISTRIBUTION

1. C.E. Aust. Corps
2. "G" 2nd Aust. Div.
3. "A.Q." 2nd Aust. Div.
4. 7th Field Coy.
5. 5th A.I. Brigade
6. C.R.E. 5th Aust. Div.
7. Lt-Col CLOGSTON.
8. ibe
9. 10. 11. War Diary.

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13

4

30/3/18.

Appendix 4

HANDING OVER NOTES REGARDING BRIGADE AREA N. of DOUVE held by
SECOND AUSTRALIAN DIVISION.



C.R.E. 19th Div.

This area was taken over only on 25th March from 5th Aust. Div. Notes and papers handed over by C.R.E. 5th Aust. Div. are therefore handed on and will be found to contain pretty clear information of work done and in hand.

7th Field Coy. A.E. will be able to give some further details. Owing to shortness of men available a good deal of the work had to stop.

2nd Aust. Pioneer Battn. have small parties engaged on maintenance of tramway lines and of roads. The screens and C.T's referred to in C.R.E. 5th Aust. Div.'s notes also require to be provided for.

2nd Zone defences are unfinished. They were being constructed under supervision of C.R.E. Corps Troops, AUST. Corps who handed over to Lt.Col. CLOGSTOUN, R.E. when this division took over and were not under the control of the C.R.E. division in the area. Since this division took over, however, any work done has been carried out under the supervision of the 7th Field Coy. This has consisted mainly of thickening up the wiring of the firing line. Wiring of Support line has only been carried as far as SWAYNES FARM from N. and requires to be continued round front of MESSINES to join with continuation on S. side of DOUVE RIVER, the necessary posts prepared. Reserve line is also very incomplete.

Lt.Col. CLOGSTOUN is under orders to go to 9th Corps and no instructions as to who the Corps Zone defences are handed over to have yet been issued.

John

Lt. Colonel,
C.R.E. Second Australian Division.

War Diary

SECRET

SECOND AUSTRALIAN DIVISION

Copy No. 11

Divisional Engineer Order No. 54.

31st March 1918.

Issued under C.E. Aust. Corps Engr. Instruction No. 86. and
Second Aust. Division Orders 166 & 167.Ref. Map - Sheet 28 S.W. & S.E. (parts of), Edition 3A - 1/20,000.
Sheets 28 & 36 1/40,000.

1. The 7th Field Company will be relieved by a field company of the 19th Division, relief to be completed by midnight 1st/2nd April 1918. The 5th and 6th Field Companies, in the Right and Centre sectors, respectively, will be relieved by field companies of 25th Division. Relief of 6th Field Company to be completed by midnight 1st/2nd April and relief of 5th Field Company to be completed by midnight 2nd/3rd April.
2. On relief, the 7th Field Company will move with 5th A.I. Brigade group, and will be prepared to entrain on 3rd April. On relief, the 6th Field Company will move with 6th A.I. Brigade group, and the 5th Field Company will move with 7th A.I. Brigade group, and will be prepared to entrain on 4th April.
3. All Maps, Aeroplane photographs, Defence Schemes and documents in connection with the sector will be handed over and receipts obtained.
4. Handing over receipts, in duplicate, will be forwarded to this office on completion of relief, together with certificates that all camps have been left in a sanitary condition.
5. On arrival in new forward area, each Field Company will detail one runner to report to D.E.S.Q.
6. D.E.S.Q. will close at 10 a.m. on 3rd April and move to entraining station.
7. Details of moves by 'bus, train etc. will be issued to Field Coys. by Brigades.
8. ACKNOWLEDGE.

W. S. Ham Lt. & Adjt.
for C.R.E. Second Australian Division.

DISTRIBUTION.

1. C.E., Aust. Corps.
2. "G" 2nd Aust. Div.
3. 5th Coy. 4. 6th Coy. 5. 7th Coy.
6. 5th Bde. 7. 6th Bde. 8. 7th Bde.
- 9 & 10. C.R.Es. 19th & 25th Divisions.
11. War Diary. 12. File.

Appendix 6 original
SECOND AUSTRALIAN DIVISIONAL ENGINEERS. *W Diary*

Hand Over report to C.R.E. 25th Division, by C.R.E. 2nd Aust. Div.

Details of the works in progress are shown in copies of Field Company reports (appendix 1.) handed over. When three field companies were employed in the area taken over, they were disposed as follows:-

- One in left forward brigade area. Employed on all forward works in brigade area. Camp at Sheet 28. T.16.a.9.9.
- One in right forward brigade area, similarly employed. Camp at Weka Lines, ROMARIN. Sheet 36.B.4.a.5.2.
- One supervising work on 2nd Zone Defences, within Divisional area. Camp at Sheet 28.T.26.d.2.2.

During the last week only two companies have been available and the field companies in each brigade sector were responsible for work on 2nd Zone in their respective areas.

PIONEERS. Camped near NIEPPE.

Employment:

One company maintaining C.Ts. and certain other trenches in right brigade sector.

One company similarly employed in left brigade sector.

One company maintaining all tramways in Divisional area, controlling issue and repair of tramway rolling stock, and construction of new tramways.

One company maintaining and improving forward roads and constructing accommodation for a battalion along St. ANDREW'S DRIVE.

Details were also employed on various jobs including 5 men running electric generating plant at CATACOMBS dugouts.

One platoon was also engaged in clearing old, and sinking new wells in forward area, under scheme got out by "Q". See list attached. (appendix 2.)

During the last week Pioneers have been withdrawn from works except for bare tramway and road maintenance and party running generating plant at CATACOMBS.

WORKS IN PROGRESS. (for details see Field Coy. reports, appendix 1.)

In forward area chiefly maintenance and improvement of trenches.

Principal work requiring attention is completion of La BASSE VILLE defences. This point is regarded as of great tactical importance. Plan showing present state of work is handed over. (appendix 3.)

There is a gap between left and right brigades which requires attention. Neither front, support or reserve lines are continuous between the brigades owing to it having been impossible to construct trenches across the marshy ground. In order to make it available for a garrison an entrance has been cut through at the back of TROIS TILLEULS Farm which might be used to cover this gap. Umpire support and reserve trenches in right brigade sector have been made good towards the left as far as shown on trench map handed over, (appendix 4), but do not at present give fire over the ground between left end and flank of left brigade.

- 2 -

2nd ZONE DEFENCES. The work on this zone has not been controlled by C.R.E. of this Division. Lt. Colonel Clogstoun, R.E. was in charge, but has just left the area; C.R.E. Corps Troops, Australian Corps is taking over.

A plan showing the work done on this zone is handed over. (appen. 5). In connection with this a series of concrete pill-boxes for use of M.G. crews and company headquarters was in progress but stopped temporarily owing to lack of labour. A list of these showing locations and state of completion is handed over. (appendix 6)

TRAMWAYS. A new tramway had been started from Le GHEER dump to connect to loop line between VANCOUVER and CALEDONIAN Tramways and go thence as indicated on maps. This was not completed but would be a useful line for supplies to left flank of right brigade.

O.P. for 2nd ZONE. Field Artillery position has been started in house where R.A.P. is situated in C.l.d.4.5. (approx. only). Field Company in right brigade sector should hand over any particulars available, though this job constituted part of 2nd Zone works and so not directly under C.R.E.

184th TUNNELLING COMPANY. Two sections of 184 Tunnelling Company are available to do work required by Division. Location of headquarters at Sheet 28.T.3.c.5.7. Particulars of work on which they are at present employed is shown on their report. (appendix 7). Work held up owing to lack of labour.

VENTILATION SYSTEM OF CATACOMBS. Orders have been given for altering present system of ventilation at CATACOMBS dugouts (near HYDE PARK CORNER) so as to provide for installation of a gas filter. No work has so far been done. Papers are handed over. (appendix 8).

R.E.STORES. Details regarding supply of R.E. stores are shown on appendix 9, attached.

