

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

Machine Guns

**Item number:** 24/24/8

**Title:** 24th Australian Machine Gun  
Company

April 1918



AWM4-24/24/8



**CONFIDENTIAL.**

ORIGINAL.  
~~DUPLICATE.~~  
~~TRIPLICATE.~~



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Australian Imperial Force.

**WAR DIARY**

OF  
24<sup>th</sup> Aust. M.G. Coy

FOR  
April 1918

Signature of Officer compiling Brocrounch  
Captain

Signature of Officer Commanding A. B. Hinton  
Major



Ref. Sheet 62D  
1/40,000.

WAR DIARY

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

24th  
AUST.

Army 1

M.G. COY.

NO.

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

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks a references Appendic
BAIZIEUX	April 1st.		Gun positions in Australian Corps Line (BAIZIEUX - BRESLE Line) improved. The line was slightly shelled by the enemy with Field Guns and light Hows. No damage done. Strength of Coy. 12 Offs. 184 O/Ranks.	
LAVIEVILLE	2nd to 3rd		Commenced relief of 12th Aust. M.G. Coy. vide Company Order No. 3 Marked "A". Relief completed.	
BAIZIEUX	3rd to 6th		In action. " " Company relieved by 6th Aust. M.G. Coy. by 11 p.m. vide report on operations marked "B", and Casualty List "C". Note the 8 guns lost in action were replaced at once by P.A.D.O.S.	
	7th		Moved by Road from BAIZIEUX to PONT NOVELLES into Billets. This village was found to be evacuated by civilian population and was under slight shell fire and bomb. fire from Aeroplanes at night.	
PONT NOVELLES	8th.		Reorganisation of Company proceeded with, Guns and Stores cleaned and gear sorted out into sections, etc.	
	9th		Company put through a Hot bath. No. 426b C.Q.M.S. WILSON H.W. proceeded to 4th A.M.G. Btn. for duty as Battalion Q.M.S. W.O. Class II (Temporary).	
BONNAY	10th		Company moved by road to BONNAY and relieved the 13th Aust. M.G. Coy by 8 p.m. vide Coy. Order No. 4 marked "D".	
	11th to 13th		In action. 11th inst. Lieut. H.A. Sheridan reported back for duty from Hospital. Strength 9 Offs. 148 Ranks. No. 468 Pte. Buschpler R.C. and No. 372 Cpl. LANE C.W. who formed part of the 8 gun teams reported missing on 5th inst., having escaped from enemy <del>side</del> hands reported to the Company. Vide their report marked "E".	
	14th to 17th		4th Aust. M. G. Batin formed absorbing 4, 12, 13, & 24th Companies. Capt. H.W. Crouch M.C. taken on strength ex 12th M.G. Coy. and appointed 2nd in Command of this Unit. The following have been awarded the Military Medal No. 426d Sgt. Sugg, C., 749 T/Cpl. Eames J.A., 429b, Cpl. Heywood H.J., 6753 A/L/Cpl. Grant R.A. 436 A/L/Cpl. Olive F.R. Strength 10 Offs. 139 O/Ranks.	
	18th to 21st		30 Reinforcements taken on strength ex 4th A.M.G. Btn. Strength 10 Offs. 170 O/RS Major FINNAGAN (Btn. Padre) held Church Service in the Field. Lieut. H.J. Lantzke taken on strength ex 4th M.G. Btn. reinforcements (Cadet Officer) Strength 11 Offs. 170 O/Ranks.	
	22nd		Company moved by Road to PONT NOVELLES vide report on Operations marked "F".	

*1050*



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# WAR DIARY

or

## INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Erase heading not required.)

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.

24th  
AUST.  
M.G. COY.  
No.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
PONT NOYELLES	23:4:'18.		Company resting in Billets. Parades, 9.30 a.m. to 12 noon, cleaning equipment, and brushing clothes, boots, etc., cleaning Guns, and gun stores, belts, etc., cleaning Arms, and inspection of Gas Respirators. 2p.m. to 3 p.m. continuation of morning Parade.	
	24:4:'18.		Reconnaissance of Quercieu Line (portion of 3rd Zone of Defence) made also all arrangements for the occupation of this Line, should enemy break through the forward and second Zone. The 3rd Zone Defence extends from Sheet 62D, B 5 Central Ave South to N 5 Central (BUSSY LES DAGURS). The Company is responsible for the defence of the Southern Half of this Line assisting the Composite Force under Lieut-Colonel PAUL, comprising the 4th Div. Pioneers Batta. and 4th Aust. Engineers. The Northern half of this Line is under the G.O.C. 12th A.I. Brigade (47th & 48th Battalions only) and 12th Aust. M. G. Coy.	
	24:4:'18.		Enemy attacked and captured VILLERS BRETONNEUX about 9 a.m. 4 Guns under Lieut. Sheridan and Lieut Lantzki despatched by Motor-lorry at 8 p.m. for attachment to 57th Batta. (5th Aust. Div.) to assist in counter-attack at 11 p.m. to recapture VILLERS BRETONNEUX. Attack successful. Vide report by Lieut Sheridan marked "G"	"G"
	25:4:'18.		Company paid. (total amount paid to Company 7000 Francs.) Counterattack by 15th Aust. Infantry Bde. (5th Aust. Div.) on left and 13th Aust. Infantry Bde. (4th Aust. Div.) on right, with 2 Battalions of 8th British Division in centre to retake VILLERS BRETONNEUX, successful, and large number (over 500) prisoners taken with many Machine Guns. Right Brigade Sector of 5th Aust. Division reconnoitred by Lieuts. Watts and Jackin case orders are received to relieve this Sector. 5th Aust. Div. H'ors. is at Ribemont. Training of Company proceeded with.	
	26:4:'18.		Special Training in Gas Masks with manoeuvres in trenches. (Note this training is considered necessary in view of the large quantity of gas shells enemy is now putting over.)	

*hwe*





WAR DIARY

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

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

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	27:4	:18.		
	28th		<p>The VILLERS BERTONNEUX Sector reconnoitred by the O.C., also by Lieuts. <u>PRYD</u> and <u>SIMOLAIR</u>. This Sector is held by the IIIrd Corps, 8th British Division to which the 13th Brigade has been attached since the counter-attack to retake the Village on the 25th. The 12th Aust. Inf. Bde. is to relieve the 13th Bde. on the night of 28th-29th and by extending their front, the 8th British Division is to come out. The 12th Bde will connect their right up with the French Colonial Troops.</p> <p>The Company marched out of <u>PONT NOVELLES</u> with its Transport at 10.30 a.m. A halt was made at midday 1 mile past <u>DAOURS</u> on the right bank of the <u>SOMME RIVER</u>. Our Field Kitchen provided a hot meal of stew and Tea for the Company and here the Limbers were packed in fighting order and about 2 p.m. Sections moved off. The <u>SOMME</u> was crossed by a Military Pontoon Bridge. The remainder of the Company proceeded to <u>LAMOTTE</u> into Billets. Transport Lines being situated at <u>CANON</u></p>	
	29th-30th		In action. (Note. A full report of these operations will appear in My War Diary) Strength of Company 11 Officers. 173 O/Ranks.	

*Handwritten signature/initials*



# WAR DIARY

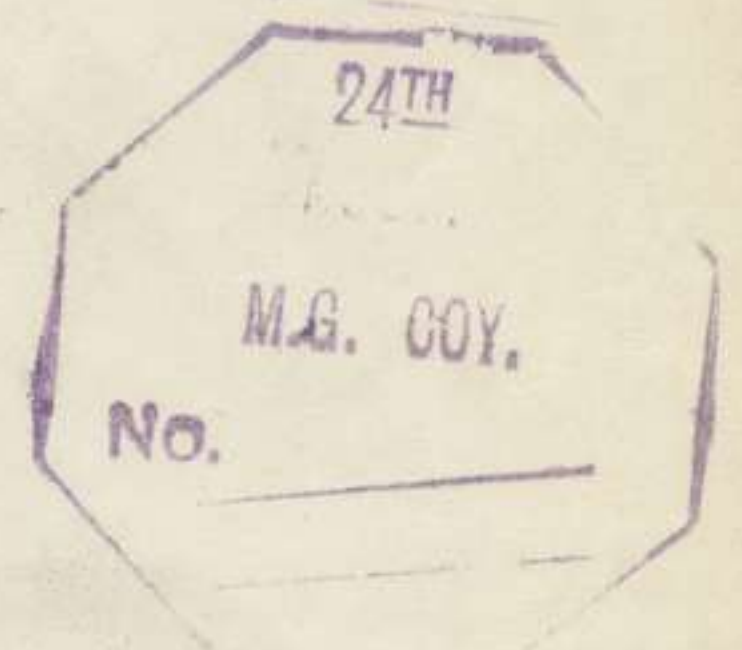
OF

24th Aust. Machine Gun Coy.

