

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

Infantry

Item number: 23/60/6

Title: 43rd Infantry Battalion

February 1917



AWM4-23/60/6

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118.

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
ARMENTISERS	11/1/17	10	"A" Battalion Right Sector in front line. usual bombardment on both sides.	
"	5/1/17	10	Relieved by 41 st Bw and became "D" Bw in Reserve. usual bombardment on both sides. Casualties slight providing working parties to "A" Bw	
"	10/1/17	10	Relieved 41 st Bw and became "A" Right Sector front line. Bombardment becoming more intense. Casualties slight.	
"	17/1/17	10	Relieved by 41 st Bw and became "C" Bw in Reserve. provided working parties to "A" Bw	
"	23-1-17	10	Relieved 41 st Bw and became "A" Bw Head On bombarded.	
"	24-1-17	10		
"	28-1-17	10	Relieved by 41 st Bw and became "C" providing working parties for "A" and "B" Bws	
"	29-1-17	10	Relieved 41 st Bw and became "A" Bw	
"	1-2-17	10	Relieved by 41 st Bw and became "C" Bw providing working parties for A. & B. Bws.	
"	8-2-17	10		
"	9-2-17	10		

A5834 Wt. W4973 M687 750,000 8/16 D. D. & L. Ltd. Forms/C.2118/13.

Chas. Butler Lieut Col.
C.O. 43rd Bn. A.I.F.

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43rd Bn A.I.F.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Armentuise	5/2/17	6am	Artillery - quiet few shots fired searching for M.G. position	Weather:-
	6/2/17	6pm	T.M. - Cutting enemy wire	Bright clear day.
			L.C. - Active	Moonlight nights.
			Snipers - Active	Snow still on ground.
			Patrols - Actively carried out through the night (casualty This man was carried into our line by Patrols & Lewis gunner.	Very frosty.
			Our defences - Continuous policy of repairing defences.	Hospital 3
			Enemy operations	On Strength 4.
			Artillery - Very quiet	
			Snipers - Quiet	
			M.G. - Quiet	
			Aircraft - Enemy plane over our Sector.	
6 Am	6/2/17		Artillery. Quiet	
6 Am	7/2/17		T.M. Two shots. No retaliation	
			Snipers Active	
			Patrols Moonlight presented active patrolling	
			Our defences Continuous policy of repairing wire	
			Enemy operations	
			Artillery Generally quiet few shells fired near Chapelle d'Armentuise	
			T.M. Retaliation to our Rifle Grenade shots	
			M.G. Quiet	
			Patrols None seen	
			Communication:- 6 pigeons few from Armentuise towards Lille 5.20pm	
			Aircraft 2 planes observed. (Cannalier "N12")	

Hospital 7
On Strength 3.
Off Strength 16.

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43rd Bn A.I.F.

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Armentières	6 AM 7/2/17		Artillery. Short in conjunction with the T.M. Carried out from 2.30 - 3 pm Damage to H.M. wire + parapet	
	6 AM 8/2/17		T.M. Enemy wire suffered severely.	
			M.G. Quiet	
			L.G. Intermittent fire on enemy wire and parapet.	
			Snipers: - Active one hit claimed.	
			Patrols: - Patrolled on sector through the night. Enemy M.G. Active to 8 p.m. hindered progress.	
			Our defences. Repairs generally proceeded with - Special attention to wiring behind parapet and front of support	
			Rifle Grenades. 98 fired from our front and brought slight retaliation	
			Enemy operations	
			Artillery: - Slight activity	
			M.G. Fairly active on our parapet and wire early, after 8 p.m. fairly quiet	
			Snipers Very quiet	
			Patrols None seen	
			Observations. Working party carrying timber etc. disrupted by our artillery	
			Communication. Pigeon noticed flying towards Armentières	
			Aircraft. Enemy plane appeared. Driven off by our planes.	
6 AM 8/2/17	6 AM 9/2/17		Artillery - Quiet, T.M. Co-operated with Artillery, M.G. Quiet. L.G. Engaged enemy parapet.	
			Snipers - quiet, Patrols - Patrolling carried out. Interfered by moonlight.	
			Our defences - Continued policy carried out. Rifle Grenades: - 102 fired, slight retaliation	
			Casualties - Nil.	
			Enemy operations: - Artillery quiet, M.G. Fairly active. Snipers Very quiet, Patrols: - none seen	
			Enemy defences. Heavily knocked about. 500. 1. Aircraft. Enemy plane flew over our line driven off by A.P. Guns. Observation: - Powerful searchlights played on no man's land.	