Lt. Colonel,

C.R.E. Second Australian Division.

31/3/18.

OPERATIONS 4th October 1917.

All assembly positions were occupied to time. Only very light rain fell on night preceding, but ground was a little soft. Lt BURNELL reported at 7th Bde H.Qrs at 7.15am. At 7.20am, the Red Line was reported captured on the right and at 7.35 am, 7th Bde reported Red Line being consolidated.

Both Strong Point and Communication parties were sent for at 7.20am, arriving about 8.20am at SANS SOUCI dump.

Communication party under Lt POLSON picked up stores and moved off from dump at 8.35am. This party had to move through very heavy barrages (mainly 5.9 with much instantaneous fuze) on our old front line system just forward of StJOSEPH'S INSTITUTE and in depth about ZONNEBEKE church and D.22.c. Later at the BROODSEINDE RIDGE they were met by raking M.G. fire and 77 mm. Before 10am the tape had been run through to the front line within an hour of infantry arriving there and up to Blue Line the track had been marked with white topped pickets in addition.

During this work 2nd CPL. BRADSHAW was severely wounded and sappers ILOU and KING less severely.

Corporal McPHERSON handled his picket party very well indeed and also L/C. WILLIAMSON.

Sappers ELTIS, McKINNON and ROCHE behaved splendidly in running out the tapes and maintaining the general direction.

The whole job of marking the communication track (shown on attached map) was very well done and the track proved to be excellently sited relative to prevailing enemy shell fire. The first company of 27th. Btn. got on to the digging of the communication trench up to the crest by 12.30pm.

By 4.30pm. the trench was cut right through to the Blue Line using part of an old German sap at the forward end and except for the road which could not be cut through on account of the absence of picks.

The actual trench was the usual type of hastily dug trench about 186" wide at the bottom to 3' wide at the top and minus about 4'.

The road was cut through on 5th.

The strong point party (2/Lt. CARLETON and 12 sappers 2/Lt. GATLEY and 26 infantry (mainly 27th.) attached and 2/Lt. JURY and 1 platoon of 25 strong of 27th. Btn. stood by at SANS SOUCI after having collected their prepared stores which had been delivered by G.S. limber on afternoon of third.

At 9.10am. observers reported the Blue Line appeared to be ours and confirmatory evidence having been received the strong point party was ordered away from dump at 9.45am.

The O.C. reconnoitred some of the tracks in company with Lt. BURNELL and incidentally saw Lt. CARLETONS' party past ST JOSEPHS INSTITUTE and the first barrage line (5.9' mainly with instantaneous fuze).

The party got almost on to the job without casualty when Cpl. LENTHALL and sapper TOMS were wounded, Cpl. LENTHALL so severely that he died within an hour and an half.

Lt. CARLETON proceeded with the siting and laying out of the strong point and then got the parties to work, ~~they were~~ infantry digging and sappers wiring.

Fortunately all the tools and stores had arrived.

The whole time the party was working, they were subjected to very heavy mixed shell fire and also indirect machine gun fire. Sappers in particular on the wiring were seriously exposed to the effects of shell exploded by instantaneous fuze.

After some time a shell exploded amongst the sappers mortally wounding sappers SEMPLE and PHELPS seriously wounding sappers ADLER and HOLMES, and at the same time throwing and severely shaking L/Cpl. McSORLEY and sapper WHITEHAIR.

Two sappers went back with the wounded men leaving only four to complete the wiring.

OPERATIONS 4th. October 1917

By dint of example and assistance Lt. CARLETON completely finished the work by 1pm. and installed the garrison. The work was as shewn in the attached sketch etc. about 60 yards of trench and 100 yards of double French and barbed wire.

Having got his party away for the rear, Lt. CARLETON remained to give any assistance to the dying men and to secure their effects.

Lt. CARLETONS' action throughout was gallant in the extreme. In the execution of this work 2/Lt. CARLETON was very ably and gallantly supported both by 2/Lt. GATLEY and 2/Lt. JURY.

At 9.15am. two pontoon loads of duck walks were ordered up to SANS SOUCI dump and arrived about 2.30pm.

At 10.am. No. 1. section under C.S.M. WEBSTER and attached in ty. then at I 12a central) were sent for and arrived at Bde. H.Q. at 12.30pm.

This party was sent out with duck walks to work duck walks up and make good the crossings of bad places in the communication track.

They met heavy scattered barrage and had casualties sappers CALDWELL and TOWERS and two infantry being wounded, but got some useful work done.

This party carried up 100 duck walks and made acrossing 50yds long over the beek.

C.S.M. WEBSTER did some useful reconnaissance and later handed over to 2/Cpl. GUDMUNXSON.

At 2pm. half of No. 4. section was ordered up and this party reported under 2/Cpl. GUDMUNXSON about 6pm.

They were instructed to make good the crossing of the bad spot at D27 b47 and placed temporarily 90 yards of single duck walk. This was done largely after nightfall and was a very creditable performance.

A party of No. 1. section continued to patrol and maintain the duckwalk.

At 3pm. O.C. handed over to Lt. BURNELL who remained with 7th. Bde. H.Q. until evening of 5th. as liaison. *officer*

COMMENTS.

All arrangements worked out well and there was no hitch anywhere. The putting through of the communication so early in the operations was extremely useful.

The track was excellently sited as it missed practically all the heavy barrage and mostly went through dry ground.

The marking of it with white pickets was well organised and well carried out.

Every effort to improve this track was made at once but the difficulties of transport of duck walks were very great and rain largely discounted the usefulness of a formed earth track. The strong Point was splendidly done throughout and the heavy casualties in sappers (the infantry had no losses) are much to be regretted.

Again on this occasion there was practically no shelling of back areas after zero and hour, and assembly positions could safely have been further up though this is possibly but little advantage as long as arrangements run smoothly.

The circumstances again emphasise the necessity for the O.C. coy. to be with the Bde. H.Q.

Too much stress cannot be on the necessity for getting through a communication track and immediately improving it.

Still more effort must be made under present circumstances to get large dumps of duck walks well forward.

Ind eb

Major,
O.C. 7th Field Coy. Engrs., A.I.F.

C.R.E.

2nd A.S. DIV

NOTES ON ATTACK 9/10/17

PREPARATION

a double duckwalk was laid as far as St Joseph's Inst at D27a72 and from there a single duckwalk was laid as far as D22C.33.

REDUMPS

The REDUMP at SANS SOUCI was supplied with sufficient tools and sandbags etc for the operations but the bad state of the roads prevented a dump of any importance being established here.

RAP. An R.A.P. was established at ~~ST JOSEPH'S INSTITUTE~~ at D22C03 and a Bearer Relay Station at St Joseph's Instituté D27a72.

JUMPING OFF LINE

This work was in charge of LT SCOTT who with others of his party was wounded shortly after the work of laying out the tapes

had begun. The work was carried on and completed by Sappers Yeale & Wilkinson who also placed the guides and markers on the tapes.

The attacking parties of the Bde got off well and reached their first objective up to time.

They advanced for their second objective and were reported to have gained it. But later reports showed that they were falling back and had finally settled down in posts in the vicinity of the first objective.

ENGINEER WORKING PARTIES

These parties took up their Battle positions at zero - 30 at JIA and reported to Major HARRIS at 6th Bde HQ SANS SOUCI where the guides from the two Strong Point garrisons ^(18 BN) were waiting. These were to guide the engineer parties to where the garrisons were stationed in the vicinity of D22C 5.5. The 19th Bde who were supplied 130 men for the T. who also

APR 1918

Stationed forward.

The working parties reported at adv B14A at 10am having been sent on by MAJOR HARRIS when he heard that second objective had been taken.