FOR

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APRIL



## LIST OF APPENDICES.

No.	Subject.
A	Operation Order No.3.
B	Report on Operations carried out by 24th M.G.Coy while attached to 12th Brigade.
C	Return of Casualties to Noon 6:4:1918.
D	Operation Order No.4.
E	Report By No.648, Pte. Ruschpler, R.C. and No.372 Cpl. Lane C.W. who were reported as missing on 5th April, 1918.
F	Report on Operations from 10th to 21st April, 1918.
G.	Statement by No.424 Sgt. Popkin C.R. Counter-attack to retake VILLERS - BRISTONNEUX, Report on operations of "D" Section, 24th to 26th April.
H	Ration Report for April.
Ha	Diet Sheet.
I	24th Aust. M.G. Coy. Order No.5.
J	Copy letter to C.O. 52nd Battn.
K	Letter reference Lieut Jack's M.C.
L	Recommendation for Immediate Reward to Sgt. Liffcoat.
M	Summary of Business which was discussed at Company Commanders' Conference 24th April.
N	Map 627.

*I. W. Crouch*  
Capt



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SECRET.

Copy No. 11.

OPERATION ORDER No. 3  
24th MACHINE GUN COY.

APP "A"

Reference Sheet 62D  
1/40,000.

The 24th Machine Gun Coy., will relieve the 12th Machine Gun Coy., in the Line on the nights of the 2nd-3rd and 3rd-4th h. Where Guns are being worked by Sections, one Sub-section will be relieved on the night of the 2nd-3rd, and one the following night. The remaining Sub-sections will be relieved on the night of the 3rd.

The following opposite numbers will report to 12th Company Headquarters at D 10 b 3.9 at 2.30 p.m. tonight with a view to reconnoitring their positions. They will each take with them one Runner, who will also be able to act as guide during the relief.

Lieut. Dight	to	Lieut. Upton	Sq. E 14 b.
" Ritchard	"	" Tree	E 7 d.
" Myers	"	" Pontin	E 14 c.

Belt-boxes, Tripods, bulk ammunition and Trench Stores if any, will not be relieved, but will be exchanged at the Transport Lines under arrangements of Company Commanders.

During the afternoon of the 3rd, Lieut. Peut will report to Lieut. Jack at Square D 12 a 00.98, and on the night of the 3rd-4th, he will, with one Sub-section, of "B" Section, relieve the guns at present under Lieut. Wood. Guides for this purpose will be supplied by 13th Machine Gun Coy.

Handing-over Certificates will be obtained in each case to enable the re-arrangement of Belt-boxes, etc. at rear Headquarters.

A total of no more than 19 all ranks per Section will be taken, i.e. 4 per gun (inclusive), 2 Runners, 1 Officer. Company Headquarters will close at Baizieux at 12 noon on the 3rd, and re-open Lavieville at 12:30 p.m. same day.

1:4:'18.

(Sg<sup>d</sup>.) F.B. Hinton, Major.  
O.C. 24th Machine Gun Coy.

Issued at 11 a.m. by Runner.

- No. 1 to O.C. 4th M.G. Battn.
- 2 A Section.
- 3 A "
- 4 B "
- 5 C "
- 6 D "
- 7 Transport Officer.
- 8 O.C. 12th M.G. Coy.
- 9 Office,
- 10 "
- 11 War Diary.



SHAW-WALKER SERIES No. 7

SECRET

COPY No. 11



OPERATION ORDER No. 3.

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REPORT ON OPERATIONS CARRIED OUT BY24th MACHINE GUN COMPANY.WHILE ATTACHED TO 12th BRIGADE.

Ref. Sheet 62D, N.E.  
1/20,000.

24TH  
AUST.  
M.G. COY.

At 8 p.m. on the 31st., ult., one Section was placed in position at D 6 c 8 5 with the object of strengthening the left flank of the Brigade and guarding the Valley running from ALBERT to MILLENCOURT.

The relief of the 12th Machine Gun Company, in the line was carried out on the nights of the 2nd-3rd and the 3rd-4th insts. Half the Company was relieved each night, and the dispositions on the 4th inst, were as follows:-

1	Section	in Quarry	in E 14 c.
1	"	in E 14	central
1	"	in E 13	b 7 9
2	Guns	in E 8	b 6.2.
2	"	in D 6	d 6.4.

The relief was carried out without casualties.

On the night of the 4th inst., indirect fire was carried out on the following targets:-

E 21 a 8.9.  
E 20 b 8.3.  
E 16 a 5.2.

by the Section in E 13 b. Owing however, to the sodden nature of the ground it was found difficult to maintain the correct elevation while firing and firing was discontinued after firing approximately 500 rounds at each target.

On the morning of the 5th inst., the enemy heavily attacked the 12th Brigade front. No verified information re the action of the guns in E 14 c and E 14 central can be obtained, as these guns with their crews complete are missing, but from statements from the Infantry, it appears that these guns were in action for a long while, inflicting large casualties on the enemy, and that they remained in action until after they were completely surrounded.

The two guns in E 8 b under Lieut. Jack, engaged several good targets including a light machine gun which was firing from E 14 a. Lieut Jack continued in action until he was quite enfiladed from the right and in danger of being cut off. As the Infantry had retired, he withdrew, first to the copse in E 8 b, and then to the AMIENS ROAD, finally taking up a position under orders of the 48th Battalion Commander, in the trench at E 2 c 2.1. This Officer got his two guns with auxiliary tripods and 5 belt boxes per gun away safely, and remained in action throughout the attack, and after bringing harassing fire to bear on the enemy's forward positions.

The guns in E 13 b were unable to do any firing on account of the Infantry coming back and thus obstructing the field of fire. The Section Commander, Lieut Ritchard, withdrew, under my orders to E 7 c 2 6. Later in the afternoon, these guns assisted in the counter attack made by the right battalion, by bringing indirect fire to bear on the road running from E 20 b 1 9, to E 20 b 4 5. At midday, the 48th Battalion Commander asked me for assistance for the left flank, and I sent the 4 guns from E 16 d, which belonged to the 12th Company, to assist in the consolidation of the line running from E 8 c 7.9. to E 8 a 0.7.



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B

7.

During the night of the 5th inst., I obtained 6 Guns and crews from my rear party to replace the Sections lost.

At 4 a.m. on the 6th inst., my final disposition was:-

- 8 Guns between E 2 c 7.9 and E 7 c 4.8
- 2 " at E 7 c 2.6
- 4 " in D 6 d 6.3M

The 12th Company placed 4 Guns ~~during the morning of the 6th inst.~~ ~~in D 6 c~~ during the preceding evening. I visited all these guns during the morning of the 6th inst and conferred with Infantry Commanders who were satisfied with fields of fire etc., of the guns. The guns in the Line running from ~~E 2 c to E 8 a~~ E 2 c to E 8 a, during the morning of the 6th, kept up sniping fire on the enemy in E 9 a and c.

During the afternoon of the 6th, the 2 guns in E 7 c brought indirect fire to bear on the Railway Viaduct in E 20 b, firing approximately 4000 rounds.

At about 7 p.m. on the night of the 6th, the relief of my Company by the 6th Company commenced, and despite the pitch dark, and heavy rain, was successfully carried out by 11 p.m. without casualties.

My total casualties were:-

- Missing, 2 Officers, 33 O/Ranks.
- Wounded, 3 O/Ranks.

One hot meal per day was served to all gun crews, and dry socks were supplied daily. Throughout my tour of duty, I kept in Telephonic communication with Brigade Headquarters, and with the Section Commander in E 7 c.

8:4:1918.

(Signed) F.B.Hinton, Major.  
O.C. 24th Machine Gun Coy.





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APP "C"

8.

24th MACHINE GUN COY.

RETURN OF CASUALTIES to Noon 6:4:1918.

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Officers.

O/Ranks.

MISSING.

Lieut. C. C. Dight.  
Lieut. F. C. A. Myers.

No. 422A	Sgt.	McPhee C.C.
292	"	Reeves, J.R.
372	T/ Cpl.	Lane C.W.
427B	A/Cpl.	Riggs J.W.
430B	L/Cpl.	Sutherland D.
511A	L/Cpl.	Leonard W.J.
433B	L/Cpl.	Gleeson J.M.
3237	"	Pearce W.H.S.
556	"	Whitnear W.H.
476	"	Share W.A.
472A	"	Stewart J.
368	Pte.	Hinds H.J.
3079	"	Forsyth S.J.
652	"	Wegner G.O.
4822	"	G. Dawson (M.M.)
631	"	Adam M.K.
420C	"	McParland W.M.
4828	"	Kelly S.
3409	"	Egan L.C.
645	"	Murphy K.
2827	"	Harris H.W.
642	"	Liddell W.P.H.
599	"	Townsing F.J.
432	"	Druce V.F.
682	"	Hackett W.
468	"	Ruschpler R.C.
7332	"	Yde E.A.J.
650A	"	Tonks E.V.
3163	"	Gill D.J.
647	"	Pithers T.
431A	"	Sellers A.H.
472A	"	Stanwix R.J.
650	"	Watkins P.J.

