

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

Infantry

Item number: 23/67/15

Title: 50th Infantry Battalion

September 1917



AWM4-23/67/15

Confidential - Original

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118.

2009

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

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

50th Bn A.I.F. Page 62

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
NEUVE EGLISE	1917 Sept.	1	Relief of Bn in front line completed by 1st Bn. Notts & Derby Regt (Sherwood Foresters) at 12 midnight. 3rd Aug/1 Sept. Bn moved to NEUVE EGLISE. Palmer Baths at disposal of Bn in forenoon. Bn moved by Bus at 3 pm to LE BREARDE near CASTRE arriving at 6.30 pm.	
LE BREARDE		2	blurch parade. Refitting & clearing up equipment etc	
"		3	blue order drill - physical training - kit inspections	
"		4	Moved by Bus to LUCY & SENLIS arriving at 5.30 pm. HQ, A.B.C. Coy at LUCY, D Coy at SENLIS.	
LUCY		5	since 2nd April 1917 after capture of NOREUIL owing to slow arrival of drafts the strength of the Bn did not permit of more than three platoons per Coy. after the operations at Messines drafts arrived more freely. on moving to the rest area sufficient men were received to bring the Bn up to a practicable working strength of 4 platoons per Coy and the 4th platoon of each Coy was re-established on 5th Sept.	
		6	in view of the 1st Augzac Corps being required for active operations within a month 4th Div rejoined its old Corps being transferred from 2nd Augzac Corps to 1st Augzac Corps on 3rd Sept. The 1st Augzac Corps had already joined the 2nd Army	
		7	From 7th to 12th special attention was directed to platoon training under platoon commanders all specialists parading with their platoons for	H. G. ... file
		to		
		12		

Confidential Original

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118.

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

50th Bn A.I.F. Page 63

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
LUGY	19 Sept	17	<p>the forenoon parade. Platoon drill - Platoon attack formations for trench to trench attack & for semi open warfare carried out - also forming up on tapes and drawing of tools practiced by day & night in conjunction with gas drills throughout training stress laid on importance of the rifle & co-operation by Lewis guns, Rifle Grenades & bombs also consolidation & precaution against counter attack. After noon parades devoted to training of sections in musketry, bombing, rifle grenade & Lewis gun work. Bn had use of a 500 yard rifle range & a bombing ground. The whole Bn was put through range practices from grouping up to 500 yards including a rapid practice & a snap shooting. All rifle grenadiers exercised in firing live grenades. Two demonstrations were carried out on range showing the greater effect of the fire of 20 rifles as compared with that of one Lewis gun, to bring home to all hands the importance of the rifle. During spells in training lectures delivered in "Husbanding of Ammunition & Bombs during attack & the difficulties of supply" "Care of arms, equipment, ammunition, bombs & water during and after an attack." Consolidation & precautions against counter attack. Platoon attack schemes on strong points - in assisting flank platoons carried out leading up to attack by larger units. Each Coy carried out a Coy attack. Two Bn attacks practiced - one Bde attack similar to proposed operation rehearsed. During the period in the rest area half an hour each morning before breakfast was devoted to Physical training & Bayonet fighting. In Bn & Bde attacks special attention was given to hopping up. A Bn Sports meeting was also held followed a few days later</p>	

A7092. Wt. W12839/M1298 750,000. 1/17. D. D & L., Ltd. Forms/C2118/14.

Al Salisbury
Pulcat

Confidential - Original

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118.

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

50th Bn A.I.F.

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
STEENVOORDE EAST	Sept	20	by a Bde Sports meeting. On 17th Sept Bn figures readed (on paper) 37 Officers 998 other ranks (31 overstrength)	
		21	Bn moved by Bus from LUGY to STEENVOORDE EAST Bn prepared to move to forward area for active operations. Strength actually with unit 29 Officers 843 other ranks. Reserve to be left at Corps reinforcement Camp 6 Officers 134 other ranks. Bn left Steenvoorde East at 7 pm by Bus and bivouaced about two miles west of YPRES.	
near YPRES		22	Representatives from Bn reconnoitred ground in forward area near WESTHOEK	
		23	C.O. detailed for liaison duty with left flank Div for operations. Bn and in Command (Major W.M. Loutit D.S.O.) took charge of Bn. Bn marched out of bivouac at 4.30 am for YPRES. Bn left YPRES at 6.30 pm + relieved 52nd Bn on WESTHOEK RIDGE 52nd Bn moving forward and taking over front line.	
WESTHOEK RIDGE		24	Bn remained at WESTHOEK RIDGE preparing for attack.	
		25	Bn remained at WESTHOEK RIDGE preparing for attack.	
Active operations near TONNEBEKE		26	Bn left WESTHOEK RIDGE at 1 am. to move on to jumping off take. attack commenced at 5.50 am. Preliminary instructions Administrative instructions, Operations Orders, Maps, and history of action attached.	
		28	at 9.45 pm Bn relieved by 45th Bn A.I.F. moved to rear of WESTHOEK RIDGE. front line taken over from 13th A.I. Bde by 12th A.I. Bde	
WESTHOEK RIDGE		29	Bn employed on Road works etc	
		30	Bn moved back to HALIFAX CAMP near DICKEBUSCH at 2.30 pm arriving in camp at 4.30 pm. C.O. returned to Bn at 9.30 pm	