At this time the situation was not clear the infantry having been reported to have fallen back to the RED LINE so parties were ordered to stand by. At 1.15 pm Capt Gray moved forward with the Right S.P. party and the C.T. party Lieut Dumas having been slightly wounded. He

saw the Co. 19th BN who informed him that only 25 men were available for the C.T. He then reconnoitred the area for the C.T. and S.P. but owing to shellfire and machine gun fire the work could not be started as regards the strong point. The infantry had already dug in a post at this point. The parties were withdrawn to wait till the situation was cleared up.

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The present wet weather has proved that without light railways and tramways our communications are cut off from the front line. The metal roads are asked to carry far more than they were designed for and in wet weather they will not stand, for they do not get sufficient maintenance and drainage.

Earth Roads are impassable after the first few showers of rain. The same applies to mule tracks.

Duckwalks

Owing to the lack of wood the duckboards have to be carried a great distance and there are not sufficient men available for the work. The hollows round ZONNEBEKE are impassable almost for a man without a load and badly need duckboarding for troops. The wastage in animals is very great owing their

APPENDIX 7
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being bogged. Without tramways it will be very hard to feed & keep the infantry supplied with ammunition as regards the 18^{lb} pdrs guns they cannot be supplied except with a great wastage of animals and men. The labour used in carrying parties would soon lay the necessary tracks. None of our roads I consider will stand the winter unless relieved of a good deal of the present traffic by using light railways.

R. Red
 Lt Col Major
 13/10/17 STCAE

"A" Form, MESSAGES AND SIGNALS.

Army Form C.2121 (in pads of 100.)

No. of Message

Code	m.	Words	Charge	Recd. at	m.
and Service Instructions.				Sent	Date
At				From	
To				By	
By				(Signature of "Franking Officer.")	



0 CRE
2nd Aust Div

Sender's Number: DY/55
Day of Month: 26-9-17
In reply to Number: AAA

appendix to
 Herewith copy of War Diary for 20th inst.
 If you wish to see WARS DIARY for preced,
 a succeed days a copy can be forwarded
 for perusal. AAA Normally for diary
 a plan of SP. and Comm. Etc would be
 attached but these are already in your hand

From: 7th Coy A.E.
 Place:
 Time:

The above may be forwarded as now corrected.
 Censor: (Z) Webb M. J. M.
 Signature of Addressor or person authorised to telegraph in his name.

* This line should be erased if not required.
 (7107) Wt. W12093/M1217 50,000 pads. 1/17. D. D. & L. (E764.) Forms C/2121/11.

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OPERATIONS 20TH. SEPT. 1917.

No. 16176 Sapper G.L. BULLEN and No. 6680 Sapper G.A. PHELPS assisting the 25th. Batta. to mark "jumping off" line with tape behaved very well. The location by accident was not at first correct but was rectified before it had any serious effect.

No. 16195 Sapper R.H.M. ELTIS and No. 8597 Sapper W.F.L. OWEN assisting 27th. Batta. to mark "jumping off" line behaved very well indeed and completed their work well and accurately.

Both Batta. Commanders expressed their appreciation of the services rendered by these men.

All arrangements as laid down were completed to time and all were in position well before "zero" hour.

Sappers got into assembly positions without casualty.

The attack went excellently from the start. As the morning was dull and misty with much smoke from barrage fire and the wind light from West the enemy had no observation on the battle and continued his barrage on his original S.O.S. lines (one original line of posts and another on WESTHOEK RIDGE) well up to 8.30 am., and did not shell the conquered country until, after that hour. O.C. reconnoitred situation at intervals from front of WESTHOEK RIDGE between the barrages.

At 7.00 am. O.C. sent to SHIBEN DUGOUT for Lt. J.R. FIDLER who arrived about 7.30 am. After viewing situation for some time O.C. instructed Lt. J.R. FIDLER'S party to come up. They arrived at about 8.15 am. and went on to work of marking out communication trench at 8.30. am.

Barrage to this time was heavy on original enemy S.O.S. lines and mainly 5.9 H.E. About this time it began to develop into indiscriminate shelling of conquered line (up to BLUE LINE) and included more shrapnel and instantaneous fuze. Lt. FIDLER'S party had to work through this second phase after passing through the original S.O.S. barrage.

The marking of trench was completed and Infantry (26th. Batta. on job digging at 11 am. In all about 500 yds. of trench in crests was dug and the Strong Point connected to rear.

Casualties in this party were:- (Lt Fidler) were:-

Lieut.	J.R. FIDLER	wounded R. arm and L. side
2780. L/Cpl.	E.A.D. HILL	" mouth
16559 Sap.	R. MCKEW	" face
15239 "	W. CORDEN	" back (severe)
2700 "	L. ALEXANDER	" L. leg
15249 "	A.B. TOWERS	" head (slight, remained at duty

At 7.15 am. Lt. POLSON was sent for arriving about 8.45 am. His party was then at once instructed to come up and join him at Brigade Headquarters collecting stores from the special dump on the way. This party and arrangements were much disconcerted by the fact that the special dump of stores had been removed by unauthorized persons. On receipt of this information from Capt. COGHLAN at Rear Brigade Headquarters O.C. sent Lt. POLSON to meet his party and pick up wiring stores as possible. Lt. POLSON failed to meet the party as they had come up by a different route.

Meantime, Lt. CHRISTIAN had shepherded the party from ^{Rear} Bde Hq. forward and arranged to pick up such wire as available on the way. Thus the party arrived at WESTHOEK RIDGE about 11.15 am. equipped with wiring stores, but in heavy and cumbersome loads. ~~At~~ WESTHOEK RIDGE the stores were rearranged under O.C.'s. direction and party reorganized.

Lt. POLSON had meanwhile gone to rear Bde. Hqrs. and waited there for instructions. On Lt. CHRISTIAN arriving with the tail of the ^{SP} party, he was hastily given all information and instructions relative to the Strong Point and sent off with the party to construct the S.P. at 11.40 am.

Fire all this time was fairly indiscriminate and hot. Lt. CHRISTIAN led the party out with sappers first. The platoon garrison (26th. Bn. under 2/Lt. WALKER) followed while the attached Infantry party (mainly 28th. Bn.) followed with Capt. ANDERSON bringing up the rear. Although loads had been readjusted, they were still heavy and cumbersome and very difficult to handle in crossing two bad swampy patches. O.C. went out about 12 noon to reconnoitre and found many of these men still struggling with their loads but not giving in.

not giving in.

As the strong point was neared a particularly heavy barrage of instantaneous fuzed shells was laid down immediately in rear of the strong point so that although the men were seen at work the actual site was not immediately investigated.

In the face of very heavy barrage fire the party worked on completing construction and garrisoning with one platoon, two Vickers and two Lewis guns at 3 pm. Casualties incurred were :-

2796 Sapper	FIRTH	P.E.	KILLED.	
5397 Pte	LINFIELD	E.A.	Wounded	} 28th A.I.Bn
6410 Pte	WRIGHT	C.F.	"	
5402 Pte	MIDDELTON	F.	"	
5821 Pte	CARELESS	P.W.	"	

During the morning O.C. arranged for duckwalks to be sent up by company transport urgent, and these were offloaded at BELLEWARDE RIDGE at 3 pm. O.C. also asked at same time for any wiring stores to be forwarded. C.R.E. arranged for several G.S. loads to be sent to BELLEWARDE RIDGE at 3.30pm.

These were the two stores particularly required.

At 12 noon two parties of sappers (each 6 strong) were ordered up to rear Bde H.Q. with tools and gun cotton ready to cut ways into any concrete dugouts asked for. These were dispatched to Advanced Bde H.Qrs with tools at 3 pm but were not called on. This party remained and lived in SIRBEN DUGOUT ready for any work which might be required.

Lt POLSON reported back to Bde Advanced H.Q. about 1 pm and about 1.50pm O.C., (being somewhat worn) handed over to Lt POLSON with instructions to push the duckwalking of marshy places in forward communication and the digging of communication trench down forward slope of WESTHOEK RIDGE. Lt POLSON remained at Adv Bde HdQrs. O.C. returned to company Hd Qrs via Rear Bde H.Q. and proceeded to report personally and make recommendations to C.R.E. at advanced Divn'l Hd Qrs about 6 pm.

