

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

Infantry

Item number: 23/72/19

Title: 55th Infantry Battalion

September 1917



AWM4-23/72/19

263

65TH BATTALION
A.I.F.
No. _____
Date _____

Army Form C. 2118.

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
LYNDAE	1.9.17		Training - <u>Am route march.</u> <u>U</u>	
	2.9.17		Sunday - Church parades. At night enemy aeroplanes dropped a number of bombs in the vicinity of the village. No casualties <u>U</u>	
	3.9.17		Training under Coy arrangements. Platoon & Coy offensive action <u>U</u>	
	4.9.17		" during morning. Battalion competitions held during afternoon. The Divisional Commander & staff visited the sports and expressed their appreciation of the high standard of the work done by the Am <u>U</u>	
	5.9.17		Training in Company offensive action <u>U</u>	
	6.9.17		" " " " " <u>U</u>	
	7.9.17		Battalion outpost scheme <u>U</u>	
	8.9.17		" " " " " <u>U</u>	
	9.9.17		Sunday - Church parades for all demonstrations <u>U</u>	
	10.9.17		Battalion offensive action <u>U</u>	
	11.9.17		Training Platoon & Coy offensive action <u>U</u>	
	12.9.17		" Rehearsal of Brigade attack to be carried out in presence of Army Commander. <u>U</u>	
	13.9.17		Battalion offensive action <u>U</u>	
	14.9.17		Specialist training under Coy arrangements <u>U</u>	
	15.9.17		Training in offensive action - Brigade attack scheme <u>U</u>	
	16.9.17		Sunday - Church parades for all demonstrations <u>U</u>	

WAR DIARY

OR

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
LYN DIE	17.9.17		Battalion moved from present area to STEENVOORDE area by march route arriving at billets about 3.45 pm. <u>Pr</u> Order No 73 (Appendix A.) <u>ll</u>	Appendix A
STEENVOORDE	18.9.17		Battalion moved to 1st Anzac Corp forward area at RENINGHELST <u>vide Pr</u> Order No 73 (Appendix A) by march route arriving at billets at 12.30 pm <u>ll</u>	
RENINGHELST	19.9.17		Specialist Training <u>ll</u>	
	20.9.17		Reserve Brigade to 2nd Aust Division, standing by ready to move when required. <u>ll</u>	
	21.9.17		Battalion moved from present area at 5.30 pm by march route to No 3 Staging Camp CHAU SEGARD Area (Ref Sheet 28 Ed 3. H 300) arriving at 9 pm. During the march enemy aeroplanes were active overhead but were finally dispersed by our anti-aircraft and machine guns. <u>ll</u>	
CHAU SEGARD II	22.9.17		Battalion relieved 1st and 2nd <u>Prs</u> A.I.F. in front line <u>vide</u> Order No 74 (Appendix B). Relief complete by 8.30 pm without any casualties <u>ll</u>	Appendix B
	23.9.17		<u>Pr</u> in front line heavy shelling during morning. Casualties at 5 am 2 killed 16 wounded. At night "D" Coy less 100 men on detached duty, withdrew to HALFWAY HOUSE Ref Sheet 28, I. 17. 4., Bn HQ, GLENCORSE WOOD.	

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80TH BATTALION,
A.I.F.
No.....
Date.....

Army Form C. 2118.

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
GLENCORSE WOOD II Ref Sheet 28 1/40000 BELGIUM part of FRANCE J. 14, 2 & d.	24.9.17		Battalion still holding front line, disposition report attached (Appendix B) Casualties at 5 am 6 killed 17 wounded. At night the bn was relieved by the 54 th Bn A.I.F. relief complete at . When relieved the bn proceeded to HALFWAY HOUSE (Sheet 28 I. 16 d.) and occupied a series of deep dugouts. On their arrival the bn was provided with hot food sent from Detail Camp at CAFE BELGE in forefront of trenches. <u>W</u>	Appendix B
HALFWAY HOUSE Sheet 28 1/40000 I. 16. d.	25.9.17		Battalion resting and preparing for offensive action. All men are in high spirits and eagerly awaiting for a chance to get to close quarters with the enemy. <u>W</u>	
POLYGON WOOD II Sheet 28 1/40000 J. 10. a.	26.9.17		Bn moved from HALFWAY HOUSE at 12.15 am and proceeded to place of assembly for attack on POLYGON WOOD. For detailed account of operation see report attached (Appendix C)	" C
	27.9.17		Battalion Operation order attached (Appendix D) <u>W</u> The holding ground captured yesterday, enemy has massed for counter attack several times but has been cut up by our artillery barrage & machine guns finally snipers occupying pill boxes in front of line have inflicted a number of casualties amongst our troops.	" D " E
	28.9.17		Snipers occupying pill boxes in front of line have inflicted a number of casualties amongst our troops.	

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
POLYGONE WOOD Sheet 128/40000 J103	29.9.17		Battalion still holding line, Pns H.O. situated at J.10.26.9. (Sheet 28) in enemy dugout built into the butte. Maps showing disposition attached (appendix <u>F</u>) <u>at</u>	Appendix <u>F</u>
	30.9.17		Planning day arrangements made for relief at night. Enemy quiet throughout the day excepting snipers who caused a number of casualties. The Battalion was relieved at night by the 30th Pns Manchester Regt. relief complete by 9.30 pm without any casualties. When relieved the Pns proceeded to rest camp situated at H 22.C.9.1. (Sheet 28) where hot food awaited all ranks. Throughout the night hostile aeroplanes dropped bombs in the vicinity of the camp, but without causing any casualties to this unit.	
			Appendix 'G' Shows Strength Returns for the month	

263 55th AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY BATTALION ORDER No 73.
-----000-----

Ref Maps:- France,
27, 28, & 36A.

Appendix A
16.9.17.