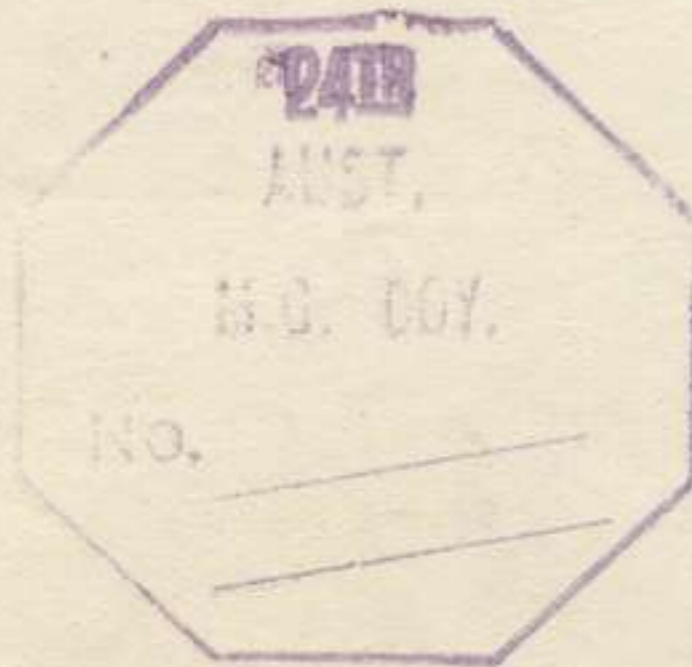
WOUNDED IN ACTION.

-----  
Officers.

O/Ranks.

NIL

No. 428A	A/Cpl.	Reade C.E.
369	L/Cpl.	Harrington T.A.
3443	Pte.	Hoff R.E.
7242	"	Hough G



*R. Watt*

.....Lieut.  
For C.O. 24th Machine Gun Coy.



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SECRET.

Copy No.....

OPERATION ORDER No.4

APP "D"

24th MACHINE GUN COY.

Ref. Sheet 62D  
1/40,000.

10:4: '18.

The 24th Machine Gun Coy, will relieve the 13th Machine Gun Coy., in the Line on the afternoon of 10th inst. The dispositions of the Unit to be relieved are as follows:-

Company Headquarters, Billet No.8 BONNAY, I 17 c.  
Transport Lines H 35 b.

4 Guns in front Line		To be relieved by
2 " J.25 b 1.9		"D" Section.
2 " J 26 d 4.6	}	"A" " Sgt. Popkin.
2 " J 26 d 0.0		"B" "
1 " J 26 c 1.2	}	"A" "
1 " J 34 a 9.7		Lieut. Peut.

These dispositions will be kept intact after relief except for the transport lines which will be notified later. Only Guns and Spare-parts Wallets will be taken in by 24th Machine Gun Coy.

Handing over receipts will be given to outstanding Section Officers.

24 hours Rations Iron-rations and rations for 11th inst. will be carried on the man when leaving these billets. Iron Rations and Gas Helmets will be inspected by Section Officers before leaving the present Billet.

Sections will arrange to relieve with as near 18 all ranks as possible. "C" Section will remain as Company reserve and will move to Company Headquarters for the present.

Sections, etc., will move as follows:-

"B" Section leave present Company H'Qrs.	3 p.m.
"A" " " " " "	3.30 p.m.
"D" " " " " "	4 p.m.
"C" " " " " "	3.45 p.m.

Arrived at new Company Headquarters, Section Officers will at once get their men distributed under cover and report to Company Headquarters for orders.

Company Headquarters will close PONT NOVELLES at 3.30 p.m. and open BONNAY 4 p.m.

(Sgd.). F..B..Hinton....Major.  
O.C. 24th Machine Gun Coy.

Issued at 11.15 a.m. to:-

- No.1 to O.C. A Section.
- 2 " B "
- 3 " C "
- 4 " D "
- 5 2nd in Command.
- 6 Transport Officer.
- 7 O.C. 4th Machine Gun Bn.
- 8 War Diary.
- 9 13th Machine Gun Coy.
- 10 Office.





Report by No.648 Pte.Ruschpler,R.C. and No.372 Cpl.Lane C.W. who were reported as missing on 5th April, 1918.

While in our position in the Chalk-pit about 10 O'clock on the morning of the 5th, Fritz. sent over about 30 Gas-shells, and then started a bombardment. His Machine Gun Bullets were cutting the edge of the Pit for some considerable time. The first we knew that the Germans had surrounded us was a couple of Rifle shots from the rear, when we discovered that we were covered by perhaps a couple of dozen Rifles, and the Germans all round us. Could not possibly get our guns mounted. All "A" Section were also captured without firing a shot, as they had no chance or time to mount the gun. They were taken through Dernancourt in the night. Think they have a separate camp for the Australians. Before being finally captured, it was impossible to mount guns as machine gun bullets, were raining over the top.

Do not know how they got round Mr. Dight. It was very hazy and we could not see the Railway Line through it. It was about 10.30 a.m. when the Germans passed the whole Section down the road towards Dernancourt. We were bringing in wounded to the Dressing Station the whole day. During the time we were carrying in wounded, Tonks, Liddell, Hackett, Pithers and Townsing were with us, also a wounded German Officer. Tonks was taken by one of the Germans to help wounded Fritz. On his way to the Dressing-station, Tonks was wounded in the back by a piece from one of our shells. Then Hackett and Ruschpler left the German Officer and helped Tonks to the Dressing Station. They then came back to the German Officer in the Field who kept them with him for about 3 hours.

(Pte. Ruschpler). About 3 on the afternoon of the 5th, I went to the Dressing-station to get a stretcher to bring the Officer in, but could not get one, and they kept me there. A German N.C.O. sent two of his men to get the Officer, but our shelling was so heavy that they came back again. After it had got quieter, Cpl. Lane arrived at the Station. The two of us with the two Germans then went out again, but our Machine Gun fire just outside Dernancourt was so heavy that we had to come back again. From there on I do not know what became of the remainder I was with in the Field, nor the German Officer. Cpl. Lane

and I decided to take the first opportunity offering to clear out, and if possible get back to our Lines, but the German A.M.C. took us to carry the German Doctor who had been killed in the Dressing Station by one of our shells. There were two Germans with us while carrying the Doctor, and we had to proceed under a very heavy Bombardment from our guns. Owing to the heavy fire, we had to leave the body so that we could move quicker on to Meaulte where we stayed till 2 a.m. on the 6th in the Doctor's Billet with the 2 escorts. There they gave us a loaf of Black Bread and a tin of Meat. At 2 a.m. we moved on again to the Dressing-station at Maricourt, where had a slice of Black Bread and hot Coffee. After staying there for an hour, moved off with about 20 German walking wounded, and 1 Australian, also wounded, to Peronne, where we arrived at about 1.30 p.m. Had Dinner consisting of thick Macaroni Soup and then taken to the Prisoners' Billets. At 7 a.m. the following morning, we were put on fatigues burying German dead about 4 kilos. out of Peronne. This lasted till about 3 p.m. Moved out again at 7 a.m. next morning to work at making a road in front of German Ordnance Stores. This lasted for about 2 hours when it started to rain heavily, so were put to work inside the stores for the rest of the day. The following morning, Tuesday, we were put to work picking green brambles used to camouflage stacks of Gas Cylinders which were used for Balloons. Stayed at this all day. Wednesday. Carrying wounded which arrived in Motor Ambulances to the Railway Station. At 7 p.m. this night, about 100 prisoners including 2 other Australians all marched out of the Billets for Bray. It was a heavy road and raining hard. We stopped at 10 p.m. at a demolished village about 8 kilos. from Peronne, where we remained till 5 a.m. The following morning, Thursday, we continued our march to Bray arriving at 10 a.m. Thursday, in a very knocked up condition, having had no breakfast. We rested till 12 and then had dinner. Here Cpl. Lane was put on some other work and I was with a large party of mixed prisoners which were marched to an Aerodrome gas ground about 7 kilos away, and were put on to filling up an old trench to make the ground level. Worked at this for about 2 1/2 hours and then returned to Billets which consisted one of our barb-wire compounds with iron huts. At 4.30 the following

AUST. COY.



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morning a party of 100 of us were ~~made~~ marched to the Aerodrome ground and remained at the same work till about 4 p.m. when we returned to the Compound.