At 3 pm Lt CARLETON was instructed to arrange for 60 of attached infantry (under 2/Lt STOCKHAM) to carry wiring stores from BELLEWARDE to WESTHOEK RIDGE. Lt CARLETON went out with this party which worked on the job until 7.30 pm.

Casualties :-

4063	Private	BENTLEY	T.J.	Killed
2413	Private	RITCH	T.	Killed
6095	Private	HERSCHEL	W.H.	Wounded
1725	Private	HOGARTH	J.	Wounded.

COMMENTS .

1. The operation was different in many respects from any previous experience. Barrage was heavier, more exact and precise, and counter battery work appeared to be very effective. Weather conditions were very favourable.
2. All arrangements worked out very well, excepting the one hitch, but under the circumstances of little or no shelling of back areas the whole of the unit, might, with advantage, have been much closer up in readiness for a job. In a successful show immediately after is the time to do work, and to get work done.
3. All sappers worked splendidly and stood up to some very stiff fire magnificently.
4. A large store of duckwalks well forward is an essential in this country. Company transport should stand by ready to move such stores right forward as soon as situation allows.
5. Communication tracks, trenches and duckwalks and mule tracks should have maximum amount of labor on them immediately - mark out with tape or pickets.
6. The value was demonstrated of having the digging of the communication trench made part of the Brigade operations. As a result the essential portions of trench were dug by 2 to 3 pm.
7. The advantages accruing from having infantry parties attached to Field Companies during such operations cannot be overestimated.
8. It is essential that the O.C. or other strong executive officer be actually with Advanced Bde Hd Qrs to know the exact situation and deal with things at once.

Comments Continued

- 9. The arrangement by which Captain COGHLAN was constituted a report and collecting centre, was an excellent one and he was of the inestimable value.
- 10. The loss of the strong point party's stores stresses the necessity for making arrangements "fool-proof".
- 11. The whole show was an excellent one and no practical hitch occurred anywhere.

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25th Sept'ber 1917.

Reddy

Major.

C.C. 7th Field Coy Aust Engrs.

Report of work done by
2nd Australian Pioneer Bn p9/v26
in connection with recent operations.

The Bn moved up to SWAN CHATEAU on
the afternoon of 7th Sept.

On morning of 8th two companies
commenced construction of formation
for plank road to run from the
CAMBRIDGE ROAD, a little north of BIRR CROSS
ROADS, north and east of BELLEWAARDE
LAKE to meet road to be run from
MENIN ROAD about HOOGE through ZOUAVE
WOOD by 1st Aust. Pioneer Bn.

This road became known as BELLEWAARDE
CIRCUIT ROAD.

On the 9th two companies commenced
construction of shelters (splinter proof)
on western banks of YPRES-COMINES CANAL
& on western side of bank near KRUISSTRAAT.

On 12th a platoon from one of the companies
commenced work on water supply scheme
from ZILLEBEKE LAKE.

On 13th one company commenced
construction of plank road division
from MENIN ROAD, about 280 yds west of
BIRR X ROADS N.E. to join BELLEWAARDE
CIRCUIT ROAD at CAMBRIDGE ROAD.

On 14th dug out shelters to accommodate
1050 men on CANAL BANKS completed.

2.
One Company worked for 6 days on this
job, and one company (less 1 platoon) for
four days.

On 15th one company commenced double
sided board track from C ROAD near
YPRES SCHOOL to GORDON HOUSE

By 15th 635 yds of BELLEWAARDE CIRCUIT
ROAD had been finished, including
the planking, & the formation had
been finished to 850 yds.

C.R.E. requested us to concentrate on
formation and culverts, the 7th Flt
Coy to follow on with the planking.

On 17th double board track completed
to about 250 yds east of GORDON HOUSE.

At 8 am on 18th the plank road
division NW of BIRR X ROAD finished;
length 436 yds. This job took the one
company (less 1 platoon) 5 days. There
was a lot of making up & banding
required, & culverts.

By 19th we had completed 1350 yds
of new formation of BELLEWAARDE
CIRCUIT ROAD, joining up with the
work of 1st Pioneer Bn. During last
two days especially enemy shelled
the work very severely. All culverts
in the road were completed, and
one man assisted in transporting

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plants by train and horse vehicles,
distributing them along the road, and
also laid 40 yds of planking.

On 18th & 19th one company erected
Camouflage to screen duckboard
track from SCHOOL to GORDON HOUSE.

On 19th parties were sent out to
continuously patrol & maintain the
BELLEWAARDE CIRCUIT ROAD and CAMBRIDGE
ROAD N to Camp boundary, also the
tramway from BIRR & ROAD to South
of BELLEWAARDE Ridge.

In addition to the work mentioned
above, one platoon was employed as
a forwarding & unloading party at
the call of Lieut. Donnell Forward
Stores officer. A loading party
was sent to DICKIEBUSCH DUMP, a party
of 1 NC. & 20 to work with airway staff
making shelters for gunners, &
five Lewis gun teams were
employed on anti-aircraft duty
with forward arty batteries.
(one team shot down an enemy
plane.)

On the afternoon of 20th (day of
attack) parties were sent out to
construct a road from BELLEWAARDE
BEND to WESTHOEK.

4
About 200 yds of double track road
formation completed before men
were shelled off the job. Later in
the evening further parties went
out & completed 6 ft wide track
to WESTHOEK by 2 am.

On 21st this road was widened
and improved by placing plants
& fascines at the softest places,
enabling several guns to be
taken up to close behind WESTHOEK
RIDGE during the night.

Fascines & plants were carted up,
also rails for proposed tramway
extension.

On 22nd & 23rd the road from
BELLEWAARDE RIDGE to WESTHOEK was
further improved by filling
forming & laying fascines.

Fascines had to be man handled
a long distance.

On 23rd one company started
on Deconville tramway from
BELLEWAARDE BEND to WESTHOEK.

On 24th tramway formation completed
to within 150 yds of WESTHOEK, rails
laid for 300 yds, 100 yds partially laid,
connecting points put into position and
Swamp bridged. Dump of rails

5
badly damaged by shellfire and
work delayed owing to tramway from
Barr x Road being blown up in
two places impeding transport
of rails. Unless exceptional shelling
is experienced the job should be finished
on 25th.

On 24th we received a company
of 5th Prince's Own at constructing
emplacements and shelters for
Corps Heavy Artillery.

Remarks.

In laying the plank road
fully 90% of the labour was required
for carrying timber on to the job.

The camel transport vehicles allotted
for carrying planks to proved most
unsatisfactory. They were very
loath to push forward & could be
scarcely be got to take up more
than one load. On one occasion
an officer in charge of 6 ponton
wheeled vehicles allotted to cart up planks
would not go up himself
further than the west side of
Shrapnel corner & only two of
the vehicles delivered even
one load. It would be much

6
more satisfactory on similar occasions
to have any available transport
vehicles temporarily allotted to
our use to camp & work with
us. Many drivers contended that
their orders were not to go anywhere
that involved any danger of waggons
or horses being hit.

A disconcerting feature at times
was that parties of other units working
at adjacent works (light railway to wit)
bolted away when some shelling
occurred & tended to unsettle
our men.

After the road to WESTHOEK
was laid out & partly formed
guns were placed actually on
the track & in other cases right
beside it so directed as to fire
across it. This involved some
extra work in extending the
formation & also impeded
the work & blocked traffic when
the guns were firing. When
protest was made to a Battery
Commander he replied that the
positions had been indicated by
his Colonel & could not be
altered without that officer's

7
 authority.
 It is suggested that when a
 new road is aligned and actually
 under construction, artillery
 should not be allowed to
 place their pieces as to impede
 or increase work & interrupt
 traffic.