A. Salisbury

Confidential - Personal

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in R. S. Reg. Part II and the Staff Manual respectively. This page will be prepared in manuscript.

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Reverse heading not required)

Sold for A.I.F.

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Summary of Events and Information

Remarks and references to Appendices

Place Date Hour

20 For movement of 100 from LUCY to STEENVOORDE EAST
 21 For preparation to move to forward area for active operations. This will be carried out with unit of 20 officers and 200 other ranks. Reserve to be left at Camp Westhoek.
 22 Camp of officers 100 other ranks. For left Steenvoorde East at 7.15 am.
 23 For movement of 100 from LUCY to STEENVOORDE EAST
 24 For preparation to move to forward area for active operations. This will be carried out with unit of 20 officers and 200 other ranks. Reserve to be left at Camp Westhoek.
 25 For movement of 100 from LUCY to STEENVOORDE EAST
 26 For preparation to move to forward area for active operations. This will be carried out with unit of 20 officers and 200 other ranks. Reserve to be left at Camp Westhoek.
 27 For movement of 100 from LUCY to STEENVOORDE EAST
 28 For preparation to move to forward area for active operations. This will be carried out with unit of 20 officers and 200 other ranks. Reserve to be left at Camp Westhoek.
 29 For movement of 100 from LUCY to STEENVOORDE EAST
 30 For preparation to move to forward area for active operations. This will be carried out with unit of 20 officers and 200 other ranks. Reserve to be left at Camp Westhoek.



OPERATION ORDER No.43,

By,
MAJOR N.M.LOUTIT D.S.O., Tempy/COMMANDING,
50th. BATTALION.

In the Field,
22/9/17.

MOVE. The Battalion will move to the "RAMPARTS" tomorrow 23rd.inst.

Starting Point:- Bn.H.Qrs.

Time:- 4.30 a.m.

Order of March:- "A", "B", "C", & "D" Coys. To march by Platoons in file at 100 Yds.interval. Connection will be maintained between ~~B~~ platoons.

Dress:- Fighting Order. All Lewis Gun Gear will be carried.

Rations:- Waterbottles to be filled, unconsumed portion of day's rations to be carried.

Baggage:- All Officers gear to be returned to Bn.Dump by 4 p.m.

Cookers:- Cookers will move in rear of Bn. Cooks to remain with Cookers.

Billeting:- C.Q.M.Sgts.will report to LIEUT.WAKELIN at Bn. H.Qrs.at 3.45 a.m.ready to proceed to destination to arrange Coy.Area.

L.P. Smith

Lieut.

A/Adjutant 50th.Battalion.

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ATTACK ON ZONNEBEKE RIDGE.

By, MAJOR N.M. LOUIT D.S.O., Tempy/COMMANDING, 50th. BATTALION.

In the Field, 23/9/17.

Reference Map 1/10,000 WESTHOEK & 1/40,000 Sheet 38.