-
1. The 1st Aust. Inf. Brigade will move from its present area to the STEEN-VOORDE Area on 17th inst, and thence to the I ANZAC Corps Forward Area on 18th inst.
 2. The 55th Battalion will move from its present billets at LYNDE on morning of 17th inst., passing cross-roads at U.25.b.2.5. at 8.45 a.m., thence via U.22.d.50.95--LONGUE CROIX--KOCRTENLOOP--St SYLVESTRE--CAPPEL--to the new area.
Route and times for 18th inst will be advised later.
 3. Order of Move will be as follows:-
 - "A" Company.
 - "B" Company.
 - "C" Company.
 - "D" Company.
 - H.Q. Sigs & H.Q. Personnel.
 - A.M.C.
 - Transport.

Dress:- Marching Order; felt hats will be worn.
The following distances will be maintained on the march:-
From BLARINGHEM Area to STEENVOORDE Area.
200 yards between Battalions.
100 yards between Companies.
From STEENVOORDE Area to FORWARD Area.
500 yards between Battalions, & other units.
200 yards between Transport & other troops.
100 yards between Companies.

If the column is halted owing to hostile aircraft being sighted, all ranks will remain steady at the side of the road and are NOT TO LOOK UP.
 4. Blankets will be rolled in burlles of 10 and conveyed by Motor Transport. They will be carried to R.Q.M.'s Store by 7.00 a.m., excepting from "A" & "B" Coys, which companies blankets will be picked up by limber at Coy Q. M.S.'s Store at 6.30 a.m.
Officers' baggage to be at R.Q.M.'s Store by 7.00 a.m. That from "A" & "B" Companies will be picked up by limber at 6.30 a.m.
Limbers for Company Lewis Guns & Stores will be sent to Coy Q.M.S.'s Stores not later than 6.30 a.m. to-morrow--if possible to-night.
A.M.C. Cart will report at 7 a.m.; Officers' Mess Cart at 7.30 a.m.
 5. An advance party as hereunder will assemble at B.O.R. at 5.30 a.m. on 17th inst. and again on 18th inst:-
Lieut R.S. MORRIS.
1 N.C.O. per company.
"A" & "B" Coy's N.C.O.'s will ride the bicycles held by those Companies.
Lieut Morris & "C" & "D" Coy's N.C.O.'s will be supplied with bicycles by the Sig. Officer. 24 hours rations will be carried.
 6. A rear party as hereunder will remain behind to clean up billets when vacated:-
1 N.C.O. and 4 men per company.
2/Lieut J.T. TARN will be in charge of this party and will inspect all billets before leaving. This party will assemble at B.O.R. after completion of work..not later than 9.45 a.m...and will move to cross-roads at U.19.a.7.2, where the Brigade rear party, under an officer of 56th Bn., assembles at 10.30 a.m.
 7. All billets and horse lines must be thoroughly cleaned and left in a sanitary condition. Certificates to this effect to be sent to B.O.R. by 7.30 a.m. on 17th inst. All latrines and refuse pits are to be filled in, and all foul ground distinctly marked with a notice board.

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Appendix A

55th Bn. Order No 70. (2)

- 8. The greatest care must be taken that all stables or old horse standings are thoroughly disinfected. Mange has been very prevalent in this area.
- 9. Transport Officer will arrange to move Cookers from Company billets at 7.45 a.m.
- 10. Watches will be synchronised through B.O.R. at 7p.m. to-night.
- 11. Battalion Orderly Room will close at LYNDE at 8 a.m. on 17th inst., and re-open in new area (STEENVOORDE) at 2 p.m. It will close at STEENVOORDE Area at 8 a.m. on 18th inst., and re-open in FORWARD Area (near Reninghelst) at 12 noon same day.
- 12. ACKNOWLEDGE.

[Handwritten signature]

Captain.,
Adjutant 55th Battalion, A.I.F.

- Issued at 1.45 p.m. by runner to:-
- C.O. 55th Battalion. 1.
 - O.C. "A" Company. 2.
 - O.C. "B" Company. 3.
 - O.C. "C" Company. 4.
 - O.C. "D" Company. 5.
 - Signal Officer. 6.
 - Transport Officer. 7.
 - R.Q.M. 8.
 - War Diary. 9 to 11.
 - File. 12.
 - Lieut R.S.Morris. 13.
 - 2/Lieut.J.T.Tarn. 14.

APPENDIX:- Instructions for Parade..17.9.17.

The Battalion will parade under Company arrangements and will move from billets in time to reach the starting point (cross-roads at U.25.b.2.5. at 8.35 a.m.
 H.Q. Personnel will parade under the Pioneer Sergt at rear of Church at 8 a.m.

Routes to the starting point will be as follows:-
 H.Q., "C" & "D" Coys, & Transport..Ebbingham Road to road junction at B.6.b.6.4., thence along road running N.E. to U.25.b.2.5. These units will form up in the order laid down in para 3 with head of ~~XXXX~~ "C" Coy at the cross-roads.
 "A" and "B" Companies...via road running N.W. from U.26.c.3.2 to U.25.b.2.5. These units will halt with head of "A" Coy at the cross roads.

The Battalion will be in column of route after moving off from the starting point.

The 53rd Battalion will precede this Battalion from the Starting point, and should therefore be given preference if met en route to the starting point.

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Appendix B

9

SECRET.

55th AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY BATTALION ORDER No 74.

Copy No.

-----000-----

Ref Maps:- France sheet 28.
Local sheet, Polygon Wood.

22.8.17.

1. The 14th Australian Infantry Brigade will relieve the 1st Australian Infantry Brigade in the left sector on the night of 22/23rd inst. The 55th Battalion will take over the front line sector J.9.d.25.75 to J.9.b.25.75. One Company of 55th Battalion will be on our right from J.9.d.25.75 to J.9.d.2.0.

2. The Battalion will parade at about 5 p.m. to-day and move to HOOGE where 1 guide per platoon will be waiting from 7 p.m. From the commencement of the move and until further orders the Battalion will move in file and the following distances will be maintained:-
200 yards between companies.
50 yards between platoons.