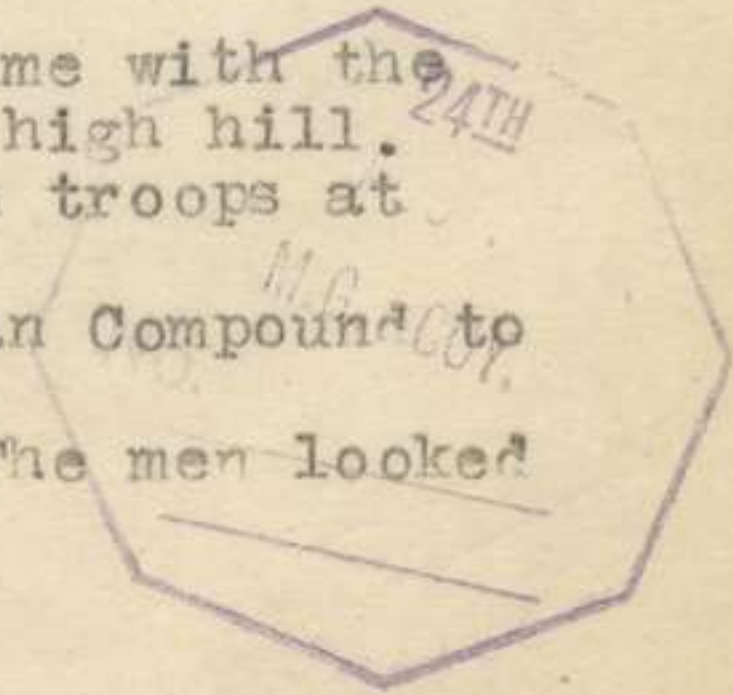
As it had been a very fine day and promised to be a good night, Cpl. Lane and I decided to make an attempt to escape. Setting our course from a Map which got at Peronne, on the Stars, we broke out of the Compound at about 9.30 p.m. with an English Prisoner. We had to cross a German Horse Transport Lines for about 200 yards which, with some difficulty we succeeded in doing and then had practically plain sailing across fields for about 3 kilos. when we were suddenly pulled up by seeing some Germans approaching. As is their custom to question everybody, they challenged us, but we turned off without replying. They repeated their challenge and we ran. When we stopped a couple of hundred yards further on we missed the Tommy. He did not turn up although we waited and we saw no more of him or the German. We continued on our way across some ploughed fields and suddenly smelt Chlorine Gas. Luckily it was only a few seconds as we did not have our Gas Masks. Continuing we came across two elevated Tanks we had seen before, which was where the dead Doctor had been left. We crossed the German Reserve Line which consisted of the main road, (the Germans sheltering in Dug-outs on the side of the road) without ~~incident~~ incident, and then crossed a Railway and then over a Duck-board Bridge over the River. We struck a Railway Siding and Dump and then a road just outside Dernancourt. Continuing, we nearly fell into a German Support Trench, with a Machine Gun mounted, but we were not seen. From here, we crawled along the edge of a Trench which ran into a Railway cutting which was full of German troops and apparently was their support line. We continued to crawl until we came to a suitable place to cross over where we held up for about 20 minutes waiting for the reliefs to be completed. We then slid down a cutting and walked across the line and climbed up on the other side. We then crawled for a couple of hundred yards so that the German Sentry at the crossing could not see us. We then got up and had clear going for a short time until we struck what appeared to be a number of German Dug-outs. We saw nobody and climbed over a Bank and continued until we heard sounds of picks and shovels. This would be about 2:30 a.m. Saturday. We lay down and waited and saw Verrey Lights going up close by and presumed we were on the German front line. We kept still while a couple of Germans came out of a trench and walked round quite close to us. We thought we were caught, but luck was with us and we were not noticed. After they had gone, we slowly wriggled back down the slope until we could crawl with safety to another position of the trench where there was no working party. We crawled up to the Front Line again to about within 15 paces when we were suddenly pulled up by something hitting the ground along side us. We waited and could just distinguish a German Sentry in the trench, and after waiting for a little while longer, some more stones and dirt were thrown at us. We both kept still for about three quarters of an hour, when we slowly wriggled further away from this Sentry and stopped about half way from another at the other end of the Trench. We waited a little while longer and then crawled right up to the German trench. We got over the top and then jumped up suddenly and ran about 200 yards towards where we thought our front line was. As soon as we jumped up we were challenged by the Sentry who immediately fired. The other Sentry followed suit, and a Machine Gun opened up on us. After falling into Shell-holes, e.c., we were halted by our own sentry in our frontline, and after examination by them, were passed on down to Company Headquarters.

Meals. While in the German's hands, for Breakfast we had some kind of Coffee (no good) hot, about 4ozs. of black bread, being 24 hour's rations.  
Dinner, a dixie of thick-soup, ~~Macaroni~~ Macaroni, Pearl Barley or Vegetable.  
Tea, a dixie of Coffee.

ARTILLERY. Saw no Artillery at all during the whole time with the exception of one big gun north of Bray on a high hill. There appeared to be a large number of German troops at Peronne.

It took about 5 hours to come from the German Compound to our Front Line.

German horses nothing but a bag of bones. The men looked pretty well, and think they got a fair issue of bread.





Sheet 62D. REPORT ON OPERATIONS FROM 10th to 21st APRIL, 1918.

On the 10th April, the 24th A.M.G. Coy., proceeded from Pont Noyelle to relieve the 13th Company at BONNAY.

The Company was attached to the 13th Brigade which formed a defensive flank to the 3rd Division. Its work was purely defensive. The Third Division considered the right flank of their Sector the one most liable to attack, and for this reason the 13th Brigade were attached and given this job of strengthening the defences.

The advance of the Hun had been temporarily checked, but no one knew exactly where the next attack would take place, and extra precautions were necessary, as the ground behind the Front Line was very high and dominating, and of great tactical importance. On the night of 10th-11th, "A" Section took up positions at SAILLY-LE-SEC, 1 gun at J 22 c 1.2, 1 gun at J 34 a 9.7, (both under Lieut. Peut.) and 2 guns under Sgt. Popkin, at J 25 b 1.9.

"B" Section (Lieut. Jack) had 4 guns at VAUX (2 at J 26 c 4.1 and 2 at J 26 d 0.0);

Lieut. Sinclair with "D" Section (4 guns) took up Front Line positions at VAIREY-SOUS-CORRIE. The remainder of the Company, 4 guns, also Transport, stayed at Company Headquarters, BONNAY.

Intersection reliefs were effected during the tour of duty. On the night of 16th-17th, all guns, except those under Lieut. Jack, at VAUX, were withdrawn and returned to Company Headquarters, and on night of 17th-18th, "C" Section (1 Off. 17 O/Rs) took up new positions with 50th Battalion, A.I.F. in reserve positions between VAIRE-SOUS-CORRIE and HAMELET.

WEATHER conditions were changeable, but only little rain was experienced. Frosts were observed on most nights, especially between 16th and 21st and on 19th, a slight fall of hail and sleet.

Villages in the Sector, viz., CORRIE, HAMELET, VAIRE-SOUS-CORRIE, VAUX, and SAILLY-LE-SEC, and BOUZINCOURT, with the exception of the last mentioned were all evacuated by the civilian population and occupied by our own troops. Each was shelled frequently by the enemy with H.E. Gas and Shrapnel, but the percentage of casualties inflicted was small.

Bouzin court was not occupied by either side though our, and enemy, patrols used to visit the village and patrol it.

BONNAY was not shelled or damaged at all during our stay, but it is interesting to note that the day after we left it to go to Pont Noyelles, it was shelled by the enemy both with H.E. and Gas and casualties to the number of 60 killed and 150 wounded inflicted.

AIRCRAFT. Our Planes were continually in the air, observing and directing Artillery and were frequently observed flying across the lines into enemy territory.

Except on 20th, there was very little enemy Aerial activity though his Observation Balloons were put up at every favorable opportunity.

His Anti-aircraft and A.A. Machine Guns opened up rapid and heavy fire on any of our Machines approaching his lines, but it did not effect them and none were observed to come down.

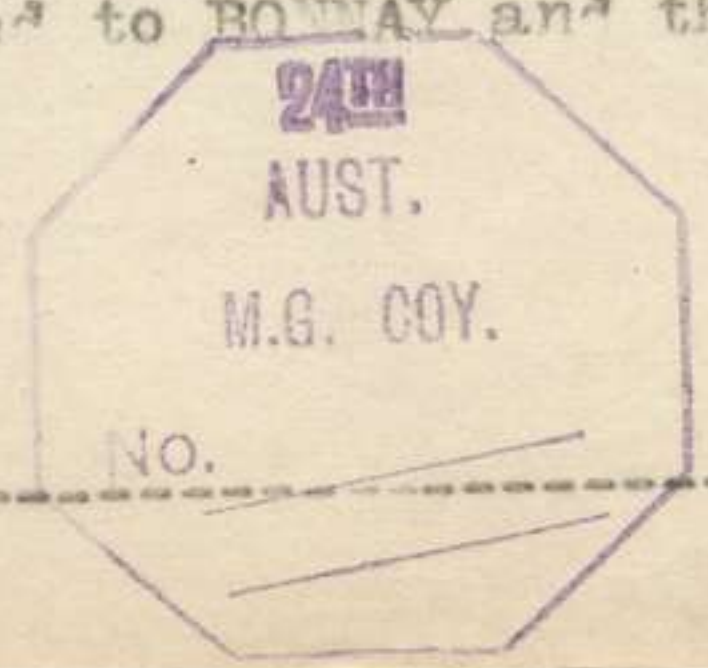
Baron Von Richthofen in any enemy Plane was brought down by Sgt. Popkin on 20th inst. west of VAUX.

Owing to no Infantry action taking place during our tour of duty, and it being desirable to keep our gun positions unknown to the enemy, no firing was done.

The period was quiet and no casualties suffered by the Coy. With the exception of shelling the villages, the enemy seldom fired either with Field Guns or small Arms without observation. It was therefore necessary to keep down by day, but at night it was possible to deliver Rations by Limber as far as the supports.

RATIONS were very good and quite adequate, bread never less than 3 per 2lb. loaf, and good supply of Biscuits. A hot meal was prepared at Coy. H'Qrs. and sent up daily to the men by Limber. It always arrived hot.

The Company was withdrawn from the Line on the morning of the 21st. inst., returned to BONNAY and then proceeded to billets at PONT NOYELLES.



*Robert Schofield*



App FA

Ref. Sheet 62D.