Wylshamman & Co
 40th and Pioneer Bn
 25-9-17

Refers to Operations of 25/9/17



APPENDIX

7
 29

To War Diary
Price



CVE 2nd Aust Div.

Oct/17
Price

In connection with the operations on 4th and 9th inst I beg to report as follows:-

4th October:-

Co-operation with infantry was good and results were fairly satisfactory. Lieut. THORPE who was in charge of the Strong Point got in touch with his platoon the previous morning and ensured that the party understood what they had to do. Working materials were made up in one man loads on the 3rd and carted to I.H.V.S.O where the carrying party picked it up about an hour before zero whilst en route to their rendezvous.

After daylight I was able to observe the advance and had no hesitation in sending forward the strong point party early whilst the enemy artillery was obviously disorganised. The party went straight through a heavy barrage and completed a strong point 75 yds long with 120 yds of double apron entanglement in about three hours and got back without heavy casualties, leaving the garrison in possession.

Arrangements for the communication trench started well. I did not send this party forward until it was fairly certain that the blue line had been captured. This party had to carry ammunition to BROODSEINDE before becoming available for digging and they became so dispersed by the barrage that the party who reached the job with Lieut. RENSHAW were only 10 strong. After sitting the trench a number of my men spent some considerable time in collecting their party and guiding them to the job, and eventually could only muster about 60 of the original 110. The trench was consequently dug over the crest but was not connected through to the front line until the following morning.

As soon as it appeared that the attack would be successful, I brought up my reserve section and the remainder of the attached infantry to make and stake a foot track from about TOKIO to DE KNOET farm, and this was extended to the communication trench the following morning. This work was very useful while the good weather lasted.

PIONEERS :-

It would probably have been better if the pioneers battle station had been in the same locality as that of the engineer parties. As soon as I sent the strong point party forward I asked Major REID to bring the pioneers forward to about X wood dry out. On their arrival there I asked for them to be sent to about SANS SOUCI but instead of this the party stayed where it was and two officers came forward for instructions. The result was that the pioneers took three or four times as long to reach their work as the strong point party.

9th October :-

Co-operation not nearly so satisfactory on 4th. Owing to brigade being in the line when strong points were ordered, brigade arranged with division that engineer parties need not be sent back to our battle station but would rendezvous at DE KNOET farm to be picked up there by our party on its way forward.

Instead of this arrangement being carried out however the battalion ~~was~~ ~~this party~~ supplying this party put them into the attack without reference to brigade.

Consequently had the attack been successful the strong point ordered by division in our sector could never have been constructed.

As it was I diverted my party to maintenance of right brigade duckboard tracks - there being no object in their attempting a strong point.

PIONEERS

Battle station satisfactory but no runners reported to me until after two companies had arrived at 7.50 and 8.45 a.m. respectively.

The latter of these companies were en route to work on the BROODSEINDE - NIEUWEMOLEN road where no one could have lived for ten minutes in daylight. This company as you know was diverted to the ZONNETEKE - BROODSEINDE road which was out of observation, and in need of considerable more labour.

Pioneer parties went forward from SANDY down somewhere about 8.30 a.m. and reported back about 2 p.m.

The strongest platoon of the other company was diverted to shifting extension of right brigade duckboard track from where it was to where it ought to have been, and shifted about 5 duckboards per man.

McHarris Major
O.C. Allfield Coy A.E.

80

APPENDIX 7 33
No. 3/54
2nd AUSTRALIAN DIVISION

NOTES ON RECENT OPERATIONS

Attached infantry parties

The value of having infantry parties attached to Field Coy's some days prior to an attack, is unquestionable. The infantry parties settle down, and know the work that is expected of them.

As regards casual working parties. A great deal depends on the class of work, but invariable a fair amount of time is lost in supplying them with tools, getting them on the work, and also explaining the work to Officers & N.C.O's. Also parties have often been on other fatigues, or standing by, and are not fully rested.


The scheme of using the infantry attached to Field Coy's as carrying and wiring party, while the garrison dug the "Strong Point", worked well. In the case of the left strong point, on left Brigade Sector, the strong point was dug and wired in good time. In the case of the right strong point, the carrying party was able to assist the garrison to dig, and man the strong point, as they both had suffered fairly heavily passing through the barrage.

General arrangements prior to attack worked out well. If there had been time to run & mark a few mule tracks, to Westhoek Ridge, prior to the attack it would have helped the Pack traffic that was used for moving up ammunition & barbed wire etc, on the night of the attack;

Carrying out of work during operations

The working parties on strong points evidently attracted attention, as both strong points on left Brigade sector came in for heavy shelling, after the work had been completed .

Communications

In view of the fact that parties are not available in sufficient strength to dig & complete communications, Tape Lines should be run out before night-fall, over tracks suitable for infantry & pack tracks. Small parties can generally open up a continuous track quickly. Tape lines could be supported on stout wire (thus: ) and would last much longer than if laid on the ground.

Tracks should be duplicated as soon as possible to prevent concentration of fire on any one of them. In dry weather duck-boards

are hardly necessary & they draw fire, but if wet weather is threatening, a light tram line of 9lb rails, with duck-boards ~~xx~~ suitable for mules, as well as foot traffic, a considerable amount of material could be put forward, & it would keep all unnecessary animals off roads that are under-going repair .

R. Reid

Major,

O.C. 5th Field Coy A.E.



"A" Form, MESSAGES AND SIGNALS.

Army Form C.2121 (in pads of 100.) No. of Message _____

Pre Office	Code	m.	Words	Charge	This message is on a/c of:	Recd. at _____ m.
Origin and Service Instructions.						Sent _____ Service.
			At _____ m.			From _____
			To _____			By _____
			By _____	(Signature of "Franking Officer.")		

(1) CRE
2nd Aust Div

Sender's Number: * X K 17 Day of Month: 25-9-17 In reply to Number: 3/54 AAA

In continuation of my WK.16. herewith plan of stay point actually put in by LT. CHRISTIAN. This was taped out first & ~~left~~ ^{made} by the garrison platoon while sappers & attached infantry did the work. In furtherance of previous paras & the value of having O.C. Coy or other strong executive officer with Bde HQ was again emphasized.

The arrangement of Capt COGHLAN as a depot and collecting centre was an excellent one and he was of inestimable value.

With this unit, prior arrangements worked out very well and the only hitch was due to removal of official stores by unauthorised persons. It is desirable to make such dumps "foot-proof" by having a sapper sit on them.