3. Dress :- Fighting order, waterproof sheets will be carried. The following will be carried by each man:-
2 Sandbags.
2 Bombs.
150 Rounds at least of S.A.A.
2 days ordinary rations.
1 days iron ration.

Certain officers will carry C.O.C. signals, and very lights. All water bottles must be filled before moving off.

4. The distribution of Companies will be as follows:-
"A" Coy (left) and "C" Coy (right) in Front Line.
Inter-company boundary will be pointed out by guides.
3 Platoons of "B" Coy. in support.
"D" Coy and 1 platoon of "B" Coy in reserve.
Support and reserve companies will be guided to their positions by the guides.
Battalion Headquarters will be at J.14.b.2.9.

5. When relief is complete and companies are in communication with units on their flanks, the following message will be sent.. "Water arrived O.K."

6. Battalion Orderly Room will remain in the present area.

Issued at 3.40 p.m. by runner to:-

[Signature] Captain,
Adjutant 55th Battalion, AIF.

- C.O. 55th Battalion. 1.
- O.C. "A" Company. 2.
- O.C. "B" Company. 3.
- O.C. "C" Company. 4.
- O.C. "D" Company. 5.
- Signal Officer. 6.
- Int. Officer. 7.
- War Diary. 8 to 10.
- File. 11.

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REPORT ON OPERATIONS AGAINST THE ENEMY BETWEEN 22.9.17--30.9.17.

At 8.30 on 22nd Sept. the 55th Battalion relieved the 1st and 2nd. Battalions in Glencorse Wood and the advanced trenches in J.9.d. The relief was accomplished in good order and without casualties under searching artillery fire.

Reconnaissance was made of the enemy ground occupied in front.

At 9.0 p.m. on the 24th the Battalion retired to Half Way House where it rested for 24 hours.

An advance party was sent to tape out positions for jumping off. This work was well done. The boundaries of each platoon was marked by tapes. 230 yards frontage being allotted to the Battalion. The support and reserve companies being ten yards in rear of front lines.

The Battalion left the Half Way House at 11:45pm. and took up position at the jumping off point at 2.30. a.m. Excellent discipline was maintained and the Battalion moved into position without casualties.

At 3.30 am. the enemy became suspicious and opened Artillery fire on our position causing us to suffer a few casualties. The morning was very misty and it was difficult to see many yards ahead in the depressions of the ground.

Our barrage fell at zero hour (5.50.a.m.) and was carried forward perfectly and to time table throughout.

Section Commanders everywhere led their sections forward in good order in worm formations as recently trained and followed the barrage closely. The only difficulty in moving to the first objective was to hold the men in check.

Very few machine guns nests remained in the first 500 yards and these were smothered by the leading sections before they could offer resistance.

True direction was very difficult to keep owing to the intense fog and mass of men moving together. A slight drift was made along the whole line toward the left, but this eventually helped the success of the movement as the enemy had concentrated in strong posts near the Cemetery (J.4.d.). These strong points were rushed and outflanked with great dash. The defenders were only able to give one burst of fire before being compelled to surrender. On the right flank the Butte which had been prepared for defence was overpowered in a similar manner. About 30 enemy A.M.C. were taken prisoners here and these were used to carry the few of our ranks who were wounded. The area between was thoroughly mopped up.

A sniper had a posse in a tree sheltered by the Butte, who opened fire when we were reforming under our barrage. Four Lewis guns were turned on him and he was killed before he could fire a second burst.

The Battalion was excellently reformed under shelter of the barrage and moved forward on scheduled time to the second objective.

Pill Boxes and Strong Posts were more numerous as we advanced, but were everywhere taken in our stride. No serious check was given until the barrage halted.

The enemy were thoroughly demoralised and appeared glad to surrender.

The booty taken here included 11 machine guns, 5 minenwerfers, a telephone instrument of new pattern, the first sample of the new German gas mask, various maps including one shewing all enemy artillery positions, points of assembly, tracks etc. in the sector, and an oxygen generator and about 120 prisoners.

All captured documents were immediately sent back and the German machine guns brought up into position when we consolidated.

The work of consolidation was rapidly carried forward. Strong posts were dug in depth and afterwards linked by saps.

At mid-day intelligence warned us of an approaching counter attack, but the artillery broke the attack before it could threaten our position. Enemy stretcher bearers were seen later

APPENDIX *B*

2.

carrying great numbers of dead and wounded to the rear. All subsequent counter attacks were similarly dealt with. During the night enemy patrols were captured and brought in.

On the 27th we were considerably harrassed by snipers in good positions on our front but our snipers were very effective.

Enemy ^{Planes} ~~snipers~~ were numerous and active throughout, always flying low and often searched the trenches with machine gun fire but caused us little loss. Our aircraft were not quite as numerous.

Some of our guns fired short during the next three days, heavy shells dropping into support and front lines and some 18 pounders even fell on to reserve trenches. This caused about 20 casualties and much annoyance.

Advance signal communication was established almost as soon as the work of consolidation was begun and was well maintained. Rear communication throughout was slow owing to Brigade forward signalling station communicating to the rear chiefly by runners. This made connection with artillery imperfect.

A plentiful supply of rations including cooked meat and Tommy cookers arrived in the trenches within 12 hours. Rations were well maintained throughout, which greatly increased the morale of the men. Ample munitions were brought up at the same time.

The enemy artillery fire on our advanced trenches caused very few casualties.

Our Regimental A.M.C. Detail was splendidly organised. By 11:0am the R.M.O. was established in the Butte 400 yards behind the front line. An advanced post was made 200 yards in front in a pill box into which the stretcher bearers carried the wounded and gave first aid, preventing congestion in the Regimental Dressing Station.

The new form of attack proved perfectly effective and could hardly be improved.