Statement by No.424 bSgt. Popkin, C.B.

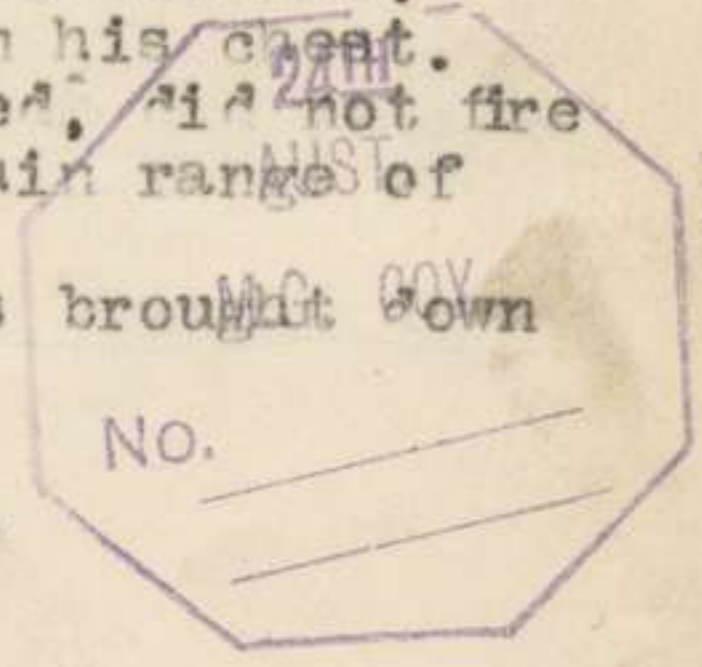
I was the Sergeant in charge of a Machine Gun detach -  
men at J 19 d.

About 10.45 a.m. on the 21st April, 1918, one of our  
Aeroplanes was being engaged by a German Aeroplane and was being driven  
down. The Planes came from an Easterly direction and when within  
range of my gun, were flying very low, just above the tree tops. I  
immediately got my gun into action and waited for our own plane to  
pass me, as the planes were close together, and there was a risk of  
bitting both. As soon as this risk was over, I opened fire a second  
time and observed at once that my fire too effect. The machine swerved  
attempts to bank and make for the ground and immediately crashed. The  
distance from the spot where the Plane crashed and my gun was about 600  
yards. I handed my gun over to the No.1 gunner and proceeded to where  
the Plane fell. The Pilot (whom I was subsequently told was Captain  
Baron Von Richtoven), I saw had at least three machine gun bullets  
through his body, one in his ribs at the side, and a couple through  
his chest, and I consider he died as a result of these wounds from the  
time he was hit till he hit the ground, a matter of 2 or 3 seconds.  
He ~~blew~~ freely after he hit the ground from the wounds in his chest.

~~bled~~ The British Plane which was being chased, did not fire  
at the German Plane when they were both low down and within range of  
any gun.

I am quite satisfied that the Plane was brought down  
as the result of the fire from my gun.

(Sgt.) C.B. Popkin, Sgt.





O.C.,  
24th M.G. Coy.,  
Ref. 62D 1/40,000.

COUNTER ATTACK TO RETAKE VILLERS - BRITONNEUX.

Report on Operations of "D" Section, 24th MACHINE GUN COY.

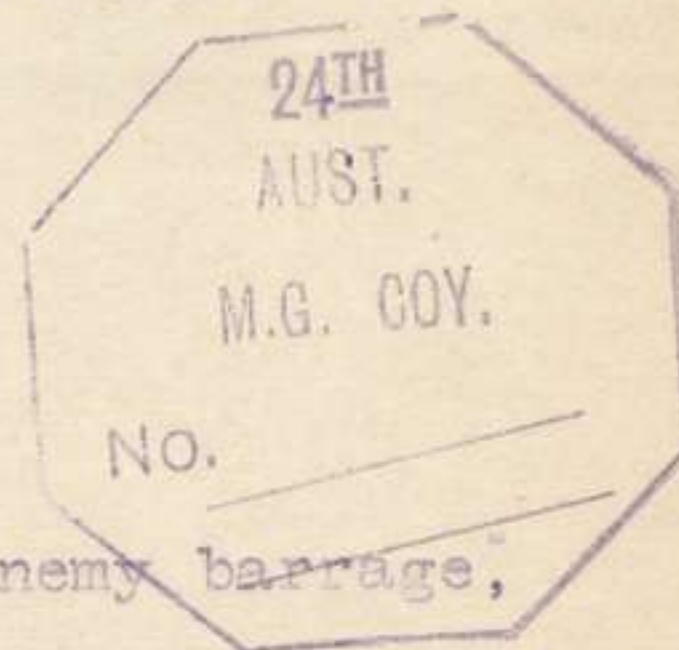
24th April, to 26th April, 1918.

About 8 p.m. 24th April, my Section under myself and Lieut. Lantzke left PONT NOVELLES by Motor-lorry taking all guns, ammunition and Gun Stores, with us in the lorry. Our Transport with bulk S.A.A. followed by Road.

I reported first to the 5th Aust. M. G. Battn. Headquarters at BUSSY and received orders to report to the C.O. 57th Battn. at AUBIGNY. We disembussed at AUBIGNY at 11 p.m. and learnt that the situation in regard to 57th Battn. was very obscure.

I was ordered to wait at Battalion Headquarters till definite information was obtained re the 57th Battn. At 5 a.m. we moved on and took up positions in the VILLERS LINE as follows:-

- 1 Gun at O 30 c 6.3
- 2 " at O 24 d 40.00
- 1 " at O 30 b 4.2.



We got into position about 7 p.m.

On the way up we passed through a heavy H.E. enemy barrage, but our only casualty was 1 O/Rank (our guide) killed.

As soon as we took up our positions, excellent targets presented themselves to our front on our right flank and in the village to our rear.

My right gun was in charge of Sgt. Lidicoat and he got into action at once, using his Auxiliary Tripod while his No.1 mounted the Mark IV Tripod at about 400 yards range. He then laid his gun on the main road leading from the village which he got in enfilade and he fired throughout the morning, first on small parties of the enemy endeavouring to retire from the village, and subsequently at a large number which were being organised on the Road.

At about midday the mopping up party was observed coming through the village. About 200 Germans were seen to surrender to the mopping up party, and thereafter this gun experienced no sniping or machine gun fire from the enemy.

This gun did excellent work protecting our right flank which was in the air, as no touch had been made with the 13th Brigade which was to join up with our right.

My most forward gun, No.3 gun, which was in charge of Lieut. Lantzke in the forward strong point, also had good targets, the largest party of enemy fired on was 20 Germans at a 600 yards range, other targets were smaller parties, some of which were fired in enfilade.

The chief work of this gun was to keep down the fire of two enemy strong points, one on our left flank, and one on our front, which were observed at about 600 yards range, with no obstructions as all the ground on this Plateau is quite level. Lieut. Lantzke kept in touch with the O.C. "C" Company (Capt. PEACOCK) who stated that the work of this gun was excellent and was of immense moral support to the Infantry.

This gun together with the Company of Infantry in its vicinity was withdrawn on the morning of the 26th about 4.30 a.m. to the VILLERS line.

Nos. 2 and 1 Gun under myself are now dealt with.

No.2 I kept in position as a reserve to send to any part that might appear weak, according as the situation might demand. It did no firing and it never proved necessary to move it.

No.1 gun, as with the other 2, also had good shooting. As soon as it got into position, targets of 3 and 4 Germans retreating from shell-hole to shell-hole presented themselves, and subsequently an enemy Machine Gun was observed. This gun was causing us a lot of trouble and shortly after it was observed at about 600 yards, I fired on it, and the crew, attempted to retreat, and three out of four were killed.



By about midday no more enemy were observed, but the line we were holding was heavily bombarded with H.E. chiefly 5.9s and many casualties caused to the Infantry.

I consider that Sgt. Liddicoat's gun killed 100 Germans and the other 2, 200 Germans, in all 300 Germans. This is a modest estimate and probably the total was more. No. 4 gun also undoubtedly was instrumental in causing the Germans in the village to surrender. Their retreat was cut off. All who attempted to retire were killed so that when the moppers up came along, the balance surrendered.

Sgt. Liddicoat in the vicinity of No. 4 gun salvaged 2 German 08 light guns and had these in action. About 2.30 p.m. 26th inst. an enemy aeroplane came over his position flying very low, about 300ft. high. He immediately fired on this Plane with both of the salvaged ~~xxxx~~ German guns. The Plane immediately turned, made back towards his own line and fell in flames about 600 yards distance from his (Sgt. Liddicoat's) gun.

Capt. Peacock observed this Plane crash about 200 yards from his former position at No. 3 gun.

There were none of our Planes about at this time, and no other guns, except Sgt. Liddicoat's guns, opened fire. He undoubtedly brought this Plane down.

I should like to add that we received every assistance from the Infantry. They shared their hot Tea with us and there was always the best co-operation between our guns and them.

Capt. Peacock undoubtedly did excellent work, both by splendid organisation and example.

While in the line, I was under the command of Capt. C.H. HOLMES, 14th Aust. M. G. Coy.

