

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

Infantry

**Item number:** 23/71/17

**Title:** 54th Infantry Battalion

June 1917



AWM4-23/71/17



## WAR DIARY

or

## INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

Army Form C. 2118.

54th BATTALION A.I.F.

JUNE, 1917.

Page 1.

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
BEAULENCOURT	1.6.1917.		<p>Battalion training according to syllabus issued by Headquarters 14th Infantry Brigade. Work of the morning devoted to company and battalion practices in taking advantage of cover and use of ground. Advice received that the undermentioned N.C.Os and men had been awarded the Military Medal by the Army Corps Commander in recognition of their gallant conduct on the morning of 15th May when the Battalion was attacked in the HINDENBURG LINE.</p> <p>2955 Pte. PRATT A.E.  2460 Pte. MELROSE J.  4350 Cpl. WHALLEY G.  5049 L/Cpl TUCKERMAN R.  5359 Pte. CULL J.  3468 Sgt. RICHARDS A.T.  1751 Pte. WALSH G.  2863 Pte. RUSSELL W.J.  4153 Cpl. BLACK J.</p> <p>Battalion area by this date had become organised and laid out with an eye to the comfort and well being of the men. Battalion Stadium was erected and concerts and boxing tournaments held nightly.</p>	
BEAULENCOURT	2.6.1917.		<p>"A" and "B" Companies worked during the morning on the defences north of VILLERS- AU-FLOS. 4868 Sgt. Redding B.G., transferred to Officers Cadet Battalion, England. "C" and "D" companies engaged in training.</p>	
BEAULENCOURT.	3.6.1917.		<p>Church parade in morning followed by Commanding Officers inspection of Battalion Area.</p>	
BEAULENCOURT.	4.6.1917.		<p>Training and work on the defences continued. Captain A.P.Vine-Hall Seconded to the 14th Training Battalion on 12.5.1917 vide A.I.F.List. All Details, including Lieut. E.S. Astridge and Lieut. R.A.Smith reported from BECOURT, leaving only reinforcements there. The Battalion undertook an instructional scheme covering Advanced, flank, and rear guards. <del>and</del></p>	



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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
BEAULENCOURT 5.6.1917.			All companies engaged on engineering work north of VILLERS-AU-FLOS. Lieut. C.E. Shaw reported for duty from the Divisional Rest Station. The weather conditions becoming very hot towards mid-day.	
BEAULENCOURT 6.6.1917.			The Battalion undertook a Battalion route march. Marching-out state showed 21 officers, 458 other ranks, 42 animals and 14 vehicles as on parade. One officer and 22 other ranks attended Brigade Schools and there necessarily remained in Camp one officer 98 other ranks, 14 animals, 4 vehicles. The route taken was via BEAULENCOURT - LE TRANSLOY → ROCQUIGNY - BARASTRE - VILLERS -au-FLOS and back to BEAULENCOURT. Total length of march about 8 miles. Strict march discipline as laid down in Field Service Regulations, part 1, was enforced. The column halted at 10 minutes to every clock hour. The march was concluded without mis-hap and without anybody falling out.	
BEAULENCOURT 7.6.1917.			Specialist training being given special attention. All companies were engaged on training. The hours of parade were altered <del>from</del> 8.30 am to noon, and 2 to 3 pm. The training of rifle grenadiers was made a special feature of the training.	
BEAULENCOURT 8.6.1917.			All companies engaged in engineering north of VILLERS-au-FLOS. A.I.F., List issued showing as Seconded wounded - Major C.S.LECKY; Captain A.G.MORRIS; Lieut. C.E.DEACON; 2/Lieut. H.R.ALLEN, as from 15.5.17. Lieut. A.M.BENSON and Lieut. H.S.PERRY were placed on the Supernumerary List on 20th and 21st May respectively.	
BEAULENCOURT 9.6.1917.			Battalion undertook route march on the same route as for the 6th inst., with the exception that the Battalion went round via HAPLINCOURT thus adding about 4 miles onto the journey. Full marching order less blankets was carried and beyond half a dozen men falling out temporarily the march discipline was good. There were 19 officers 490 other ranks, 40 animals and 13 vehicles on parade.	
BEAULENCOURT 10.6.1917.			Church parades followed by Commanding Officer's inspection of Battalion Area.	
BEAULENCOURT 11.6.1917.			Training continued. Lieut. G.A.Dickinson and 17 other ranks proceed to Fifth Army Rest Camp at ST.VALERIE-sur-SOMME. Advice received that Lieut.F.W.Hunt had been evacuated	