More training in the formation and digging of strong points would be profitable

Our rifle fire was very good and accounted for any enemy moving within range.

We were relieved at 8:0 p.m. on the 30th September and moved out without suffering casualties.

Narrative of the Operations of the 55th Battalion
A.I.F. against the Enemy Defences in the vicinity
of POLYCOONE WOOD and JETTY TRENCH, on 26th September
1917 and subsequent days.

Appendix C

The task.

The attack was on a three Division front, the divisions operating being, - in order from right to left -, the 33rd Division, 5th Australian Division and 4th Australian Division. The 5th Australian Division's Objective was the line J 10.d.3.0. - Joist Farm - JETTY TRENCH, - JUBILEE TRENCH, - J.4.d.3.6. ; the boundaries of the 14th Brigade sector being the line J.9.d.25.85. - J.10.b.35.30. on the South and the line from J.9.b. 25.70., thence parallel along POLYCOONEVELD ROAD at a distance of 100 yards on the North.

The area allotted to the 55th Battalion was that between the RED line from J.10.a.88. to J.4.c.70.35., and the BLUE line from J.4.d.30. to J.4.d. 36. The 56th Battalion was on our right and the 13th Battalion of the 4th Brigade on our left.

Our task was to "leap-frog" through the 53rd Battalion whose objective was the RED line, capture the above area and consolidate on the BLUE line.

Preparation.

All ranks taking part in the attack had seen the ground to be traversed. The Battalion held the line for 48 hours before the attack and during that period the officers, who by personal reconnaissance became thoroughly acquainted with the ground in front of them, pointed out the features and points of direction to their men. Every Commander was subsequently issued with a sketch of the area and every man through his Section Commander was made thoroughly conversant with the plan of attack in so far as it effected him.

The Battalion was withdrawn from the line to HALF WAY HOUSE on the night 24th - 25th September for a day's rest prior to the attack. On the night of the 25th the Battalion moved to its point of assembly, which was clearly marked with white tapes, the approaches being similarly marked. The formation was in mass as shown on diagram. The Battalion was in position at 3-Oam. There were no casualties getting into position; this being accountable to the fact that movement was in artillery formation - small groups in single file at a distance of 50 yards.

The Attack.

Precisely at zero hour (5.50a.m.) on the morning of the 26th the artillery barrage was put down 150 yards in front of our forming up line. The noise was terrific. The line of the Barrage was perfect. It rested out in front of us like a great wall of smoke for three minutes when it commenced to move forward with the three attacking Battalions of the Brigade in close formation following closely - very closely - behind it. Immediately before that movement commenced one or two of the enemy's shells burst close to our right Company inflicting three or four casualties.

A space of four minutes after the "kick-off" saw the enemy's barrage settle down behind us. The close formation had enabled us to get clear of this barrage and even as the advance continued and the troops began to shake out very few enemy shells fell in our ranks. The Boche's barrage was a feeble response to the weight of shells which were literally ploughing up his defensive system.

The mist was very thick and the smoke a dust assisted in preventing vision for more than 15 yards. As must naturally be expected the various units became intermingled with one another. At one stage in the advance too, the troops got a little out of direction, but by the use of map and compass this was soon rectified. The 53rd Battalion reached its objective on scheduled time, and apparently with very little resistance.

* Appendix A

The stay of the barrage for a space in advance of the RED line enabled the Officers to re-organise the Battalion for the second advance. Every man knew his place and very soon each man was in it. At Zero (plus 100 minutes) the barrage increased in intensity and then commenced its forward movement, this time at the slow rate of 100 yards in eight minutes.

The 55th Battalion then moved forward simultaneously with the 56th Battalion on the Right. For but a short space of time beaters and worm-section formations held together, but soon the area was covered with little parties of eight and nine men deployed each looking for its shell-hole full or pill box full of Boche and they found them too; but the cringing, camarading Hun was not willing to fight, everywhere surrendering rapidly. Indeed he did not get much opportunity to show resistance because our men pounced on him immediately the barrage had passed over him. Detachments were left behind to clear each pill-box and the parties of 30 and 40 from these strongholds in the vicinity of J.4.d.05.20. and 20.10. were quickly escorted to the rear.

The BLUE Line was reached at 8:30am, 18 pounders smoke shells making the location certain for anyone in doubt. The troops began to dig in immediately and steps were taken to establish connection with the flanking units. This was hampered by machine gun fire from enemy strong holds in ~~the~~ ~~advance~~ of each flank. These were dealt with by fighting patrols. When attacked the one on the left, at about J.4.d.50.45 surrendered immediately and we captured here 2 machine guns and over 20 prisoners. A party of one Officer, one Sergeant and two others attacked the stronghold on the right, at about J. 10.b.5.8., which resisted more than any other ~~px~~ point. With the aid of bombs the crew of the machine gun was put out of action and over 30 prisoners taken as well as the machine gun. Touch was gained with both flanks at 8:50am. At the time the Objective was reached the Battalion had only suffered about 7% casualties and the majority of wounds were slight. There were only three or four casualties from our own barrage.

Under the protection of our barrage the work of consolidation was continued and when the barrage died down at 11:17 am we had established a fairly formidable system of trenches which ~~was~~ eventually deepened and connected became the defence system shewn on the attached sketch. We were well prepared therefore for the attempted counter attacks which followed.

At about 4:0pm the enemy was observed massing, moving from pillbox to pillbox, but the attack was never developed. At about 7:0pm however hundreds of the enemy were seen coming across the sky-line in small groups and concentrating at several points. At 7:15pm the enemy came out in attack formations - advancing in three waves - but at the desired moment our barrage came down on the advancing enemy, and those who were not cut up by our artillery were mowed down by Lewis Gun and rifle fire. The Boche did not reach our lines at any point. There were no further attempts made. If it was his intention to counter attack at dawn on the 27th his attempt was frustrated by our barrage which went down at 5:0am.