We were relieved at about 9.30 p.m. by a Section from the 8th Aust. M. G. Coy. in charge of an 8th Aust. M.G. Officer, Lieut. Hill, and reached PONT NOYELLES about 2 a.m. 27th inst.

I wish to bring to your notice the excellent work of Sgt. Liddicoat. Capt. SOUTHWELL and Lieut. MYERS 59th Battn. can vouch for this N.C.O.'s good work.

Casualties Nil.

Total rounds fired, 15000.

(Sgdm) H.A. SHERIDAN, Lieut.  
24th Aust. M.G. Coy.





## RATION REPORT for APRIL.

APP "H" 16

Owing to the enemy offensive action which commenced on the 21st ult., and necessitated much ~~extreme~~ economy in the use of the Railways in carrying supplies, etc., the rations issued to the Company were rather poor. For about a week, only dry rations were issued, (no bread and no fresh meat).

For about the first week in April, the bread ration for the Company whose ration strength was 185, consisted of 14 2lb. loaves fresh bread and 100 lbs. Biscuits.

The daily ration per man was as follows:-

$\frac{3}{4}$  lb. preserve<sup>d</sup> meat,  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  " Biscuit.  
 2 $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. Jam.  
 1 oz. Butter.  
 5 oz. Meat & Vegetable Ration  
 (in lieu of Bacon).  
 3 $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. Sugar.  
 2 oz. Cheese.  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. Tea.  
 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. Potatoes.

2 oz. Tobacco, or Cigarettes, and 1 box Matches per man per week. 1 oz. of Pickles per man twice weekly.

Commencing on the 5th inst., Rations improved and consisted of 3 men to a 2 lb. loaf, and 4 oz. Biscuits, per man,

$\frac{3}{4}$  lb. fresh meat,  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  " Preserved meat.  
 3oz. Bacon per man daily.

General Rations, Butter, Tea, Pickles, etc., greatly improved, but Vegetables were still light.

From the 8th inst. till the end of the month the Rations were good. - 75% bread, 25% Biscuits, and Fresh Meat 1 lb. per man and full general ration issue.

The Cooker was issued to the Company on 3rd inst., and during the time the Company was in action, was sent to Company Headquarters, Lavieville. Hot meals were cooked in Field Kitchen and sent to the men in the Line. These hot meals consisted of Stew, Roast Meat, Boiled Meat, Potatoes and Onions.

On the 18th inst., a number of sheep were rescued from shell-fire, having been abandoned by their French owners owing to the quick advance of the enemy, and these greatly supplemented the men's rations during the first week's shortage of fresh meat.

Potatoes were salvaged in the forward area, making good the vegetable shortage.

A Quantity of Mustard and Sardines was purchased by the Officers of the Company from the evacuated village of Corbie ~~xxxx~~ through the Town Major and this assisted.

On the Company coming out of action, into reserve, or rest area, the Diet Sheet, which is appended, was prepared and worked on.

When in the Line, the daily issue of Rum 1/10th gal per man per day was made.

The cooking for the Company was carried out by:-

No. 457c Pte. Champion H.H.  
 432a " Wyatt C.H.  
 420b " Monument, R.F.

and was very satisfactory.

The Sergeants' Mess was re-started on the Company coming out of action.



2 M.S. 4 Parker  
 24 M.S. Boy



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APPENDIX

Ha<sup>19</sup>

"Ha"

Diet. Sheet  
24<sup>th</sup> MACHINE GUN COY.

From Tuesday  
23<sup>rd</sup>  
to  
Sunday 28<sup>th</sup>

Date	Breakfast	Dinner	Tea
Tuesday 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Cold Roast. Beef Tea.	Boiled Meat. Potatoes Onion Sauce Tea	Boiled Rice Corned Beef Tea
Wednesday 24 <sup>th</sup>	Fried Bacon Tea.	Stew (Curried) Potatoes. Tea.	Steak & Onions Tea
Thursday 25 <sup>th</sup>	Fried Bacon Tea.	Boiled Meat Potatoes Tea.	Jam Rolls Tea.
Friday 26 <sup>th</sup>	Curried Stew. Tea	Roast Meat Potatoes Tea 24 <sup>th</sup>	Boiled Rice Tea.
Saturday 27 <sup>th</sup>	Cold Boiled Bacon Tea.	Boiled Meat <sup>AUST.</sup> Potatoes Onion Sauce .. Tea. COY.	Jam Rolls Tea.
Sunday 28 <sup>th</sup>	Fried Bacon Boiled Potatoes. Tea	Fresh Meat <sup>NO</sup> Stew with Dumplings Tea.	Boiled Rice Tea.





SECRET.

Copy No.....

24th AUST. MACHINE GUN COY. ORDER No.5.

Reference Sheet, 62D,  
1/40,000.

The 24th Aust. M. G. Coy., will relieve "B" Company, 8th M.G. Battn., in the Support Line on the 28th inst. Each Section will take in:-

- 1 Off.
- 2 N.C.Os.
- 1 Runner,
- 14 Gunners.

and in addition, each Section will detail 1 Runner to go with Company H'Qrs.

The following Officers will accompany their Sections into the Line:-

- Lieut. F. R. Watts.
- " L. D. Sinclair.
- " G. R. T. Ritchard.
- " H. A. Sheridan.

No Gun gear will be handed over by the outgoing Company. Each Section will take in the usual Gun gear plus 5000 bulk S.A.A. per gun. Spare-part cases, not boxes, will be taken in.

RATIONS. Each man will carry the unexpended portion of the day's Ration, plus one day's Iron-ration. In addition to this, each Section will take in bulk, 1 day's Rations. Two Camp Kettles per Section will be taken.

TRANSPORT LINES will be at LAMOTTE, and the remainder of the Company will be billeted in LAMOTTE.

Capt. H.W.Crouch, M.C., will be in charge of Rear Company H'Qrs., and will be responsible for Rations and administration.

The Company will leave PONT NOYELLES at 10.30 a.m. 28:4:'18 and bivouac for 1 hour at BLANGY TROUVILLE for dinner, and resume the march afterwards.

Only the usual reports will be required from Section Officers.

Every effort will be made to improve the comfort of the men while in these positions. Strict attention will be paid to camouflage, especially on the Gun positions, fresh grass or bushes being used daily. Guns will be mounted day and night, unless otherwise ordered. Box Respirators will always be worn in the alert position, and will be inspected twice daily by Section Officers.

Water will be supplied from Rear Company H'Qrs. and will not be obtained by Sections from any other source. Section Officers will establish touch with one another and with guns on the right and left and forward.

Pegs for direct fire will be laid out in all cases, and the situation as far as possible, explained to the men.

Before marching out at 10.30 a.m. on 28th inst., Nominal Roll of all ranks accompanying Sections, will be handed to the O/Room Sgt.

Company H'Qrs. will be approximately at N 30 d 9.0

27:4:'18.

F. B. Hinton...Major.  
O.C. 24th Machine Gun Coy.

- Issue at 10 p.m.
- No.1 to O.C. 4th Aust. M. G. Battn.
- 2 "A" Section.
- 3 "B" "
- 4 "C" "
- 5 "D" "
- 6 Transport Officer.
- 7 2nd in Command.
- 8 War Diary.
- 9 Office.





COPY.

April, 23rd 1918.

C.O.,

52nd Battalion A.I.F.

Herewith report on Captain Von RICHTHOFEN'S Plane which was brought down on the 21st April 1918 at about 11.45 a.m. and landed at (Map Reference, Sheet 220) J 19 b 3.4 and was hit directly over J 19 c 8.5.

On the 21st April I was instructed to reported to 11th Brigade Headquarters as liaison Officer, situated at J 19 c 8.5. At about 11.45 a.m., I was lying on the ground accompanied by my runner, about 50 yards from Brigade Headquarters, setting my map and having a general look round with my glasses. I heard a plan, or planes, coming at a tremendous pace from the direction of 26 Central. A Vickers gun was firing from a spot situated at J 25 a 8.9. The first plane which came into view was one of our own and less than 20 paces behind was an enemy plane painted "RED". The red plane was overhauling our plane first and both were flying so low that they almost crashed into the trees at top of hill. Almost directly over the spot where I was laying, the enemy plane swerved to the right so suddenly that it seemed almost to turn over. Our Plane went straight on from that moment. The enemy plane was quite out of control and did a wild circle and dashed towards J 19 b 3.4 where it crashed. I went over with other Officers and had a look at the plane and also the driver who was dead, a machine gun bullet had passed from the left side of his face and near bottom of Jaw and came out just behind his right eye.

Height about 6 ft.

Age 26 or 28 years.

Eyes - very light blue.

Closely cropped fair hair.

Clear complexion, clean shaven.

The Vickers gun mentioned was the only gun firing at the time the driver first lost control of his machine.

I made enquiries and found the gun was handled by No.424 Sgt. POPKIN CEDRIC BASSETT, 24th Aust. M.G. Company.

Date 23:4:1918.

Time 2.10 p.m.

(Sgt .) Geo. TRAVERS, Lieut.





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APPENDIX

K 20

App "K"

Australian Corps,  
B.E.F. France.  
24th Apl., 1918.