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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
BEAULENCOURT 11.6.17. (Con).			to England and admitted to the 3rd London General Hospital, Wandsworth. Lieut. A. Finney who had been found guilty of absence without leave on 3.4.17 from front line, and had been sentenced by G.C.M., to be cashiered was transferred to A.I.F., Headquarters, London.	
BEAULENCOURT 12.6.17.			Lieut. W.L. Agnew returned to duty from Divisional Rest Station. Companies undertook special training and companies as outposts.	
BEAULENCOURT 13.6.17. Ref. 57c.			Battalion undertook a route march. Marching out state showed 20 officers, 536 other ranks, 40 animals, 13 vehicles on parade. One officer and 80 other ranks remained in Camp. Four officers attended 8th I. Brigade scheme.	
BEAULENCOURT 14.6.17.			The route taken was as follows. Starting point - road junction at N 17 b 5.8 via BAPAUME ROAD to O 31 b 4.0 - ROCQUIGNY - BARASTRE - HAPLIN COURT - CROSS ROADS at O 2 d 9.6 - VILLERS au FLOS - BEAULENCOURT. Total length of march about 11 miles. Strict march discipline was enforced. Column halted at <del>xxxxx</del> 10 minutes to every clock hour. No one fell out during the march and a fine spirit obtained to the end. Lieut. N.B. Lovett, 53rd Battalion Seconded to 15th A.I. Brigade, assumed duty as acting Adjutant.	
BEAULENCOURT 14.6.17.			The Battalion undertook a special scheme. An enemy "white" force was reported to be advancing on BEAULENCOURT from PREMICOURT. A "blue" force was despatched to check advance. Lieut. McArthur with "C" Company constituted the "white" force, Captain O.J.O. Tedder was O.C., "blue" force, which comprised "A", "B" and "D" Companies. The whole scheme was well carried out. N.C.Os and men displayed great interest, and the C.Os' meeting which was held when the exercise was over was productive of much good. Captain Leedman, R.M.O., returned from U.K., leave to-day. Captain J.M. Crombie, 5th Div. Artillery, was attached for one month on probation, posted to "B" Company.	
WARLOY.	15.6.17.		In accordance with 14th A.I. Brigade order No. 94, the 54th Battalion was relieved at Beaulencourt by 23rd Battalion, A.I.F. Battalion was timed to entrain at BAPAUME at 1.30 pm but owing to the line near ACHIET-LE-GRAND having been destroyed by enemy shell-fire the departure of the train was delayed 5 hours. Entraining state showed 27 officers, 594 other ranks. Two companies of 53rd Battalion entrained on same train. Lieut. Col. S. Midgley, C.M.G., D.S.O.,	