1. The 13th.A.I.Bde.will relieve the 6th.A.I.Bde.in the front line from J.3.d.0.7. to J.3.a.3.8. on 23/24th.inst.
The 52nd.Bn.relieving on that frontage the 21st.Bn.
On night of 23/24th.the 50th.Bn.will relieve the 52nd.Bn.in WESTHOEK AREA.
2. The Task of the 13th.A.I.Bde.will be to capture & consolidate the General Line D.26.c.90.05. to D.26.a.2.2.
The 4th.A.I.Bde.on right & a British Bde.on Left will attack and capture their objectives in conjunction with the 13th.A.I.Bde.
- 3.(a)The Bde.Attack will be carried out as follows:-
Ist.Objective, (RED LINE) 50th.Bn., J.4.a.35.70., D.27.d.90.45., D.27.d.80.95.
2nd.Objective (BLUE LINE) 49th.Bn.on right, 51st.Bn.on Left.
(b)Dividing Line between 13th.A.I.Bde.and troops on left, Straight Line J.3.a.3.8. to D.27.d.8.8.
(c)Dividing Line between 13th.A.I.Bde.& 4th.A.I.Bde.on right, Straight Line J.3.d.0.7. to J.4.a.35.70.
4. The attacking troops for RED LINE (Ist.Objective) will form up one hour before Zero on line 150 Yds.in advance of line held by 52nd.Bn.
Great care must be taken that a minimum amount of movement & noise is made while forming up.
Position of Coys.in the attack will be, A.Coy.on right, B., C., & D., Coys. on left flank. Each Coy.will attack in four lines.Distance between lines as follows:-
Ist. & 2nd. Line. 25 Yds.
2nd. & 3rd. Line. 15 Yds.
3rd. & 4th. Line. 50 Yds.
Last Line of each Coy.consisting of a complete platoon detailed for mopping up.
Each Coy.will have approximately 195 Yds.
Zero & Barrage Table will be notified later.
Attack will be carried out in lines of section columns, connection between head of leading column to be maintained by beaters & between flank Units Liasson Patrols.
Section Columns should not break down until creek at bottom of gully has been crossed.
Lieut.LACKMAN & N.C.O., will be posted with extreme right section of C.Coy & will be responsible for maintaining direction.
All ranks to be warned to pay special attention to this section of direction
Lieut.LACKMAN will take bearing to centre of objective.
Four Stokes Mortars are attached to the Bn.two of these will move with the 3rd.line of "D" Coy.
The remaining two will remain at Bn.H.Q.
5. Bayonets will not be fixed until Barrage falls.
6. Watches will be synchronised before leaving WESTHOEK.
7. Bn.H.Qrs.& R.A.P.will be situated at place to be notified later.
8. All Orders to be returned to Bn.H.Qrs.one hour before Zero.
9. All ranks will be warned that ground will probably be very wet & breast works will be more practicable than deep trenches.
10. Stragglers Posts will be established in rear of 52nd.Bn.These sentries will stop & return to Bn.H.Qrs.all ~~wounded~~ unwounded & slightly wounded cases leaving the line, other than runners & parties under a N.C.O.
11. Rifles will be carried by troops of front line at the ready & every opportunity will be taken to fire while moving forward.
12. Two guiding tapes will be laid from WESTHOEK to front line.

Copy No.1 File.	Copy No.8 B.Coy.
:: : 2 C.O.	:: : 9 C.Coy.
:: : 3.Sen.Mjr.	:: : 10 D.Coy.
:: : 4)	:: : 11 13th.A.I.Bde.
:: : 5)War Diary	:: : 12 Right Bn.
:: : 6)	:: : 13 Left Bn.
:: : 2 A Coy	

[Signature] Lieut.
Adjutant 50th.Bn.

SECRET.

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Signal arrangements issued in conjunction with Preliminary Instructions for attack on ZONNEBEKE RIDGE.

Reference Map 1/40,000 WESTHOEK & 1/40,000 - Sheet 28.

1. The following will be the means of Communication :-

(A). Between Battalion H.Qs & Brigade Forward Stations -

- (a) Telephonic.
- (b) Visual.
- (c) Runners.

(B). Between Coy H.Qs and Battalion H.Qs -

- (a) Runners.
- (b) Visual.

2. Action of Battalion H.Qs -

- (a) At 2 hours before ZERO Bn H.Qs will be established at GARTER POINT in with 52nd Bn H.Qs. As soon as strong points at J.3.a.65/95 are reported to be mopped up Bn H.Qs will be moved forward to this position and establish itself there.

3. Action of Brigade Forward Party -

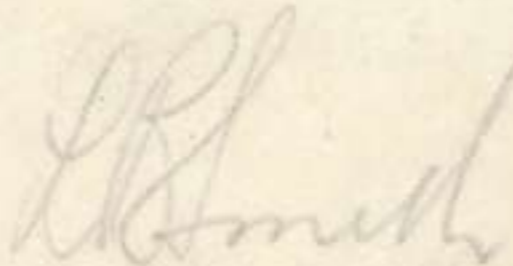
- (a). At ZERO minus 1 hour, Brigade Forward Party will be assembled at its Cable Head- J.3.c.28. At ZERO plus 4 minutes it will advance in rear of, and close up to the last line of 50th Bn establishing itself at J.3.b.76.
- (b). On the capture of the BLUE Line being assured Bde Forward Party will advance and finally establish itself at D.17.a.9.7.