Dear Jack,

I write to convey to you my heartiest congratulations on the Military Cross, which you have so fully deserved for your fine work during the operations near Dernancourt on the 5th inst. I know that you displayed marked courage and ability in the handling of the two machine guns under your command, by bringing them into action with good effect, and covering the withdrawal of our men from the outpost line. This you did until the enemy were on both your flanks, when you fell back on ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ to another position, and again came into action.

Your action was a fine example of courage and initiative to your men, and was a big factor in the success of the operation.

With many thanks for your good work, and all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd.) W.R. BIRDWOOD.





Sheet 62 D 140000

App L

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RECOMMENDATION FOR IMMEDIATE REWARD.

Brigade

4th Australian.

Division

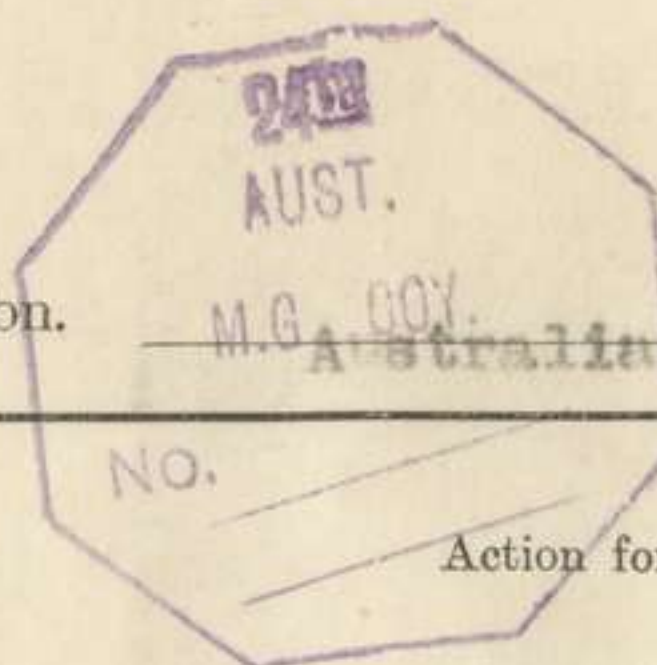
M.G. Coy. Australian

Corps

27:4:1918.

Date of Recommendation.

Schedule No. (to be left blank)	Unit	Regtl. No.	Rank and Name	Action for which commended	Recommended by	Honour or Reward	(To be left blank)
	24th Aust. M.G. Coy.	467	Sergeant Thomas James, LIDDICOAT	<p>For gallantry and devotion to duty near VILLERS BRETONNEUX between the 24th and 26th April, 1918., while in charge of a Machine Gun.</p> <p>In the counter-attack to recapture this village, he worked round to the exposed flank of the Infantry, protected this flank, firing on and killing large numbers of the enemy. Subsequently he got one of the exits from the village in enfilade, killing all the Germans who attempted to retreat. The next day, having salvaged two German 08 Light Machine Guns which he had into action on a German Aeroplane coming over flying very low, he brought it down in flames.</p> <p>He set a splendid example to his Gun detachment and the Infantry in his vicinity.</p>	Major.	Military Medal.	



APPENDIX L



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App. 'M' 22

SUMMARY OF BUSINESS WHICH WAS DISCUSSED AT COMPANY COMMANDERS'

CONFERENCE 24th April, '18.

The 3rd Divisional Front extends from D 29 Central to J 29 Central.

The present arrangements are that the 24th Machine Gun Company will relieve the right Brigade Sector and the 12th Machine Gun Coy will relieve the left Brigade Sector on the 3rd Divisional Front.

The 4th M.G. Coy. is expected to come down from Hebuterne today.

In future, when in the Line one Machine Gun Officer will be sent by each Machine Gun Company to reside with the Battalion H'Qrs., in the Line, or with the Infantry Company H'Qrs. in the Line.

While Guns are in Front Line, an escort must always be demanded, preferably a Bombing Section, to 2 or 4 Guns. An escort is not necessary when Guns are behind the front line, as the front line then becomes the escort.

Tripods will never be dismantled, and only in exceptional circumstances will guns be dismantled. Camouflage, i.e., grass, bagging, etc., will be used instead of dismantling guns.

Lines will always be laid out for direct fire in case of fog or darkness.

Should an area be gas-shelled heavily, the nearest Section Commander will see that this area is properly guarded.

Water-bottles will always be kept full and Iron-rations carefully watched, men being particularly warned of the penalties attached to the consumption of Iron-rations. Men should also be warned under what circumstances they can eat their Iron-rations.

The Gun Commander, or the Section Commander, in the front line, will not move any gun from a laid down position when asked by the Infantry Company Commander unless in the opinion of the Section Commander the situation demands it. Of course, guns could be moved under orders from an Infantry Battalion Commander, but word must be sent as soon as possible to Machine Gun Company Headquarters. When one gun is covering another gun, or group of guns, and that gun, or guns, has to be removed, the guns being mutually supported, will be advised.

With regard to wounded, no man must leave his Section during a battle to assist a wounded man back. Walking wounded will be allowed to get back as best they can, but severely wounded men will be got away during a lull in the battle. Every care of the wounded is to be taken, but gun teams must not be weakened by assisting wounded men back.

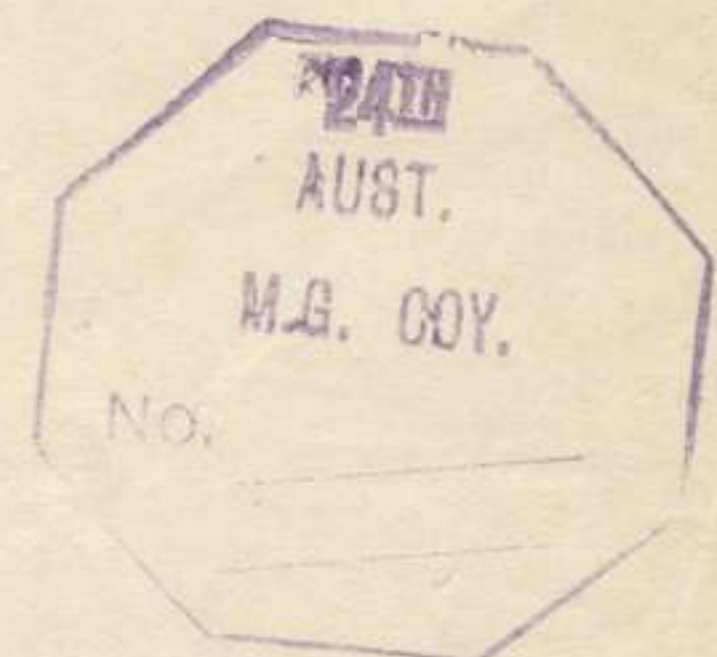
All men must be warned re Sanitation, and the fact that the coming hot weather will bring with it flies and disease.

All Winter clothing, that is, Sheep-skins, M.S. Boots, and the extra Blankets are to be returned to the Q.M. at once.

Trousers are now being issued more frequently than Breeches. These may be cut down and made into Breeches by the Battalion Tailor, but not by the man himself.

When taking over Billets, should a house be looted, the correct procedure is to ask the Town Major to inspect, and receive from him a Certificate to the effect that the house was looted before taking over. The same applies when leaving a Billet. A Clearance Certificate should be obtained from the Town Major stating that the Billet was not looted by our Company.

Every care must be taken to prevent unnecessary damage to trees.



Lieut. Peut.



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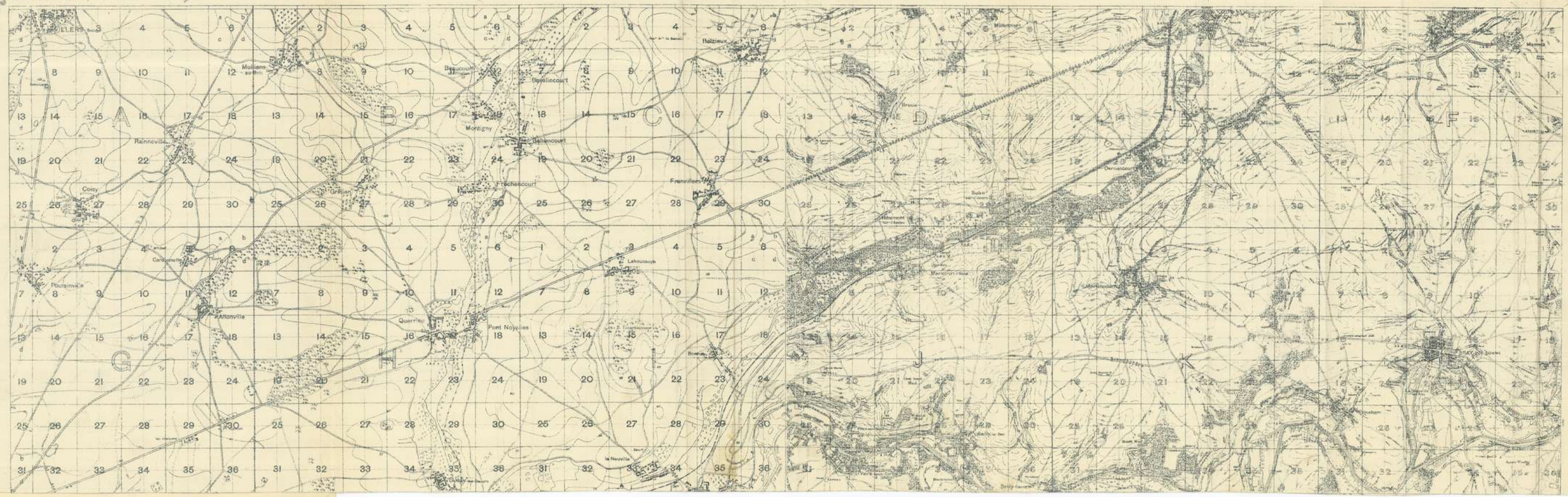
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WAR DIARY 24 Aust M.G. Coy

FRANCE 215

SHEET 62D

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App. 7

24th  
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M.G. COY.  
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M.G. COY.  
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1. The necessity of all guns being amply protected. One occasion on the 5th. April, was particularly noticeable. No sentry or scout was posted forward, the situation demanding it, as fog made observation difficult, allowing the enemy to approach the position closely before being observed. Hand grenades, especially No. 35 Rifle Grenade, been employed, there is little doubt that the enemy would have been beaten off, allowing the gun to inflict heavy casualties. Bombs and if possible rifle grenades should always be in gun positions, and an infantry escort of bombers provided by the nearest Company Commander.