Hospital 44 men
100 2 dis-
1 man charged
On strength to 1. OR
On strength, 25 OR from base

Weather. Bright clear
Moonlight.

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Arment	9/1/17		Relieved by 41st Bn. became "C" Bn. provided working parties to A & B Battalions in the line. Training carried out of 3rd Class Shot. Scouts in firing ground. and revolved shooting. Sniping. Weather. Fine. still frosty.	
	10/2/17		Continuation of 9-2-17. Weather. Fine still frosty.	
	11-2-17		do do 10-2-17 do Fine still frosty commencing to thaw.	
	12-2-17		do do 11-2-17 do Fine do	
	13-2-17		do do 12-2-17 do Dull Thawing	
	14-2-17		do do 13-2-17 do Dull Thawing	
	15-2-17 6am		Relieved 41st Bn became "A" Bn	
	16-2-17 6am		Artillery - Fairly active. T.M. Shoot carried out. much damage done M.G. Very quiet. L.G. Fairly active Sniper - one hit claimed Patrols - Continuous patrolling enemy working party fired on. Our defence - Cleared policy of repairs. Rifle Grenades. fired intermittently Our Casualties 1 R. killed	Enemy's operations. Artillery - Retaliation for our shoot. M.G. - Fairly active traversing on front & supports Sniper - Quiet. Patrols - Patrol 8 men seen opposite No. 1 Bay fired on by our L.G. Enemy defence - Busy behind front line. Observation - Balloon noticed at 4-30pm. Aircraft - Enemy plane over our line. Any down by our A.A. Gun.

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Armentuise	16.2.17	6 AM	<u>Our operations</u> Artillery Active throughout day, dispersed enemies work in position	<u>Enemy's operations</u>
	16	T.M.	Programme short carried out	Artillery: Active all day up till 11 p.m. Barrage commenced 7.55 p.m. and ceased 8.40 p.m. but little material damage done.
	17.2.17	6 AM	M.G. Firing at intervals on gaps.	M.G. Occasional bursts
		L.G.	Played on enemy wire.	Snipers: Very quiet
		Snipers	Fairly active one hit claimed.	Patrols: None encountered
		Patrols	Active patrolling throughout night.	Enemy Defences: Wire cut by our T.M. Parapet badly damaged by our Artillery.
		Our Defences	Parapet raised Locality No. 1.	Communication: Pigeons seen flying to & from Armentuise. 6.30 p.m. Morse code picked up.
		Rifle Grenade	General repairs carried out.	Aircraft: Enemy plane flew over line A.H. Guns dispersed same.
			Rifle Grenade. Thrown at intervals during the day.	<u>Enemy's operations</u>
			Casualties 1 O.R. wounded.	Artillery: Fairly active. Localities 1 and 2 getting most attention
	17.2.17	Artillery	Retaliation called for several times including hows. Engaged working party and dispersed same.	M.G. Quiet during day, usual fire on our wire during night
	18.2.17	T.M.	Fired on enemy wire and engaged working party.	Snipers: Very quiet. Still using dummy heads
		M.G.	Played on gap on enemy wire during evening and morning.	Patrols: None encountered
		L.G.	Quiet active	Defences: Parapet repaired, new sand bags visible
		Snipers	Quiet Poor visibility	Observation: Working parties observed carrying material.
		Patrols	Actively carried out throughout the night	Communication: Pigeon flew towards Armentuise another flew towards Perennes
		Defences	General policy of repairs	
		Rifle Grenade	Intermittent firing carried on in front line.	
			Casualties Killed O.R. 2 Wounded 4	

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Armentieres	18.2.17	6 AM	Our operations Artillery. Retaliation to enemy fire Locality 1. Shoot at 3 p.m. in conjunction T.M.	Enemy operations Artillery. Active N.E. 1 Locality received much attention
	19.2.17	6 AM	T.M. Programme shoot 3 p.m. Destroyed sniper post. M.G. Quiet L.G. Special attention gaps in wire Snipers Very active one hit claimed Patrols Actively patrolled "No Man's Land" throughout night Defences General repairs and wiring done throughout sector Rifle Grenades. Fired at intervals during day. Retaliation received N.E. 3. Locality. Casualties O.R. 1 Killed	M.G. Fairly active on right Quiet on left Snipers. Fairly active till position fired on by our T.M. when ceased. Patrols None encountered Defences. Slight activity in enemy lines Observation Observation balloon up well in rear of line direction W.E. 2. MAC DUART Miscellaneous. Frequently bombing his own wire. Searchlights used at intervals
	19.2.17	6 AM	Artillery. Our Hows & Field Guns retaliated at intervals	Enemy operations Artillery. Very active Special attention being given to Locality 1 & 2.
	20.2.17	6 AM	T.M. - Cut wire at noon as per programme. M.G. - Active. Engaged gaps in enemy wire. Co-operation with Artillery L.G. Active. Sniping. Mist prevented great activity nothing to report. Our Defences. General policy of Repair carried out. Carried out raid on enemy trenches. Casualties Officers Wounded 1 O.R. " 30 Killed " 1	M.G. Active as usual. Snipers. Fairly active Periscope hit Locality 4 Enemy defences. Gap in wire opp. Pear Tree Farm Trenches in bad condition where raised by us. Observation Giant periscope visible I 17a 9.4. Patrols. None seen.