4. VISUAL :-

- (a) A Divisional Visual Station will be established near J.1.a.7.1. at ZERO minus 4 hours. This Station is for receiving only messages from Bde Forward Parties, Attacking Battalions, Companies, or Platoons after ZERO. It is connected by telephone to H.Qs, Right and Left Brigades, and will receive messages from any part of the attack and will transmit them to their destinations.
- (b) A Visual Station will be established at Bn H.Qs. If conditions permit Visual ~~xxx~~ Stations should be established at or near Coy H.Qs. Before commencing visual work approximate position of Station should be given H.Qs Signallers at Bn H.Qs
- (c) All messages will be sent "DD" three times over. The message will be repeated as a whole, not word by word

GENERAL :-

- (a) The position of the Divisional Visual Station should be made known to all Coys Signal personnel, it would be much better to point out the actual position on the ground thereby making the chance of recognition from forward positions greater.
- (b) On no account will lines be run forward from Bn H.Qs to Coys until consolidation has progressed satisfactorily.
- (c) Messages after ZERO need not be sent in CIPHER or CODE, but code names of UNITS will be employed.



Lieutenant,

Adjutant, 50th, Battalion.

In the Field,
23/9/17.

50th. BATTALION,
ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTIONS ON
ATTACK ON
ZONNEBEKE RIDGE

By.
MAJOR N.M. LOUITIT D.S.O., Tempy/COMMANDING,
50th. BATTALION.

In the Field,
34/9/17.

Reference Map 1/10,000 WESTHOEK and 1/40,000 Sheet 28.

1. Ammunition:- All men with the exception of the following will carry 220 rounds S.A.A. (Lewis Gunners 150 Rds., Bombers, Runners, and Carrying Parties will carry 50 Rds. S.A.A.)
Two detonated Mills Grenades, 1 in each pocket, carried by all except Runners.
3 Sandbags, one entrenching implement.
In addition to the above ground flares and very lights will be distributed among the Coys.
2. Rations:- The following rations will be carried by all ranks.
1 day's iron ration, 3 day's preserve ration, unconsumed portion of day's ration.
C.Q.M. Sgts., & Sgt. Cook will return to Transport Lines.
R.S.M. will remain at WESTHOEK RIDGE with Police & supervising placing of Stragglers Post.
All ranks will carry one extra water bottle.
Water to be conserved as much as possible.
3. Dump:- A dump of S.A.A. is established at ANZAC FARM.
Coys. requiring ammunition will send party direct to En.H.Q.
4. Objective:- If, on digging posts, trench is found to be wet, it is to be drained down the hill.
5. Wounded:- All wounded whether stretcher or walking cases must be sent away with box respirators.

On Battalion being relieved, before moving out of the forward area, Coys. are to move out complete in all detail of equipment rifles and Lewis Gun Gear.



Lieut.

A/Adjutant 50th. Battalion.

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SECRET.

Appendix

Copy No.....

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13th. AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY BRIGADE.

Brigade Headquarters,
25th. September 1917.

PRELIMINARY INSTRUCTIONS No. 3.

MOVEMENT OF TROOPS TO JUMPING OFF LINE AND ATTACK.

Reference Map attached & WESTHOEK 1/10,000.

1. From RAMPARTS and CANAL Areas to WESTHOEK Ridge.
 - (a). The Rifle Farm track will be used by the 49th. & 51st. Bns. and Brigade Forward Party as far as WESTHOEK Ridge.
 - (b). Control Posts under Capt. FOWLER will be established along this route; In addition boards have been placed at intervals along the track and two Red Lamps will be placed at Advanced Bde. H. Qrs.
 - (c). The 51st. Bn. will be clear of I. 9. d. 5. 5. by 6.30 p.m.
The 49th. Bn. & Bde. Forward Party will be clear of same point by 7.30 p.m.

2. Assembly WESTHOEK Ridge. Advance parties will be sent to reach Advanced Brigade Headquarters by 4 p.m. where they will be shown the area in J. 7. b. which they will occupy while waiting to move forward to the Jumping Off Line.