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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
WARLOY (Con.)	15.6.17.		Commanding 54th Battalion, was O. C., train. Battalion detrained at VARENNES and marched to billets in WARLOY. All companies had reported billeting complete at 11 pm. The transport had arrived at 5 pm having moved by road. The billets were exceptionally clean and satisfactory.	
WARLOY	16.6.17.		Day spent in settling down in billets. All billets were thoroughly inspected by Adjutant, R.M.O., and Billeting Officer. Necessary changes were made and improvements put on foot. G.O.C., 14th A.I. Brigade, with the Brigade Major and Staff Captain, inspected the Battalion Area. Lieut. A.J. Evans rejoined Unit from hospital and was posted to "D" Company.	
WARLOY	17.6.17.		Church Parade followed by Commanding Officer's inspection of Battalion Area. Lt. Evans <del>was</del> returned from Hospital. Lt. C. J. Small to Hospital, sick.	
WARLOY	18.6.17.		The forenoon was occupied by a through inspection of kits, cleaning of equipment and general brushing up. C.O., Adjutant and Company Commanders spent most of the morning selecting training grounds. In the afternoon the C.O., lectured officers.	
WARLOY	19.6.17.		The Battalion undertook a tactical scheme in the form of an attack through VARDEN-COURT Wood. This was the first opportunity the Battalion has had to practice wood fighting and was productive of much good. Officers were lectured by the Commanding Officer in the afternoon concerning the morning's work.	
WARLOY	20.6.1917.		The Battalion undertook a route march. Marching out state showed.- 21 officers and 553 other ranks, 38 animals, 13 vehicles as on parade; 17 other ranks at Brigade Schools; 3 officers and 53 other ranks, 17 animals and 5 vehicles remained in Camp on necessary duties. The route taken was <del>XXX</del> as follows:- WARLOY - VARENNES - HEDAUVILLE - WARLOY. Total length of march - 8 miles. The column was reviewed at HEDAUVILLE by the Divisional and Brigade Commanders. The march was concluded without mishap, no one fell out.	



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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
WARLOY	21st.		<p>Training was continued according to Brigade Syllabus . Training consisted mainly of elementary musketry including description and recognition of targets, fire control, judging distance, visual training, aiming and firing instruction. Special instruction was given to Lewis gunners and rifle grenadiers . One hour in the afternoon was occupied in Platoon organisation according to S. S. 143.</p> <p>Major F.W.D.Oatley joined Battalion from Supernumerary List, 25th Battalion, A.I.F., and was posted Second in Command. One O/r reinforcement.</p>	
WARLOY	22nd.		<p>Training according to Brigade Syllabus continued. First two hours occupied by lecturettes by platoon commanders to their platoons on reconnaissance, scouting and patrolling. Remainder of the morning was occupied in steadying drill, first by platoons then by companies. One hour in the afternoon devoted to a short, brisk, toute march by companies.</p> <p>No.2630 Corporal J. Bowran was appointed Second Lieutenant and was posted to "C" Company.</p> <p>The following decorations were awarded to officers and other ranks of the Battalion for acts of gallantry during the BULLECOURT action on 14/15th May :-</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">D.S.O. Major C.S.LECKY. Bar to Military Cross Capt. A.G.MORRIS (M.C.) Military Cross Capt. H.H.Young, Capt.C.H.Leedman, Lieut.D.McArthur and 2/Lt. F. Morley. D.C.M. R.S.M. McRobie J.S.</p>	
WARLOY	23rd		<p>The Battalion undertook a tactical exercise in the shape of an attack scheme through HENENCOURT Wood . All preparations were made and an attack on the first objective launched when heavy rain prevented all further movement . The C.O., lectured all officers in the afternoon concerning the mornings work.</p> <p>Captain M.J.Lowe marched in from 14th Training Battalion, Lieut. K.N.Wark from Seconded List (Wounded). 20 other ranks reinforcements marched in.</p>	
WARLOY	24th		<p>Church Parade followed by Commanding Officer's inspection of Battalion Area.</p>	