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			Our operations	Enemy operations	
Armentieres	20.2.17	6 Am	Artillery. Very small activity during day. Retaliation at intervals	Artillery 77 th H.E. + S. grenades thrown at intervals during day. Special attention to Locality 2.	
	21.2.17	6 Am	M.G. Fired periodically through the night	M.G. Very quiet.	
Armentieres.			L.G. Active	Snipers Very quiet.	
			Snipers. Mist prevented great activity	Patrols Small patrols tried to penetrate our wire 3.30 Am. Driven off by our bombers and M.G.	
			Patrols Battalion front patrolled throughout night	Enemy Defences. Little activity. One working party fired on observation. Working party observed.	
			Our Defences. General repairs carried out	Communication. 7.10 pm. Red Light went up off Locality 1. No apparent result.	
			Rifle Grenades. Firing throughout day. Enemy retaliated with Pineapples and Rifle Grenades.		
			Casualties 1 O.R. wounded		
	21.2.17		Relieved by 41 st Battalion and became "C" Battalion.		Weather fine.
	22.2.17		Provided working parties for "A" + "B" Battalions in the line.		
	23.2.17		do		
	24.2.17		do		
	25.2.17		do		
	26.2.17		do.		
	27.2.17		do.		
	28.2.17	6 Am	Relieved 41 st Battalion and became A. Battalion in the line.		
	1.3.17	6 Am			

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43rd. Battalion A. I. F. **WAR DIARY**
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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
In the Field	28/2/17	6 a.m.	<p><u>Our Operations.</u></p> <p>Artillery. Active 18 pdrs, & Hows retaliated on several occasions.</p> <p>Machine Guns. Slight Activity.</p> <p>Lewis Gun. Engaged enemy wire & parapet at intervals.</p> <p>Snipers. Mist hampered Visibility - hence quiet.</p> <p>Patrols. W.M.L. clear - enemy alert owing to Stunt on left.</p> <p>Our Defences. Our wire badly damaged in place right along front.</p> <p><u>Our Casualties.</u></p> <p>2 O.R. Wounded.</p>	<p><u>Enemy Operations.</u></p> <p>Artillery. Active 77 H.E. and shrapnel sent over.</p> <p>M.G. Quiet.</p> <p>Patrols. None seen.</p> <p>Enemy Defences. Owing mist observation poor. 2 working parties seen, dispersed by our artillery.</p> <p>Observation. Mist hampered Visibility.</p> <p>Communication. Very lights freely used.</p> <p>Searchlights Active.</p>

(Original of above appears on the same sheet as entries for the beginning of the subsequent month and will be found with the diary for that month.)

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(A10266) Wt W5300/P713 750,000 2/18 Sch. 52 Forms/C2118/16

REPORT ON RAID CONDUCTED BY 43rd. INF. BATTALION.

----- NIGHT OF 19/20/2/17. -----

STATEMENT BY LT. W.D.PRICE, O.C. PARAPET.

Raiding party left our trenches about 9.30 p.m. Reached point of assembly just before barrage started without difficulty. At ZERO plus 3 party moved forward under our artillery barrage which was good and reached enemy wire on outside before barrage lifted. At ZERO plus 1 minute my party No.2 moved to enemy parapet. Threw bridges across the borrow ditch, crossed same, and scaled parapet. Right Blocking party moved to their position which was a few yards to right of entrance point and Left Blocking party followed by No.7,8 and 9 parties moved to the left. From the time we reached the enemy wire we were subjected to enemy bombardment consisting of shrapnel and I think, rifle grenades. consequently all parties were greatly disorganised by casualties. On reaching enemy parapet the enemy shells that burst around us, (or rifle grenades) burst on concussion. I moved to the left of No.9 party and directed these parties which way to go. I was unable to gain touch with my signallers and at this juncture a bomb or rifle grenade burst practically at my feet and the concussion knocked me over. I tried to rise and found my left leg was useless. The parties being disorganised, and finding it impossible to direct operations, I deemed it advisable to give instructions for the Signal to Withdraw, to be given. This was at about 10.12 p.m. I, myself, scrambled over parapet and was assisted back to our own lines by Pte. Forrest and another man.- I desire to call ~~special~~ attention to the good work performed by all the men, and especially to that of Scout W.H. Healy. This man greatly assisted me at point of assembly, led the party into the Hun trench, helped me to direct operations after I was wounded, and worked splendidly in assisting wounded back to our lines, by guiding them back to enemy wire.