3. From WESTHOEK to Jumping Off Line. Units will move forward from WESTHOEK as under:-

50th. Battalion	to leave	WESTHOEK Area	at	1.00 a.m.
49th.	::	:	:	::
51st.	::	:	:	::

4. Tracks as shewn on sketch have already been allotted to Battalions and lamps will be placed along each route.

5. Place of Assembly and Jumping Off Line.
 - (a). Intelligence Officers and tape laying parties will report to the Brigade Intelligence Officer at 6.30 p.m. at Advanced Brigade Headquarters, J. 1. d. 65. 15.
 - (b). The 50th. Bn. will be formed up on a taped line and will occupy a depth of 60 Yds.
 - (c). Immediately in rear of the 50th. Bn. the 49th. Bn. & 51st. Bn. will be formed up on a depth of 90 Yds.
The outer flanks of these Battalions will be taped and the dividing line between them will be marked.

6. Advance to the Attack.
 - (a). At Zero plus 2 minutes the 50th. Battalion will move off and deepen out to its attack formation.
 - (b). At Zero plus 6 minutes the troops for the Blue Lines will move slowly forward, clear of the enemy barrage keeping 300 yards distance of the Red Line troops.
 - (c). On crossing the swampy ground in J. 3. b. opportunity should be taken of checking the line of direction. Direction of attack is approximately 72°30' magnetic.
 - (d). The Blue Line troops will remain in rear of the Red Line troops till they move forward in time to anticipate the lift of the protective barrage at Zero plus 100.

A C K N O W L E D G E.

(Signed) R. MORELL Major.
Bde. Major 13th. Aust. Inf. Bde.

Issued at 12.30 p.m.

Issued direct to coys

Headquarters,
25th. September 1917.

Reference Map WESTHOEK 1/10,000.

1. (a). On "K" day at hour to be notified later the 4th. Aust. Division in conjunction with the 5th. Aust. Division on the Right & the 3rd. Div. on the Left will continue the operations against the PASHENDAELE Ridge.
(b). The attack of the I3th. Aust. Inf. Bde. will be carried out as per instructions already issued.
(c). The Left of the 4th. Aust. Inf. Bde. will direct and Officers of the Right Coys. of the 50th. & 49th. Bns. will arrange to get in touch before Zero with Lieut. KERR (Intelligence Officer, 16th. Bn.) & Lieut. JOHNSTON (Intelligence Officer, 14th. Bn.) who will be directing Officers. In addition to the above, in the case of mist or fog, one Officer and one Other Rank in the centre of each Bn. will be prepared to lead by compass.
2. (a). Posts will be pushed out to a distance of about 100 yards in advance of the line that is being consolidated.
(b). When the final protective barrage ceases at Zero plus 327 minutes patrols properly supported will be pushed forward and tactical points within 200-250 Yards found unoccupied will be occupied & consolidated.
3. In the event of attack by hostile aircraft during the advance certain Lewis Guns must be ready to engage them.
4. The Machine Gun Barrage will commence at Zero plus 7.
5. (a). A contact patrol distinguished by a black streamer on near edge of left wing will fly over the front from Zero till the final objective is reached.
(b). Red flares will be lit by leading troops 20 minutes after reaching each objective, at which time a contact 'plane will call for them by Klaxon Horn or firing a White Very Light.
(c). In addition, Infantry will light flares whenever an aeroplane calls for them.
6. Each Unit will send an Officer to Advanced Bde. H. Qrs. to synchronise watches at 12.30 a.m. on morning of attack.
7. All messages after Zero will be sent in clear till otherwise instructed.

A C K N O W L E D G E.

(Signed) R. MORELL.

Major.

Bde. Major I3th. Australian Infantry Brigade.

Issued at 2.30 p.m.