The Battalion continued to hold the line until the night of the 30th September / 1st October when we were relieved by the 20th Manchesters.

The total casualties numbered , Officers - wounded 7, shell shock 1 ; Other Ranks, Killed 40, wounded 137.

Communication.

Communication, in so far as the Battalion system of communication is concerned, was good. Unfortunately, the cable head was destroyed by shell fire, with the result that the Brigade could not connect with their forward station on

3.

POLYGOON RACECOURSE by line, consequently Brigade communication was for the most part by runner and power buzzer.

By 7:15 am the Battalion signaller had laid a line connecting the BUTTE with Brigade forward station, and at 11:30 am lines were through to the support companies, lateral lines being laid to front line companies shortly afterwards. Owing to heavy casualties amongst the Signal Sections of the other attacking units, the Signal Office set up by this Battalion was utilised also by the 53rd and 56th Battalions. Throughout the operation Battalion communication by phone was supplemented by lamp, power buzzer and pigeon service.

Rations and Supplies.

The "Q" branch of the Battalion was a big factor in the success of the operations and the maintenance of the good health and spirits of the men during the consolidation of the position. Rations and water throughout were plentiful and the supply of ammunition etc., to the front line was always maintained by reason of the good system of Brigade, Battalion and Company dumps. This operation proved unfortunately that the Divisional Pack transport Troop method of transport is not a success. It would be far better if the control of transport is kept under Battalion arrangements. There was a good supply of "Tommy Cookers" and solidified paraffin, which enabled the men to heat up the food cooked for them at the Details Camp and supplied to them in the line.

Medical.

The H.A.P. was established at Battalion Head quarters at J.S.a. 46.05 and moved forward to BUTTE at 10:0am 26th September. The wounded were all cleared by 10:0am on the 27th.

FUTURE TRAINING.

From the experiences of this Battalion during these operations, I make the following remarks and suggestions for future training:-

The general principles for the training for offensive action as practised by this Brigade during the few weeks previous to the attack still hold good, but there are certain points of detail requiring close attention.

Some of these points are,-

1. Troops detailed to support and reserve positions should not be allowed to push their way through to the front. The men should be told that on their maintaining their place in the formation depends the success or failure of the attack.
2. Every individual should know every detail of the plan of operations in so far as it affects him, and he should be given every possible opportunity of seeing the ground to be traversed and have pointed out to him the various points of direction.
3. All commanders, even to the Junior Section Commanders, should be issued with a plan of the area to be captured and the section commander as well as the Officers should explain his intention to the men under his command.
4. In order to ensure that proper direction is maintained it is important that,
 - (a) All officers and as many N.C.Os. as possible are in possession of a compass and the bearing of direction.
 - (b) Fullest advantage should be taken of dark nights and foggy mornings to practice the advance under cover of a barrage, represented by lights, maintaining direction by compass. These would also be good opportunities to train the men to know their position, whether in front line or support, commencing from the massed formation; and as the advance progresses gradually shaking out into the normal formation for the attack.
 - (5) The most advanced troops must keep close to the barrage and strong points must be rushed immediately the barrage has passed over.

It is quite safe to allow the advanced troops - the line of beaters - to advance almost under the bursts of shrapnel

6. At least 200 rounds S.A.A. should be carried on the man.
7. A reserve of stretcher bearers equal in strength to those normally trained should always be in training.
8. There was little use made of bombs and rifle grenades except to encourage the Boche out of his deep dug-outs; but it is important that they should be carried.
9. Infantry should receive more instruction in the construction of strong points and trenches under the supervision of the Engineers.

CAPTURES.

The following were the captures made by the Battalion,-

About 150 prisoners, including 7 Officers.

- 11 Machine Guns Maxim '08.
- 1 Machine Gun Maxim '08/15.
- 1 Oxygen Generator.
- 1 Telephone Receiver.
- 1 Telephone Instrument.
- 1 Latest pattern Gas Respirator.
- 4 Creanatenwefers.
- 1 Pineapple Thrower.

Also a large quantity of papers, documents, maps etc., including one map shewing the enemy's artillery dispositions and Infantry assembly points, approaches, tracks, etc., and a pamphlet shewing all the enemy's signal code calls.

Appendix "A"

Appendix "A"

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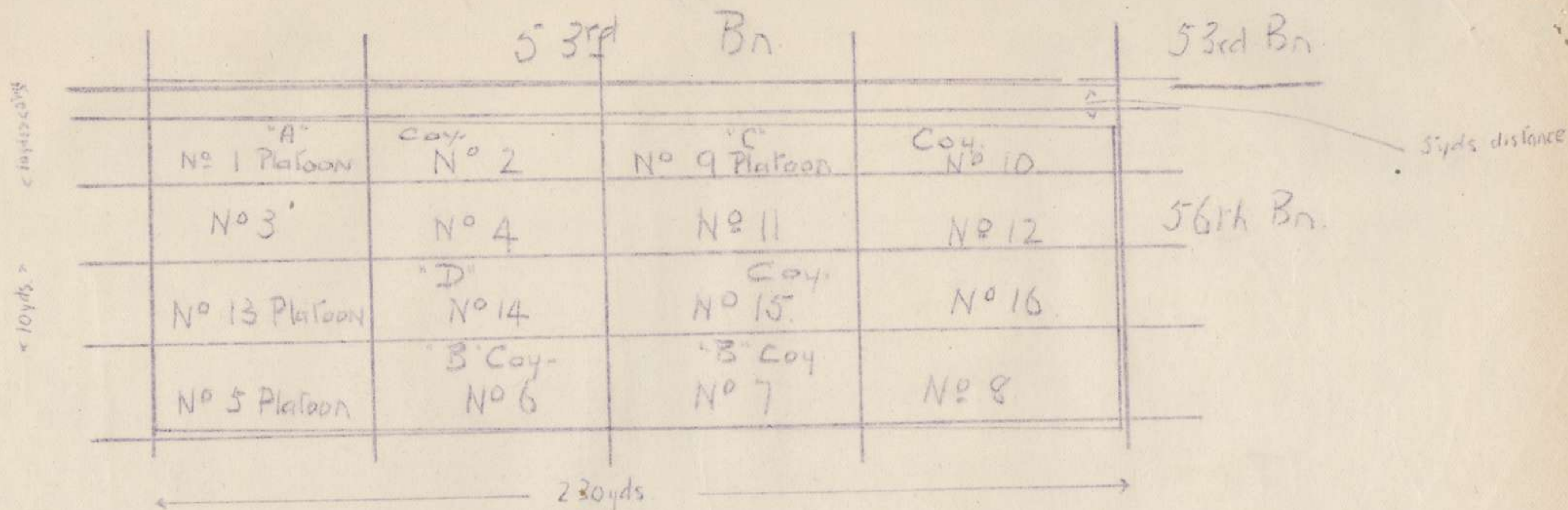