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WARLOY	25th		<p>Training continued four hours in the forenoon and one in the afternoon. Morning training included one hour's platoon and company drill. The remainder of the morning was devoted to practice of the "Company in Attack". Formation as laid down in S.S.144 was adopted. Special attention was paid to (1) Covering fire, (2) Use of scouts, (3) The Assault. The afternoon parade was placed at Company Commanders disposal.</p>	
WARLOY	26th		<p>Training continued. Elementary musketry, including recognition of targets, fire direction and control. Range practices were carried out by Companies on the WARLOY range, consisting of 5 rounds application and 5 rounds rapid at the 300 yards range. The practice showed necessity for more range work. This is being arranged for. Lieut. J. A. Evans was this day transferred to the 6th Australian Division, England. 2/Lieut. J. H. Barton marched in from reinforcements and was posted to "C" Company.</p>	
WARLOY	27th		<p>Battalion undertook a route march. Marching-out state showed 28 officers, 442 other ranks, 34 animals and 10 vehicles on parade. 73 other ranks attended the Brigade Schools, 49 other ranks on leave to AMIENS, and 2 officers and 91 other ranks remained in Camp on necessary duties. The route was as follows - WARLOY - BAIZIEUX - FRAMVILLERS - Albert - Amien Road - FRAMVILLERS - BAIZIEUX - WARLOY. The total length of march was 8½ miles. The marching was good, general turn-out was an improvement on the route march of the 20th inst. The faults of the previous march commented upon by the Divisional Commander paid special attention to.</p>	
WARLOY	28th		<p>Training continued. Two hours in the forenoon were devoted to practice in extensions and formations adaptable to night operations. It was intended that a night outpost scheme should be undertaken from 9.30 pm to 11.30 pm. Commanding Officers lectured all officers for an hour concerning the intended operation. The Adjutant lectured all N.C.Os on the contents of S.S.143. Heavy rain in the afternoon and evening caused the postponement of the intended night operation.</p>	
WARLOY	29th		<p>Two hours in the forenoon were devoted to ceremonial drill and rifle exercises. Practice in marching past was indulged in by companies. This was in preparation for a Brigade parade in the afternoon for the Premier of New South Wales. General Sir William Birdwood, Major General J. Hobbs, Brig-General Hobkirk and The Hon. W.A. Holman, Premier</p>	



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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices																
WARLOY	29th (Con.)		<p>of New South Wales were present. The Corps Commander and the Premier addressed the Brigade. The Corps Commander presented decorations and ribbons to members of the Battalion as follows :-</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>DECORATIONS.</u></p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Cross of St. George</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Sgt. STRINGER T.F.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Military Medal</td> <td>Pte. WHEEN A.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>" "</td> <td>C.S.M. FULLARTON J.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>" "</td> <td>C.S.M. HAWKE C.R.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>" "</td> <td>Cpl. SMITH H.</td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>RIBBONS.</u></p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Captain</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Capt. C.H. LEEDMAN.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Military Cross.</td> <td>Lieut. D.A. McARTHUR.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>" "</td> <td>Lieut. F. MORLEY.</td> </tr> </table> <p>Lt. R.G. Downing (M.C.) marched in from 14th Training Battalion and was posted to "B" Company. Lieut. G. A. Dickinson marched out to 14th Training Battalion. <del>24</del> other ranks reinforcements arrived from BECOURT.</p>	Cross of St. George	Sgt. STRINGER T.F.	Military Medal	Pte. WHEEN A.	" "	C.S.M. FULLARTON J.	" "	C.S.M. HAWKE C.R.	" "	Cpl. SMITH H.	Captain	Capt. C.H. LEEDMAN.	Military Cross.	Lieut. D.A. McARTHUR.	" "	Lieut. F. MORLEY.	
Cross of St. George	Sgt. STRINGER T.F.																			
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" "	Lieut. F. MORLEY.																			
WARLOY	30th		<p>Training continued. Battalion undertook a short route march. Route WARLOY - SENLIS - HENENCOURT - WARLOY. At HENENCOURT a break was made in the march and an exercise was undertaken in the shape of "The Tactical occupation of a Defensive Line"</p>																	

*Norman Lovett*

CAPTAIN  
ADJUTANT, 54th BATTALION  
AUST. IMPERIAL FORCE.