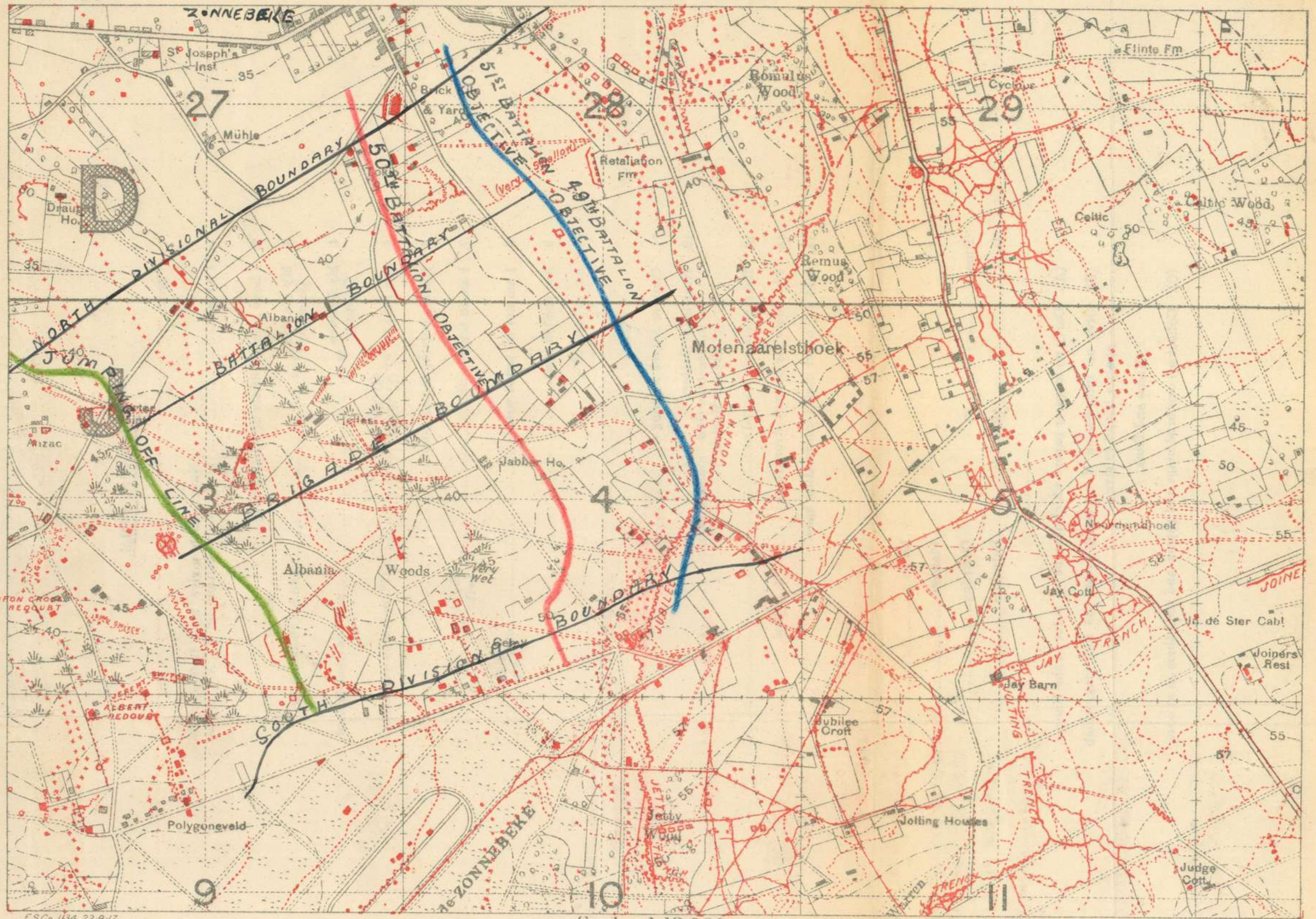
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N°7.

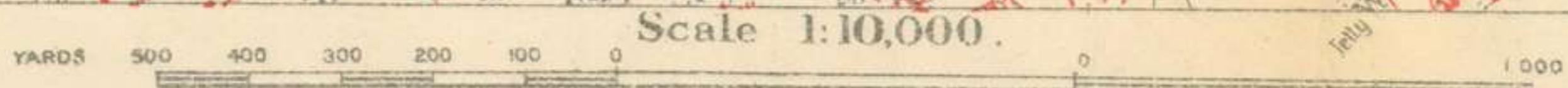
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MESSAGE MAP.

Trenches &c. corrected to 19-9-17.



F.S.Co. 1134. 22 9-17.



Printed by N°2 Advanced Section, A.P.&S.S.

- C.D.Os. verified by Air Photographs ■
 - C.D.Os. reported by other sources, and not verified by latest Air Photographs □
 - Old Gun Positions !
 - Strong Point probably occupied ⊗
- NOTE.—Air Photographs show practically no signs of wire anywhere in this area. C.D.Os.—Concrete Dug-outs.

OPERATION ORDER No.44,

By,
 MAJOR N.M.LOUTIT D.S.O., Tempy/COMMANDING,
 50th. BATTALION.

In the Field,
 27/9/17.

The 13th.A.I.Bde.is distributing in Depth.

The following moves will take place at 4 a.m. today neither sooner nor later.

52nd.Bn. move to CANAL AREA.

50th.Bn. Move to Present Area held by 52nd.Bn.