DIAGRAM shewing 55th Bn. in MASS FORMATION on
the Forming-Up Line, as marked by White Tapes.

Appendix "A"

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SECRET.

Appendix D

Copy No. 7....

55th AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY BATTALION ORDER No 75.

Ref/Maps:-

WESTHOEK.1/10,000.
Special Map Issued.

25.9.17.

1. INTENTION. The 5th Australian Division is to attack the enemy positions opposite the present front. The 14th Aust. Inf. Bde will attack between the lines J.9.d.25.85 and J.10.b.35.30 on the south, and the line from J.9.b.25.70 thence parallel along POLYGONVELD Road at a distance of 100 yards on the north. The line to be attacked and consolidated by the 5th Aust. Div. is J.10.d.3.0. - JOIST FARM - JETTY TRENCH - JUBILEE TRENCH - J.4.d.3.6.

2. OBJECTIVE. The objective of the 14th Aust. Inf. Bde will be the BLUE Line shown on sketch already issued, i.e. J.10.b.35.30. - JETTY TRENCH - JUBILEE TRENCH - J.4.d.3.6. The latter point will be the junction with the 4th Aust. Division.

3. DETAILED PLAN. (a) (i) The attack of the 14th Inf Bde will be carried out by the 53rd, 55th, and 56th Battalions, the objective of the 55th Battalion being as follows:-
BLUE Line J.4.d.3.0. - J.4.d.3.6.
The 55th Battalion will follow the 53rd Battalion in the attack, which Battalion is taking the RED Line J.10.a.70.15 - J.10.a.8.8, - ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ - J.4.c.70.35. Includes the BUTTE. The 56th Battalion's objective will be the BLUE Line on the right of the 55th Battalion's. The 4th Aust. Div. will be on the left of the 55th Battalion.
(ii) Consolidation to take place on the BLUE Line under the protection of the barrage. Outposts will be pushed out when the barrage subsequently moves forward.
(iii) The final protective barrage ceases at Zero plus 327 minutes., when patrols must be pushed out 300 yards beyond outpost line. The location of these posts to be sent back at once to allow for the adjustment of the S.O.S. barrage.

* Attached to Appendix C to War Diary

(b) The 55th Battalion will be guided to its positions at the point of assembly, where tapes are being laid. Dispositions of companies to be as shown in Appendix 1* attached.
(c) Dress and equipment will be as shown in Appendix 2 attached.

4. CONSOLIDATION. Consolidation is to be carried out on the BLUE Line in accordance with instructions already given to Company Commanders.

5. LIASION. Contact aeroplanes will be in the air at about:-
Zero plus 55 mins...RED LINE.
Zero plus 152 mins..BLUE LINE.
Leading infantry will be ready to light flares and wave Watson Fans when the plane signals with KLAXON Horn or VERY Light. Contact planes will carry a black streamer on rear edge of left wing.

6. SIGNAL COMMUNICATION. The Battalion Signal Officer will arrange for necessary communication during and after the attack and advise Company Commanders of his plans.

7. MEDICAL ARRANGEMENTS. R.M.O. will make necessary arrangements for evacuation of wounded. 4 additional stretcher bearers per company will be appointed for duty before moving from

(2)

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our present location.

- 8. REPORTS. Battalion Headquarters will be established at strong-point J.9.a.25.05. until the BLUE LINE is consolidated when it will move forward to the vicinity of the BUTTE. All reports will be sent to Battalion Headquarters in accordance with instructions already issued.
- 9. TIME. Watches will be synchronised by runner from Battalion Headquarters before leaving the present location, and also 2 hours before zero.
- 10. ZERO. Zero hour will be notified later.
- 11. ARTILLERY. Barrage Map has been issued to Company Commanders and all details in connection therewith communicated verbally to-day.
- 12. ACKNOWLEDGE and destroy this order before moving forward to the line.

N. Pinkstone

Captain.,
Adjutant 55th Battalion, AIF.

Issued at 2 p.m. to:

C.O. 55th Bn.	1.
O.C. "A" Coy.	2.
O.C. "B" Coy.	3.
O.C. "C" Coy.	4.
O.C. "D" Coy.	5.
Sig. Officer.	6.
War Diary.	7 to 9.
File	10.

Copy to:

53rd Battalion.	11.
56th Battalion.	12.

Dress:- Fighting order.
Haversacks will contain the following:-
(1) Unexpired portion of the days ration.
(2) Iron ration.
(3) Pair of socks.
(4) Mess tin.

Waterbottles to be filled.

Waterproof sheets will be carried in haversacks.

Equipment:- Each man will carry:-
(1) 120 rounds of S.A.A. at least, *and an extra bandolier*
(2) 2 sandbags.
(3) 2 Bombs.
(4) Box respirator.
(5) Field dressing.
~~***~~

S.O.S. Rockets, Very Lights, Ground Flares, will be carried by certain officers and other ranks as already detailed.