STATEMENT BY LT. R.C.M.B.GUNTER. O.C. ASSAULT.

We left our trenches at 9.30 p.m. and reached point of assembly a few seconds before first shot from our artillery was fired. The barrage of our artillery was good and at ZERO plus 3 minutes the leading parties crept forward, and as far as I could judge (being with No.7 party) reached front system of enemy wire. When our barrage lifted the party moved forward into enemy trench, and I noticed several of the men were wounded as I was going up to the parapet, but whether with rifle grenades or shells I cannot say. On reaching enemy trench I moved to the left, and some yards up met Mr. Price who was wounded. He told me as the parties were so cut up I had better give the signal to withdraw. After moving further to the left I came to enemy's G.T. trench, and found a party carrying one of our wounded men out of same. I gave the signal to withdraw at 10.15 ~~xxxxxxx~~ and by the time I had seen the last man out it was 10.30 or later. I did not see any of the enemy or notice any dugouts. The condition of the trenches was terrible, due I think, to our bombardment. I could not see any firebays or traverses. There was no sign of any duckboards, and the mud and slush was very bad. I could see wire between front and support line, which appeared to be in good condition. Great difficulty was experienced in getting our wounded back, and the extension bridge we had used to cross the borrow ditch was found useless to carry a man on. After leaving enemy trench enemy barrage appeared thickest behind me and on RAILWAY SALIENT. I saw one of our men who was dead, (his head having been blown off) lying between enemy borrow ditch and wire, but having so many wounded to get back I could not spare men to bring back the body. Getting back to our trenches was difficult owing to enemy M.G. fire which appeared to come from the North, and the large number of wounded we had. I reached our parapet at 11.20 p.m. I desire to call attention to the splendid work performed by Scout W.H. Healy, without whose assistance the entrance into, and exit from enemy trenches would have been even more difficult, and his assistance in guiding wounded back through enemy wire was most helpful.

STATEMENT BY PTE. E.R. TILLBROOK. After reaching enemy trench I moved to the left until I reached a C.T. down which I proceeded for about 30 yards. I saw a concrete dugout with steel door, outside of which I found a steel helmet. I could not effect an entrance owing to the fact that the demolition men on my party became casualties.

STATEMENT BY PTE. C.P. FOX. After reaching enemy trench I moved to the left, turned up a C.T. to the right and found what I took to be a Support trench. After proceeding a few yards along this a Hun approached me, wearing steel helmet of the type brought back except that forehead piece appeared to be missing. I brought my rifle to the ready position and the Hun threw up his hands. Just as he did so a bomb or rifle grenade burst between us and knocked me over. I saw the Hun disappear, but was unable to follow him as my foot had been badly injured.

STATEMENT BY PTE. H. JONES. ~~THE~~ I moved to the left after crossing enemy parapet and discovered, some 40 yards down, a concrete dugout the door of which appeared to be made of wood. I was unable to effect an entrance, the demolition men of my party having become casualties. Outside this dugout 3 German rifles were found.

GENERAL REMARKS BY C.O. The party moved from SQUARE FARM fully equipped at 8.30 p.m. Communication by telephone between myself and front line was not established until 9.40 p.m. due to the fact that signaller who was to connect up from front line to forward Coy H.Q. was moving up behind the raiding party and thus arrived later. At 9.36 p.m. I received word that first party were over our parapet and at 9.45 another message stated they were all out. At 10.2 p.m. the information was received that the O.C. Raid was out of touch with his party, and this is explained as follows;- Signallers with raiding party reached point of assembly alright, but wires became entangled and the operator shortly after became a casualty through shell shock. The remaining signaller endeavored to connect up, but the parties in rear, stumbling over his wires, made it impossible. At 10.6 p.m. word was received that the enemy was retaliating in our front line. At 10.12 p.m. O.C. Raid stated again he was still out of touch with the party, and at 10.29 pm a man was reported as having returned wounded. At 10.30 p.m. O.C. Raid forwarded a request for our artillery to cease fire. At 10.51 p.m. information was received that about half the party were in, and enemy was still bombarding NO MANS LAND. At 10.56 p.m. advice was forthcoming that Lt. Price had returned.