I Coy. 49th.Bn.Right Sector will relieve 2 Coys.A.,&B.,of 50th. Battalion.

I.Coy.51st.Bn.Left Sector will relieve C & D Coys. 50th.Bn.

Coy.Commanders of A & B Coys. will immediately get in touch with C.O.,49th.Bn.,& Coy. Comdrs.concerned, & will arrange guides for relief.

Coy.Comdrs.of C & D Coys. will get in touch with C.O.,51st.Bn.& Coy.Comdrs.concerned & arrange guides for relief.

Guides from 52nd.Bn.,4 per Coy.will report to respective Coys. of 50th.Bn., at about 3.30 a.m. to guide troops into new area.

Sandbags will be handed over.

Petrol tins issued tonight will be taken out by each Coy.

Coys.must move from RED LINE complete in all equipment, Lewis Gun Magazines etc.

L.P. Smith

Lieut.

Adjutant 50th. Battalion.

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By,
MAJOR N.M. LOUTIT D.S.O., Tempy/COMMANDING,
50th. BATTALION.

In the Field,
29/9/17.

Reference Map 1/40,000 Sheet 38.

Move:- The Bn. will move to HALIFLAX CAMP, H.19.a. & b. & H.13. c. & d. on 30th. inst.

Route:- Duckboard track leading from BIRR X ROADS to LILLE GATE, YPRES, thence to BELGIAN CHATEAU.

Starting Point:- Present Area.

Time:- A.Coy., 1.30 p.m., B.Coy., 1.45 p.m., C.Coy., 2.00 p.m.
D.Coy., 2.15 p.m. Attached to march with Coys.

Movement:- All movement to be made by Platoons in file, 100 yds. interval. There must be no straggling. A N.C.O. or Officer will march in rear of each Platoon.

Dress:- Fighting Order. Special care will be taken to see that Coys. move out complete in all detail of equipment.

Baggage:- All Lewis Gun Gear will be stacked on Coy. Dumps by 9.30 a.m. Limbers will call for same. One Lewis Gunner per Coy. will move with Coy. Limber to Transport Lines, & remain with Coy. Lewis Gun Gear until taken over by Coy. All dixies, Cook's gear etc., will be ready for Limbers to call at 1 p.m. All cooks will move with these limbers, will carry equipment, & will not ride on limbers. Sgt. Thorn will be in charge. All Officers Mess Gear will be put on Cooks Limber. No men to move out carrying gear in sandbags.

Billeting Party:- C.Q.M. Sgts. will report to LIEUT. LOUDON at Transport Lines at 8 a.m.

Sanitation:- Every endeavour will be made to leave area occupied by this Bn. as clean as possible. Latrines will be attended to before moving out.

L.P. Smith Lieut.

A/Adjutant 50th. Battalion.

Copy No. 1 File.
:: : 2 C.O.
:: : 3 Senior Major.
:: : 4)
:: : 5) War Diary.
:: : 6)
:: : 7 A.Coy.
:: : 8 B.Coy.
:: : 9 C.Coy.
:: : 10 D.Coy.

REPORT ON OPERATIONS CARRIED OUT BY 50th. BATTALION from 22nd. to 27th. Sept-
ember 1917 on Ridge S.E. of ZONNEBEKE.

On 22nd. Sept. 1917, the Bn. was billeted in Canal Area, & Prior to moving forward packs & all baggage were dumped, all ranks then being ready to move wearing "Fighting Order".

From Canal Area, routes forward to YPRES & WESTHOEK were reconnoitred by Officers and N.C.O's of all Coys.

A red stripe was painted on back of steel helmet for 50th. Bn. attacking Red Line and Blue for 49th. Bn. & 51st. Bn. attacking Blue Line.

The Bn. moved to YPRES on the 23rd. September 1917.

Two bombs, extra 100 Rounds S.A.A. & 4 sandbags per man, also 30 picks and 80 shovels were issued to each Coy.

At 6.30 p.m. the Bn. left for WESTHOEK & relieved the 52nd. Bn., relief being completed by 10.30 p.m., the 52nd. Bn. moving forward & taking over front Line.

On 24th. Sept. routes from WESTHOEK to Front Line were reconnoitred by all Officers, number of N.C.O's, Scouts & Runners.

Ground to be captured was well looked over & valuable information given by 52nd. Bn. Officers.

On 25th. Sept. Orders for attack were issued. Bn. was given a 640 Yds Frontage and had to attack to a depth of 750 Yds. Task being to capture 1st. Objective "RED LINE". 49th. & 51st. Bns. then moving through to their Objectives the "BLUE LINE" 300 Yds. in advance of RED LINE.