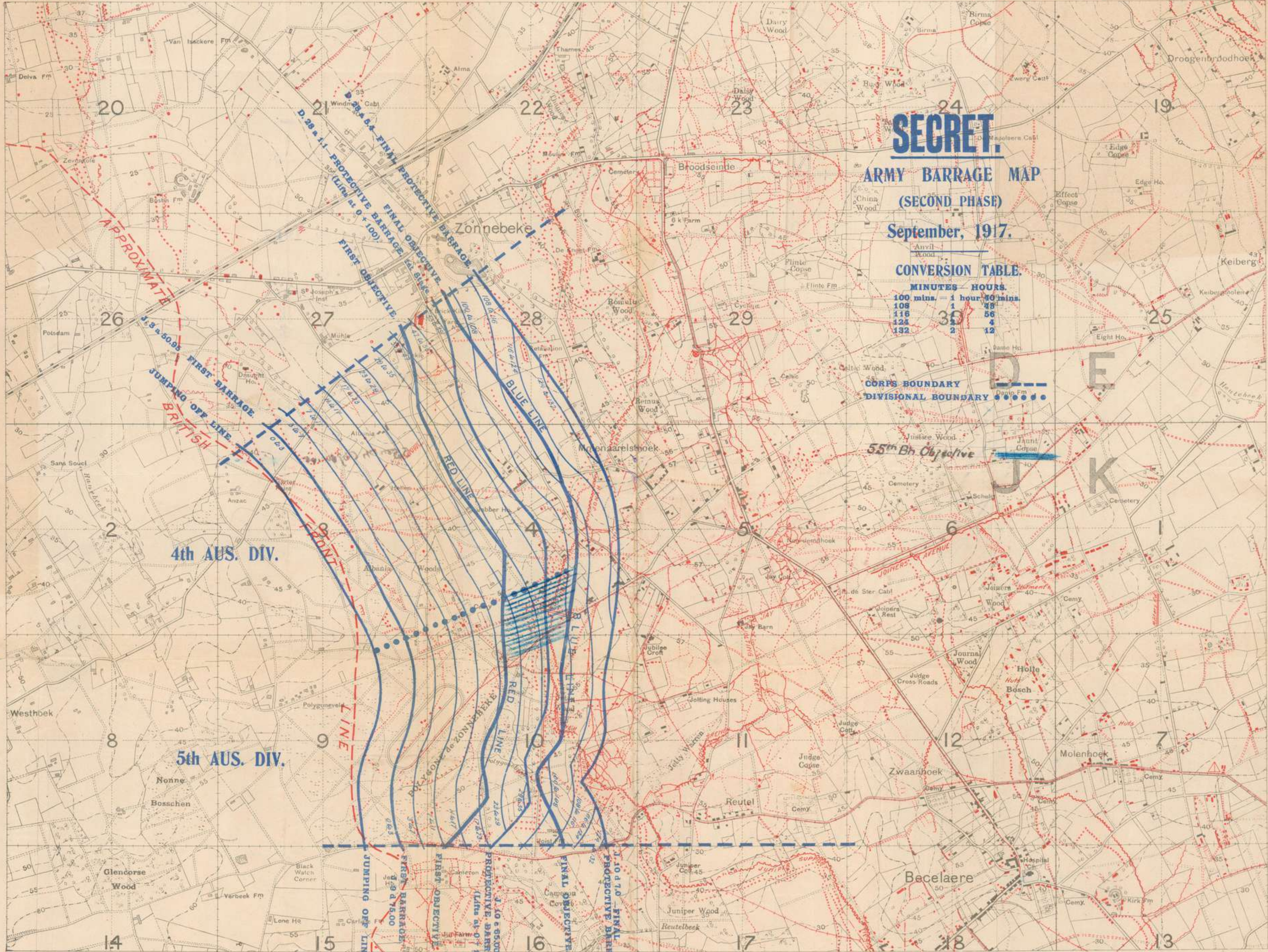
At least 2 shovels per ~~company~~ section will be carried.

EDITION 1.A

BECELAERE

German Trenches corrected to 21-9-17.

Part of Sheet 28.



SECRET.

ARMY BARRAGE MAP

(SECOND PHASE)

September, 1917.

CONVERSION TABLE

MINUTES	HOURS
100 mins	1 hour 40 mins
108	1 48
116	1 56
124	2 04
132	2 12

CORPS BOUNDARY
 DIVISIONAL BOUNDARY

55th Bn Objective

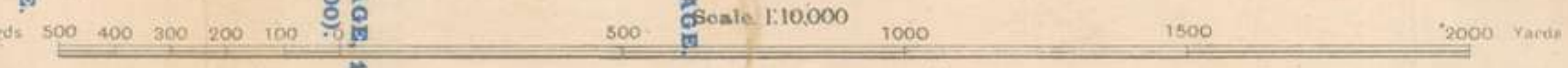
4th AUS. DIV.

5th AUS. DIV.

F.O. OF 125 21 23 1140 23-9-17.