From _____
Place _____
Time _____

hidobb
M. J. W.
O.C. 7th Coy
1-05 pm

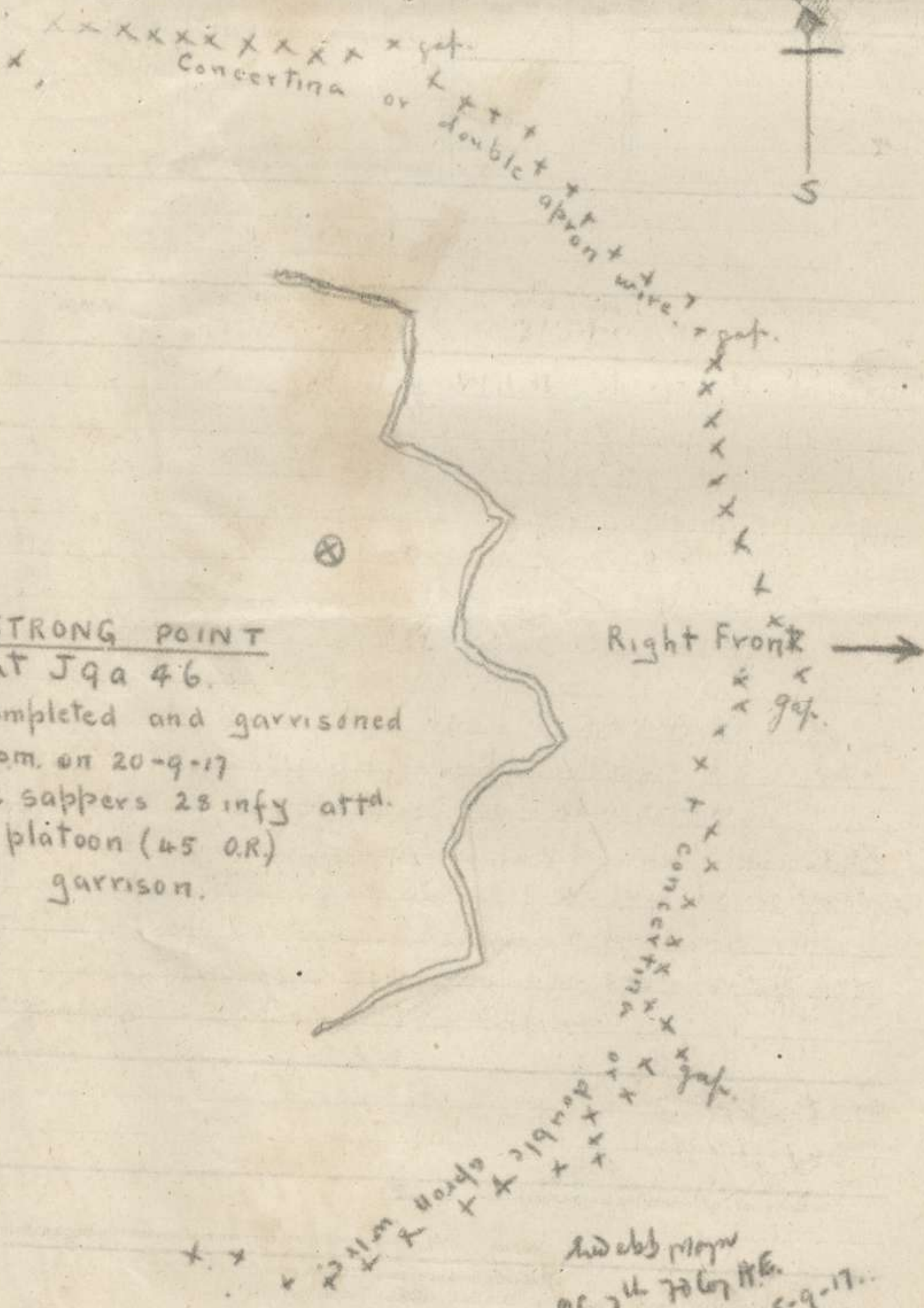
above may be forwarded as now corrected. (Z)

Censor _____ Signature of Addressor or person authorised to telegraph in his name _____

* This line should be erased if not required.
07) Wt. W12093/M1217 50,000 pads. 1/17. D. D. & L. (E764.) Forms C/2121/11.



WK 17



STRONG POINT
 at Jqa 46.
 Completed and garrisoned
 3pm. on 20-9-17
 12 sappers 28 infy attd.
 1 platoon (45 OR)
 garrison.

Handed over
 05. 14 7067 HE.
 25-9-17.

7

WK 16

CIRE 2nd Aust Div



The following appear to be points worth noting relative to recent operations

- 1 Under the existing conditions of heavy barrage & swamping of enemy artillery, the sappers could have been in readiness a good deal further forward. Much work could have been done very cheaply during the first 3 to 3 1/2 hours after the launching of the attack.
- 2 A large store of duckwalks well forward is an essential. More barbed wire is also desirable for emergency. Coy headquarters should stand by to move such stores up immediately the situation is clear enough.
- 3 All available labour should be put on to communications - marking tracks & duckwalking - immediately after the situation is clear.
- 4 The value of having ^{the digging of} communication trench made a bn operation by Bde was demonstrated. The comm. was marked out by 8-30 & the essential portions of trench dug by 2 pns.
- 5 Mule hacks and mud hacks (to be duckwalked later) should be kept well in mind in addition to the comm. trench.
- 6 The value of having infantry definitely attached has proved invaluable throughout the operations.

OC 7th Coy RE. E. Webb Morn 17.

C. R. E 2nd Aust Div.

With regard to experience gained by this company in recent operations —

1. Attached infantry did not join the company until four days after our arrival in the forward area. During this period no working parties were obtainable from the 47th or our own division, except one party of 50 on the third night for work on the Divisional Ammunition Dump. Consequently for the first three days I was compelled to employ three sections solely on digging and carrying, and very little progress was made with forward R.E. preparations for the attack. When the attached infantry did arrive, the forward work was somewhat hampered by large ammunition carrying parties.

Had the attached infantry moved to the area with the company we could have laid two good duckboard tracks to WESTHOEK ridge before the division took over, thus making subsequent carrying parties considerably more efficient.

2. The company programme, apart from the divisional ammunition dump, involved
 - (1) Construction of 4.2 proof shelters for 120 men (crowded) in JACOB TRENCH.
 - (2) Reconstruction and completion of duckboard track from HOOGE to WESTHOEK, and if possible its duplication by another track further North.
 - (3) Construction of 2 R.A.P.'s and 60 splinterproof shelters behind WESTHOEK ridge.
 - (4) Miscellaneous work on improving dug-outs, extending existing R.A.P.'s and accommodation in YPRES etc.

This programme was more than completed in most respects and somewhat less as regards the second duckboard track and the cutting of rear entrances into two concrete pill-boxes. The duckboard track would have been finished but for the inefficiency

and slackness of a casual working party. The concrete work could not in my opinion have been finished in the time. There was heavy reinforcement to contend with and suitable tools which I ordered a fortnight ago have not yet been obtainable.

The above programme was sound I think, but had more time been available, I should have advocated the construction of a 20ft dry weather track from I 12 b 8 2 to WESTHOEK and the erection of more shelters behind WESTHOEK ridge.

3. The relative value of permanently attached infantry to casual working parties is about 3 to 1 judging by results.
4. Early information regarding practice barrages by our artillery was most valuable and enabled me to employ all parties for a full working day without excessive casualties.
5. Some units, when laying duckboard tracks appear to consider that by laying them around shellholes instead of in a series of straight lines, they are making enfilade fire impossible. This idea is believed to be erroneous, and if the practice could be stopped, there is no doubt that there would be a considerable saving in man-power - particularly as regards carrying parties and stretcher bearers.
6. Motor transport was disappointing as the off-loading point was seldom reached. G S wagons which could be used more extensively by day gave much better results under the conditions of the last operations.
7. Throughout the preparatory work, I kept a section in JACOB TRENCH, their duty being to carry out practically all engineer work forward of BULLEWARDE RIDGE. Sections were relieved every three days, and the arrangement worked fairly well.
8. All working parties going to WESTHOEK RIDGE had to carry either picks, shovels or sandbags and leave them there. But for this, there would have been practically no RE battle dumps.

It is considered that the formation of RE battle dumps should be the responsibility of brigades.

carrying out the attack, in consultation with their affiliated field companies. This procedure was definitely adopted for the BULLECOURT operations with results that were more satisfactory than in this case.

McHarris Major.

OC 6TH FIELD COMPANY ENGINEERS A.I.F.