2. Liaison Duty. (Forward and Lateral).

One Company has been in the habit of detailing an independent officer whose one and only duty is to keep close liaison between Company Commanders in the front line and Forward and Flank Guns. This Officer is made responsible for this one branch, allowing Machine Gun Headquarters to keep liaison between Infantry Battalions and Brigade, thoroughly acquainting these latter two with the tasks of all guns. This method of liaison has proved highly satisfactory and is recommended for adoption throughout all Machine Gun Companies.

3. Ammunition.

A good supply of ammunition must be maintained on all guns, and throughout belts must be carefully conserved. One instance brought to light shows one gun expended nearly all belts at long ranges, and the enemy pushing forward considerably endangered the gun. The crew had been severely reduced and assistance for belt-filling called for from the infantry. Rear Guns firing indirect must on all occasions keep their belts filled, and at least a bulk reserve of 15,000 rounds, 5,000 of which is to be held in reserve for direct fire.

4. Siting of Barrage Batteries.

Where batteries are installed for barrage purposes the primary consideration must be their ability to employ direct fire should the occasion arise. No particular instance of this occurred, as all guns were sited on forward slopes. This can always be adopted, and with the careful use of camouflage batteries are difficult to locate. Batteries are generally some distance behind the front line, and can be easily and most usefully employed to command and protect features of high tactical importance.

5. Sacrificing of Guns.

All Machine Gunners must be most carefully and thoroughly acquainted with the tactical situation, and where the position demands it, prepared to sacrifice themselves. One sub-section stood by their guns on the morning of the 5th. April, and caused the enemy heavy casualties. The two gun crews were practically wiped out, only two surviving. These two guns fired until they were overpowered by the enemy, but their splendid sacrifice had the result of stopping the enemy.

6. Fire of guns.

All guns whether direct or indirect must always have their lines of fire laid out by indirect means. One Section of Guns on the 5th. April could have done considerable execution had their tasks been laid out by indirect means. The morning of the attack was densely foggy, and the task allotted was a tunnel under a railway embankment. No arrangements had been made to lay out lines of fire by indirect means, consequently it was not until the enemy was close in that the attack was discovered. Another Section had their lines laid out by indirect means, resulting in good work being done before the enemy reached the position from which he could be observed.

P.T.O.

24th  
AUST.  
M.G. COY.



7. Superiority of Fire.

Superiority of fire was strongly emphasised on one occasion. A number of forward guns were called upon by the infantry to assist in keeping down enemy machine gunners. The following method was adopted. Forward machine guns were instructed to fire on any target, whether suitable for machine gun or rifle fire. Guns creating consolidation in depth were placed in telephonic communication with an observer in the front line, and worked as a battery of opportunity. These guns were controlled by an F.O.O. who directed their fire on any target presenting itself; resulting in a few days time in considerably quietening the enemy. Harassing fire was extensively employed at night. The expenditure of ammunition was considerable, but proved worthy of the result.

8. Mounting of Guns.

Guns should on all occasions be mounted. An instance is brought to light and proves that a position was saved by sentries being alert and gun prepared for immediate use. On the morning of the 5th. April the enemy attempted to rush our trenches under cover of a dense fog. Observation was impossible beyond 50 yards but the guns were ready for immediate use. The enemy advanced to within 50 yards of the trench, when the signal was given of the attack. Fortunately wire hampered his progress but before he could do any damage the attack was completely broken up by the fire of machine guns. Guns should at all times be mounted and with the aid of careful camouflage can be easily hidden from the enemy's view.

9. Sentries and S.O.S.

Sentries must at all times be on the alert and must know the S.O.S. and the approximate position from which it is to be fired. One instance brought forward shows that though the guns had excellent field of fire, one hundred yards to their flank was a little dead ground. The enemy made use of this, resulting in the guns being almost overpowered before they fired. Fortunately the enemy was discovered but it only emphasises the fact that all gun commanders must thoroughly reconnoitre the ground near their positions, and take the necessary precautions to protect their guns, either by establishing a post or by means of patrolling. This can be arranged with the infantry commander.

10. Guns and Spare Parts.

Throughout the whole operation guns and gear worked splendidly, the only exception being lock springs. The breakages in this particular part were not excessive, but were the only thing that proved troublesome. Barrels were always obtainable and broken or damaged parts readily renewed. Oil was rather thick but this was easily rectified. Stoppages throughout were below normal.

18. 4.18.



Fourth Army No.G.S.14/8.

III Corps.  
XIX Corps.  
Aust. Corps.

The attached notes on recent operations bear out the necessity of closely observing the instructions contained in Fourth Army Notes on Employment of Machine Guns, No. G.S.14/8, dated 17/4/18.

The following points are especially noticeable:-

- (1). Necessity of correct use of scouts to give warning of enemy's approach.
- (2). Firing too much S.A.A. at long ranges and not keeping enough for direct fire at the shorter ranges.
- (3). Success of Machine Guns when they hold their position to the last.
- (4). Importance of having all guns mounted and manned and ready for immediate use.
- (5). Importance of Machine Guns being able to fire both to their front and flanks.
- (6). The importance of siting guns for direct fire.

The following additional points are brought out :-

- (1). The necessity of a supply of bombs and, if possible, Rifle Grenades being at the gun position, and an infantry escort to the guns. N.B. The correct use of an infantry escort requires study and does not necessarily mean that the escort should be at the gun, but generally that it should be so located as to deny ground to the enemy from which they can bring effective fire to bear on the gun position, the distance away depending on the ground and on the situation.
- (2). The necessity of guns laid for direct fire also being able to open fire by indirect means on the targets for which they are laid for direct fire, so that in the event of the direct fire targets being hidden by fog, smoke, darkness, etc., the Machine Guns can fire equally by indirect means.
- (3). The importance of close liaison between Machine Guns and Infantry.

*A. C. M. [Signature]*

H.Q., Fourth Army.  
22nd. April, 1918.

Major-General,  
General Staff, Fourth Army.





Headquarters,  
4th AUSTRALIAN DIVISION.  
25th April, 1918.

4th Aust. Inf. Bde.  
15th " " "  
18th " " "  
4th Aust. Div. Artillery.  
O.R.E.  
4th Aust. M.G. Coy. Bn.  
4th Aust. Pioneer Bn.

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The following extract from G.M.Q. Summary dated 17th April, 1918  
is forwarded for information and promulgation to all ranks :-

"Extracts from information given by a Corporal of the 15th Royal  
Scots, captured E. of CROISILLES on morning of 22nd March, who  
escaped to our lines.

TREATMENT. From the morning of the 22nd March till the evening  
of the 24th the 750 British prisoners received no food. Only  
coffee of inferior quality was issued. The first meal received  
on the evening of the 24th March consisted of a tin of broth made  
of barley and horseflesh. Thereafter the daily routine was :-

4.30 a.m. Reveille and roll-call. 1 tin of coffee issued.  
Work all day without food.  
4 p.m. Return to Cage and receive :-  
1 tin of broth made with barley and horseflesh.  
8 ozs. of black bread.  
2 ozs. of black pudding.

In order to supplement the inadequate rations ; the prisoners were  
obliged to help themselves to flesh from dead horses on the side  
of the road. The German guards stripped the prisoners of all such  
articles as greatcoats, cardigans, jerkins, puttees.

ACCOMMODATION. At VILLERS 1,500 British prisoners slept in the open  
in a cage for a week without greatcoats or cover of any description.  
Two small huts were then erected and the prisoners were made to  
crowd into a totally inadequate space.

WORK. For some 3 days a large party of prisoners were employed as  
storing ammunition at a dump.

EFFECT OF OUR AEROPLANE BOMBING. The vicinity of VILLERS was  
bombed on three successive nights and severe casualties were  
caused to men and horses. British prisoners buried 20 Germans  
killed by bombs, and 4 others were buried by Germans.

*D. Stewart L.*  
for Lieut-Colonel,  
G.S., 4th AUSTRALIAN DIVISION.