Battery Positions (possible strong points)
 Organised Shell Holes

Probably Timber or Camouflage
 Probably Concrete



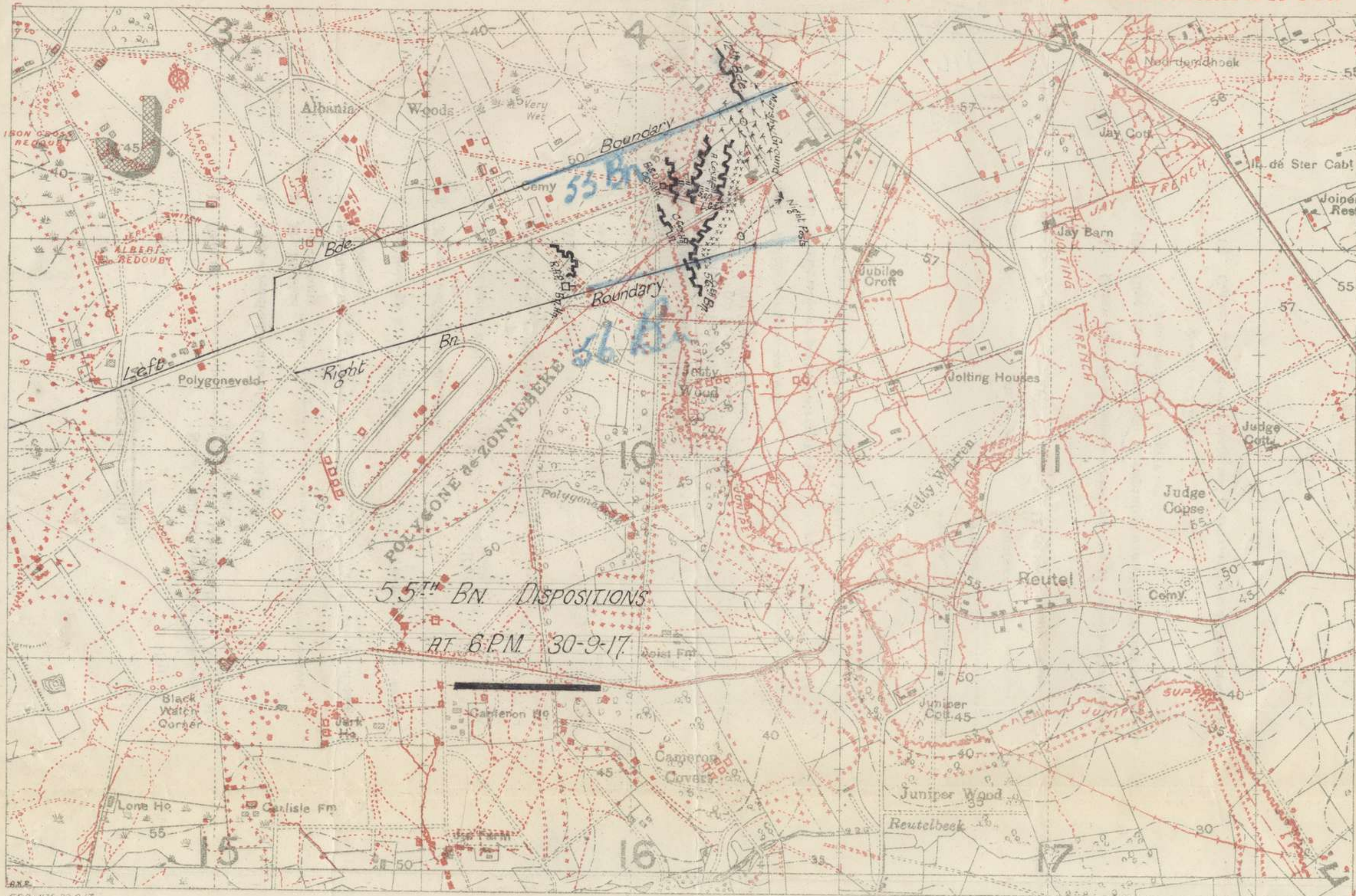
Scale 1:10,000

Nº 8

MESSAGE MAP.

Appendix F

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



APPENDIX F

F.S. Ch. 1135, 22-9-17.

Scale 1:10,000

Nº 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 ... L
 - Strong Point probably occupied ... ⊗
- NOTE.—Air Photographs show practically no signs of wire anywhere in this area. C.D.Os. = Concrete Dug-outs.

MESSAGE FORM.

To:—

No.

- Note:—Either give Map Reference or mark your position by a 'X' on the Map on back.
1. I am at.....
 2. I have reached limits of my Objective.
 3. My Platoon is at..... and is consolidating.
Company
 4. My Platoon is at..... and has consolidated.
Company
 5. Am held up by (a) M.G. at..... (Place where you are).
(b) Wire
 6. Enemy holding strong point.....
 7. I am in touch with..... on Right at.....
Left.
 8. I am not in touch with..... on Right.
Left.
 9. Am shelled from.....
 10. Am in need of —
 11. Counter Attack forming at.....
 12. Hostile (a) Battery } active at.....
(b) Machine Gun }
(c) Trench Mortar }
 13. Reinforcements wanted at.....
 14. I estimate my present strength at..... rifles.
 15. Add any other useful information here:—

595
716
121
25

Time..... m.
Date..... 1917.

Name.....
Platoon.....
Company.....
Battalion.....

- (A). Carry no maps or papers which may be of value to the Enemy.
- (B). Give no information if captured, except the following, which you are bound to give:—
Name and Rank.
- (C). Collect all captured maps and papers and send them in at once.

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Appendix G

55TH BATTALION.

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Date	Strength		Reinforcements Joined.		Killed.		Wounded.		Missing.		Sick	
	Off	O/R.	Off	O/R.	Off	O/R.	Off	O/R.	Off	O/R.	Off	O/R.
Sept. 1917												
1 st	43	1023	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2 nd	43	1028	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3
3 rd	43	1028	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4 th	45	1025	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5 th	45	1024	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
6 th	45	1022	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7 th	45	1023	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
8 th	46	1035	-	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
9 th	46	1032	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
10 th	46	1032	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
11 th	46	1032	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
12 th	46	1032	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
13 th	46	1033	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
14 th	46	1030	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
15 th	46	1030	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
16 th	46	1027	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
17 th	45	1026	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
18 th	45	1026	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
19 th	45	1024	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
20 th	45	1025	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
21 st	46	1034	-	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
22 nd	46	1052	-	22	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
23 rd	46	1052	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
24 th	44	1014	-	-	-	9	2	37	-	-	-	-
25 th	44	1012	-	-	-	-	8	-	-	-	-	8
26 th	44	1009	-	-	-	40	8	137	-	-	-	-
27 th	40	968	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
28 th	37	816	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
29 th	37	814	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
30 th	37	827	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6