Notes on Operations of Sep 20/19

Preparatory Work

On arrival - area on Sep 7 reconnoitered with C.E. of route for road giving access to rear of Bellwound ridge for guns. Plank road decided a starting for Cambridge Road running round N. of B'wood Lake picking up old road from the through. Chosen wood stance back to Menni Road near Hoop length about 2500' - 3000'. 2 Coy 2nd Aust Provns started work on 8th a section N of B'wood Lake + 2 Coy 1st Puss for Menni Road. Planks set up by Hottel Lorry to various parts of Menni Road from Hellfire Corner to Hoop where they had to be carried to job by g.s. wags. Attempt made to get slabs up by Lorry but generally failed to get them further than Hellfire Corner. For the last week the Lorry railway terminus lay along route of road on N. half + a tramway constructed by 47th Div continued from there on but the Lorry railway entirely failed to deliver material. During last few days 7th 7th Coy were given job of planking + 9th Puss concentrated on planking. Latter joined 1st Puss planking at 1350' on 19th and all then concentrated on planking. The rate of progress in this was limited by rate at which planks could be delivered to job. Had the railway delivered a couple of train loads it would have progressed a good deal further. 1200' planked by night of 19th / 20th when work ceased as troops rest for operations ~~to~~ attack to be made by 1st + 2nd Aust Divs on early morning of 20th. Menni Rd from Hellfire Corner to Hoop heavily shelled frequently but large amount of long other traffic carrying stores + ammo maintained near it. It was however never certain how far up stores would get as a result they were distributed indiscriminately along road to

H'fire Corner + Hoop

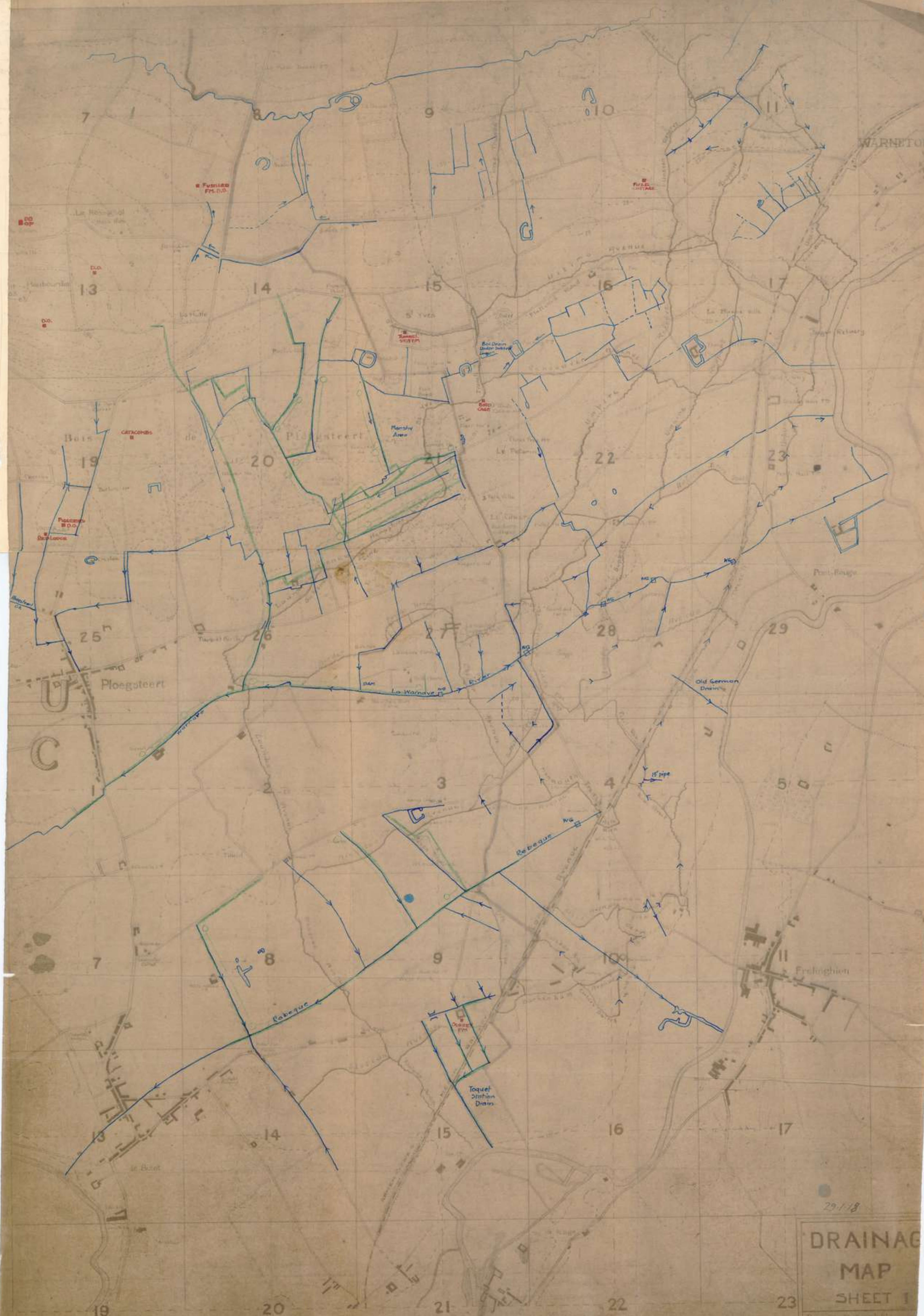
Other preparatory work consisted of renovating, extending, building tracks, construction of Div² submachine ammunition shelters, R.A.P. in position at Washlock ridge, Adv. Collecting station B'wood ridge, installing splinter proof shelters behind Washlock + B'wood ridges, accumulating stores for battle dump at Washlock. This work was a hour of 6th Field Coy.

Field Coy.

Also had to put in a infantry dry weather tracks, on N with other S. of Menni road in order to avoid necessity of reliefs + rounds following Menni rd. 5th Field Coy did this. Also had to erect huts for Adv. Div H.P. + for personnel of transport line. ~~note road via rippling~~ ~~poor + dis?~~ ~~poor stores.~~ Preparatory work though little time was available was pretty well forward except that B'wood Creek road was not yet there, about 650 yds of planking still remaining to be done + the battle dump at Washlock was not properly stocked chiefly owing to failure of some casual infantry parties facing some cases to turn up in other to ~~reluctance~~ carry out their job. The successful completion of the large amount of work involving long carries of

a large amount of material was to a considerable extent due to the fact that the Division had provided 100 infantry to be attached to each Field Coy. This arrangement was of the very greatest value and all Field Coy commanders are agreed that it would have required three times as many men for working parties & carriers to get the same amount of work done with parties supplied daily. Besides which with the latter system there is the constant necessity up to the last minute whether they will turn up or the arrangements arranged & the lack of enthusiasm which is always present with casual parties. It also saves the staff of Brigades the trouble of meeting frequent sudden calls for parties & gives them freedom to a greater extent than of otherwise from possibility of sudden unexpected calls ^{for additional work} for additional parties. Under ordinary circumstances with attached infantry parties ~~in addition~~ should only be required for fairly extensive works or when the attached infantry are employed on carrying duties.

James



Ref: Sheets 28 & 36.

SECRET

SCALE 1:10,000.

29/18

**DRAINAGE
MAP
SHEET 1**

Drawn by: [illegible]
Checked by: [illegible]
Date: [illegible]

Sent with War
Diary for
March 1918

APPENDIX



SECRET PLAN N° 68

APPENDIX 7



- LEGEND**
- Full size revetted & boarded Underage —
 - Full size revetted not boarded Underage ---
 - Full size boarded not revetted Underage ++++
 - Full size not revetted nor boarded Underage ---
 - Trenches in fair enter as above in Blue unconvincible in Yellow
 - Road shown in Brown are those kept in order by Division