Attack was carried out in four lines, each Coy. on 160 Yds. Frontage. Order of battle being from right to left, - "A", "B", "C", & "D" Coys. Total number taking part in attack being 19 Officers, 550 Other-Ranks.

An extra Waterbottle & two days preserved rations were issued at 9 p.m. on 25th. Sept.

Casualties to midnight on 25th. Sept. - 14 O.R. Killed, 1 Off. 15 O.R. Wounded.

26th. September 1917. Bn. Left WESTHOEK 1 a.m. moving by Platoons in single file 100 Yds. interval between Platoons to front line & were formed up on tape ready to attack by 4.30 a.m.

Zero was at 5.50 a.m.

To this time there were no casualties.

Moving to position of assembly and forming on the tape was well done. Bn. had a good start for the attack. On advancing under barrage troops in a few instances moved too close and casualties were sustained a few also being caused by short shooting of some batteries.

Barrage generally was very good.

Troops gained objective at 6.50 a.m., very few casualties to this time had been caused.

With a few exceptions no general resistance was met with. Germans surrendering very freely, one party of enemy only holding a group of four concrete dugouts causing most trouble, but were cleared up by previously detailed mopping up party. 2 M.G.'s, 3 H.T.M.'s & 15 enemy being captured from these dugouts. Mopping up did not cause much trouble, all dugouts and other likely places were bombed. Mopping up Platoons of all Coys. reported mopping up completed & rejoined their Coys. about 10 minutes after objective had been reached.

Direction was easily maintained, connecting files between head of Column being of assistance besides direction being maintained from left Flank 4th. Bde. The Bn. guiding section was also of assistance.

Consolidation was not difficult, digging was easy though wet & not much trouble was caused by enemy shelling, M.G.'s, or snipers.

The Bn. dug in by establishing a series of posts which were afterwards connected up making almost a continuous trench of an average depth of 6 ft sandbags being used for making firesteps.

Strong Posts were constructed one on each flank, Left flank being covered by 3 Vickers, 2 T.M.'s, Right Flank by 1 T.M.

Retaliation on front line was not heavy until about an hour & a half after ZERO when RED LINE and area behind was fired on continuously by 5.9" and 4.2" and indirect M.G. Fire. Snipers & M.G. Fire by this time had become very consistent and were causing a great deal of trouble to Front Line and Support Line.

(2).

Appendix

As this Battalion was holding RED LINE nothing very definite can be said, although counter attacks were made on both flanks and S.O.S. Signals being sent up. Our artillery response was almost immediate.

Although effect of M.G. Barrage could not be observed the barrage was very thick, well maintained, and sounded good.

All communications from front line to rear were done by runner, it being not practicable to use & maintain telephonic communication.

Visual work was attempted but owing to no suitable cover it was impossible to work through from front line.

Communication to aeroplane ~~from~~ from front line was done by lighting RED FLARES, 30 minutes after objective had been gained.

From Battalion H.Qrs. to Bde. the communication was mostly maintained by telephone, runners being used on special occasions.

Two messages were despatched from same place & time to same destination, one by pigeon and one by telephone. Phone message arrived 2 minutes before pigeon. This was the only message sent by Pigeon.

R.A.P. was established really too far away from the objective but owing to lack of suitable accommodation this was unavoidable, consequently long carries were necessary making evacuation of wounded slow & giving much extra work to Regimental Stretcher Bearers..

It is thought that an improvement in the medical arrangements would have been an addition of bearers from a Field Ambulance.

The Battalion was relieved by Coys. from Battalions of 49th. & 51st. on morning of 27th. September 1917, relief being completed by 5.50 a.m.

The 50th. Bn. then moving to old front line, being relieved from there by 45th. Bn. at 10 p.m. on 27th. Sept. 1917.

Counter attack was attempted by enemy at 6.45 p.m. on this night. Attack was evidently made on a broad frontage, S.O.S. Signals going up from our two Flanks.

No S.O.S. was fired from the Bde. Frontage, and enemy was not seen on our front.

Our artillery S.O.S. Barrage was most intense and presumably attack did not develop but was dispersed by artillery.

Total casualties for operations:-

4 Officers.
174 Other Ranks.

KILLED.

35 Other Ranks.

WOUNDED.

4 Officers.
139 Other Ranks.

28/9/17.

J. M. Coutit
Temp. Commanding 50th. Battalion.

Major.