The O.C. Raid being out of touch with his party made it most difficult for him to send back information, and further, the fact that so many of the party were wounded, tended naturally to delay operations, and harass this officer. From information gained from all ranks it would appear that the enemy barraged his own wire and front line parapet, almost immediately after our barrage was put down on his front line. His wire was found to be quite passable. The many casualties that occurred prior to our party entering his trenches disorganised our parties and severely hampered members of those parties and the operation as a whole. This was particularly marked in the case of the demolition men, without whose assistance it was impossible to gain entrance to the dugouts discovered. I contend that the reason why Gap made in enemy wire (which had existed for some time) was not repaired was because he organised a thorough system to repulse our raid. Under the circumstances I respectfully submit ~~THESE~~ THAT the party did all in its power to attain the objects for which they were despatched, and I think that the fact of out of 68 men who went over and 29 being either being killed or wounded, and all but one (dead) being brought back, speaks very highly for the morale and courage of all ranks who anticipated. In an operation during which all displayed such splendid dash it is hard to individualise, but I desire to particularly draw attention to the splendid work performed by Svout W.H. Healy and both Lts. Price and Gunter, whilst the organisation and thoroughness displayed by O.C. Raid Cpt. Cope throughout training and during operation left nothing to be desired. I desire also to draw attention to splendid work of M.O.'s Capts. GUYMER and FITZ-HILL, and stretcherbearers, who worked in N.M.L. and from F.L. to 1st. A.P.- S.B. Pte Tillbrook did particularly good work.

Sgd. Chas. P. Butler. Major.
C.O. 43rd Inf. Battalion. A.I.F.

Original

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

RECEIVED
10 AUG 1917
4th DIVISION
CENTRAL
AREA

Army Form C. 2118.
7

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Armentieres	1917 February		<p><u>Scout Platoon (Continued)</u></p> <p>During the early part of February scouting conditions did not alter as much the same routine continued as was adopted for January. Snow still lay on the ground and all the country remained ice bound.</p> <p>On 8th Feb. Scout W.H. Healey was sent to a raiding school to practise for the raid which eventuated on 19th Feb. He was entrusted with the scouting necessary for such an enterprise. Prior to the night of the raid he nightly reconnoitred the ground and approached with different members of the raiding party and thoroughly inspected all the surrounding area, working through the enemy wire as far forward as the parapet. On the night of the raid he successfully lead the party to the point of entry and throughout the operation gave invaluable assistance. for which he for the magnificent work done in connection with this raid he was awarded the D.C.M. the first in the platoon.</p>	

B.H.H.

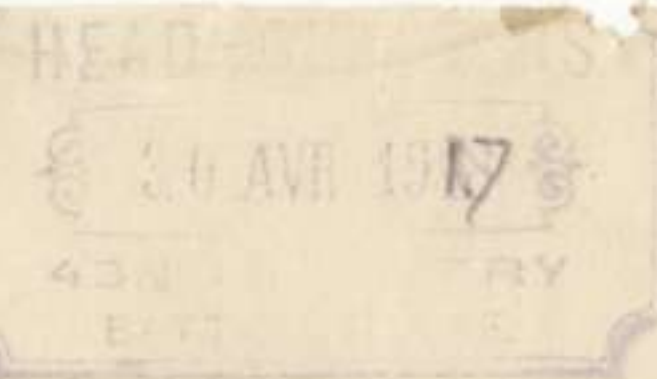
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Armentieres	1917 February		<p><u>Scout Platoon (ctd)</u></p> <p>On the 24th the scout platoon was reorganised into</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 officer Lt S.E. Tolley 1 cpl bpl O.W. Wilson 4 Patrol leaders Ptes Schulz - Francis - Day & Healey 14 Scouts <p>On account of the increase in length of daylight and clearer visibility at night it was decided to decrease the strength of a patrol from 1 leader & 5 scouts to 1 leader & 3 scouts for silent patrols.</p> <p>About the end of Feb & early in March the enemy adopted a more aggressive attitude engaging the near lines more with artillery & forward press with T.M. Little M.G. fire had previously been directed onto N.M.L. Both British & German trenches consisted of revettment and were consequently raised above ground level. At the end of February however, frequent bursts of fire were directed into N.M.L. and indirect oblique fire freely used causing much trouble to patrols.</p>	
	March			