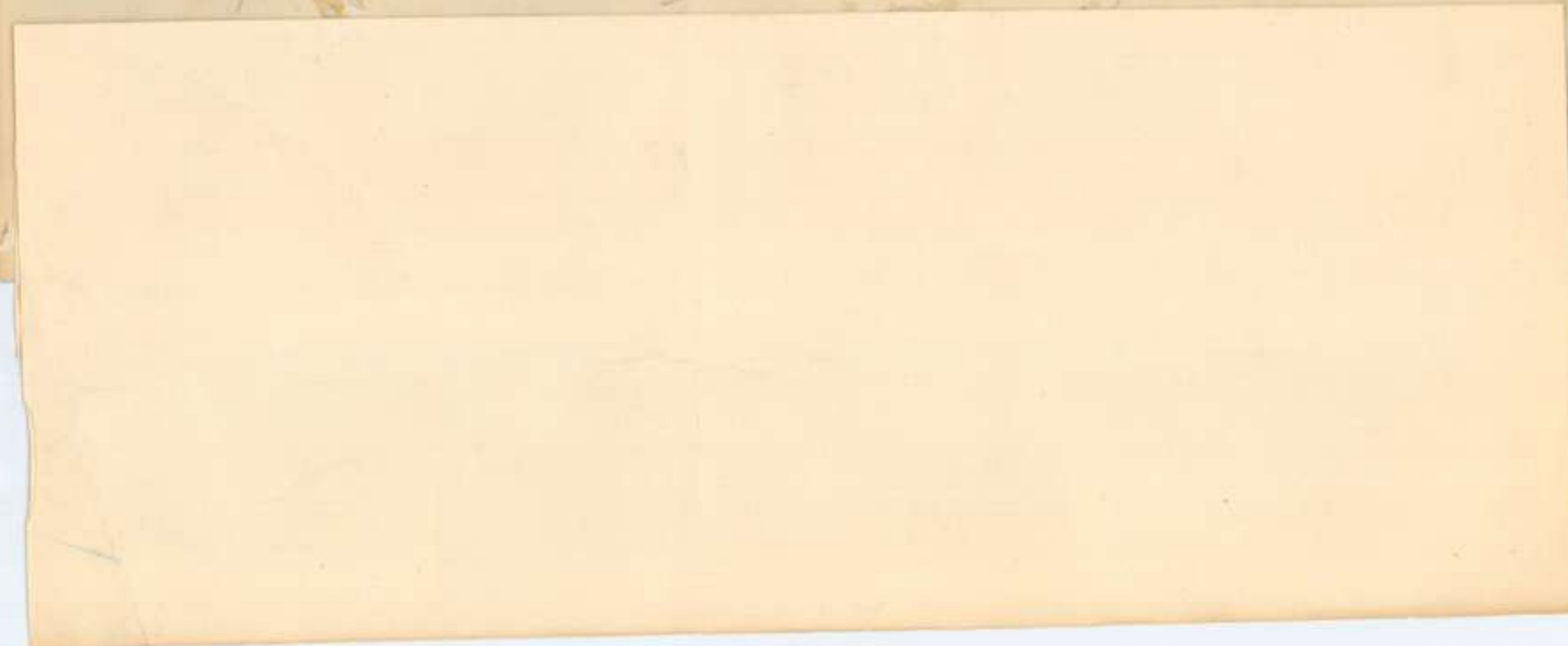
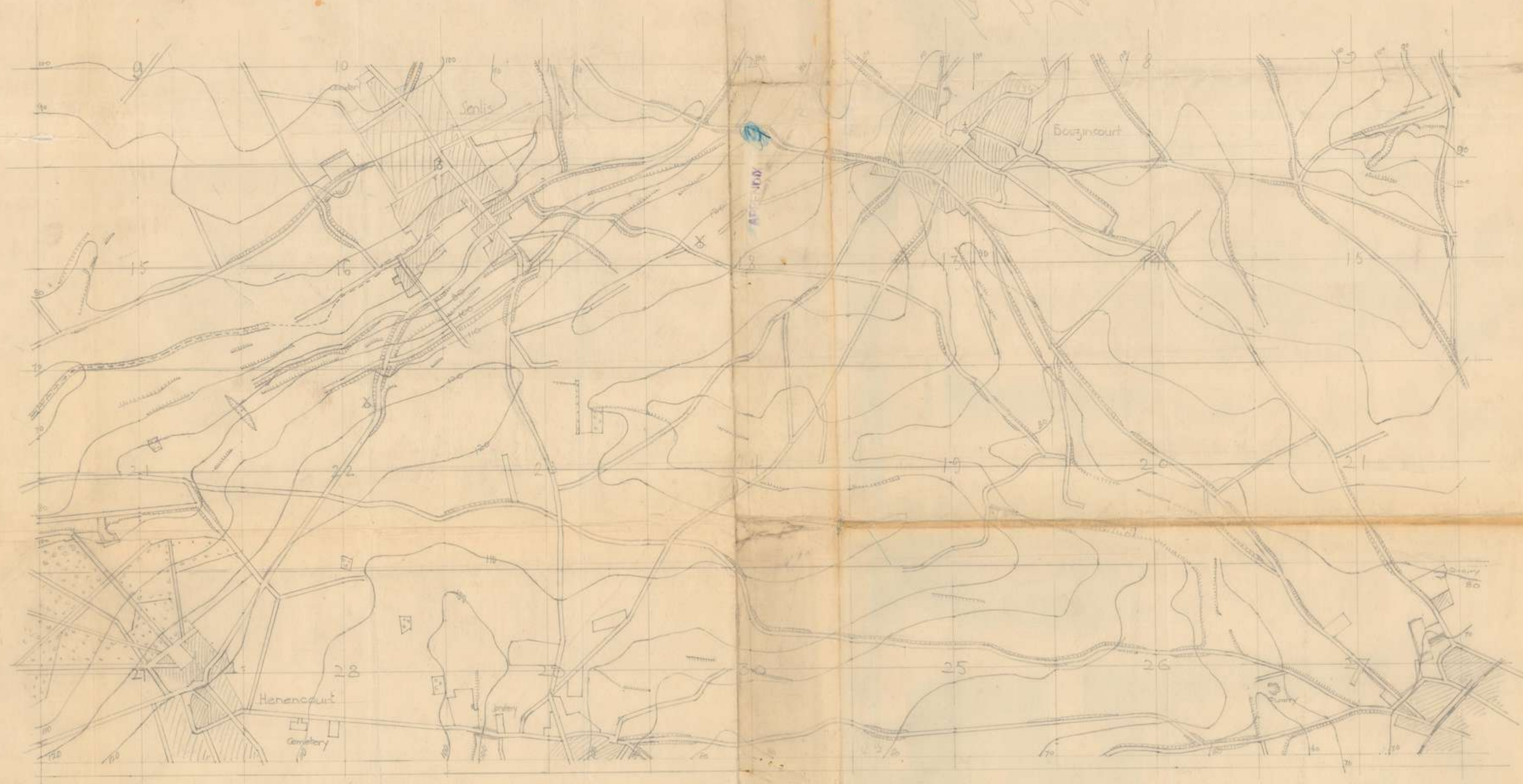
- LEGEND**
- Trenches in fair revetted full size
 - Trenches in fair revetted not full size
 - Trenches Proposed
 - Trenches Abandoned
 - Machine G. P. in order
 - Machine G. P. in fair
 - Dugouts
 - Posts
 - Light Railway
 - Trench Traverses
 - Dugouts
 - Darkway Paths
 - Pill Boxes
 - 1st Class Railway (dark blue)

Up to date 3.4.18
 Muellette
 CHE 2^e Art Div

3/4/18



but with war
Biry for
March 1918





TRENCH MAP OF FRONT HELD BY 2nd AUSTRALIAN DIVISION FROM
16/12/17 to 29/1/18.

=====

This map shows the approximate condition of trenches at the time just preceding the heavy rain and thaw about the middle of January 1918 which caused their condition to retrogress. A good deal of progress towards clearing mud and restoration had however been effected at the date the division was relieved on 29/1/18 and the map may be taken as a fairly correct record of condition on that date.

All the wiring shown in red was put in by this division and is a pretty complete and correct record except for front line wiring of which the records do not come through C.R.E. as it is done by infantry without Engineer control.

A great deal of the old wiring shown in black is in very poor condition and of little use.

Drainage was a difficult problem in the area and a separate plan indicates the line of drainage.

For contours refer to map sheet 1/10,000 BAS WARNETON and HOUPLINES.

W. L. L. L. L. L. L. L.
CR 2 - Aust Div

Map by G. Austin
Office of the Director of Intelligence

DEFENCE MAP RIGHT DIVISIONAL SECTOR.

SECRET 13214
S.29/

Scale 1/10000.
Date 26.12.17.

