

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

Machine Guns

**Item number:** 24/21/15

**Title:** 21st Australian Machine Gun  
Company

April 1918



AWM4-24/21/15

18,000-12/1 -8723

**CONFIDENTIAL.**

ORIGINAL.  
DUPLICATE.  
TRIPLICATE.

Australian Imperial Force.

**WAR DIARY**

OF

*21<sup>ST</sup> Aust Machine Gun Coy.*

FOR

*April* 1918.

Signature of Officer compiling

*L. G. Sewell  
Capt  
2nd Aust MG Coy*

Signature of Officer Commanding

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118.

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or  
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
"LEG COPSE"	WYTSCHAETE	1.4.18	Nothing special to note. Coy's present strength 11 Off's & 159 OR's.	
(1/10.000)				
..	2.4.18	1.30 AM	At 1.30 AM a party from 8 <sup>th</sup> Aust Bn. consisting of 4 officers and 50 O.R's, raided WHIZ FINE. Six of our M.G's, viz. R18, R19, R20, S12, S13 & S14 cooperated by firing on selected points. At zero hour a special R.F. <sup>COY</sup> party projected gas against the enemy positions at POLL HOUSE FLY, WABP & PILLEGREMS FMS. The guns were laid on fresh S.O.S. lines	
..	3.4.18		During night of 1/2 <sup>nd</sup> 5000 rounds were spent in harassing fire on WABP FM, MIDGE FM, & FLY BLDS and enemy tracks. Major French & two officers of 21 <sup>st</sup> MG Bn. visited LEG COPSE - reference relief, but eight guns in battery positions forward of HILL 60 were relieved tonight and returned to BAROSSA CAMP. Lt Phelan attached from 2 <sup>nd</sup> Aust MG Coy	
..	4.4.18		All arrangements for relief complete by noon. 5000 rounds expended on usual targets during night. During night of 4/5 <sup>th</sup> our 8 guns forward of WYTSCHAETE were relieved by 21 <sup>st</sup> MG Bn. All men were back at BAROSSA CAMP (near LA CLYTTE) by 3 AM. (5 <sup>th</sup> ) Two OR's wounded (gas). No 7097 Pte Wilson R. & No 587. Pte Ounstan A.	
BAROSSA CAMP (near LA CLYTTE)	5.4.18	11 AM	Transport moved out at 11 AM for CAESTRE. Remainder of Coy marched out at 1.15 PM for LOCHE.	

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BRASSA CAMP (NR LA CLYTER)	5.4.18		where they enbussed for CHESTRE which place was reached at about 4 p.m. all men were billeted in fair billets	
CHESTRE	6.4.18		Entrained at CHESTRE during morning. Train left at 11.20 a.m. and proceeded via CALAIS & ABBEVILLE to AMIENS	
AMIENS. (REG. AMIENS) 1/100.000	7.4.18	1. AM	Arrived at ST. ROCH. Station (AMIENS) and proceeded by march route to VAUX EN ARMIENNOIS, arriving at 6 a.m. Men were billeted in a good hut & we had covered stabling for transport animals. During the afternoon all gun gear was cleaned & replaced on timbers. Coy's present strength 11 offs & 158 ORs.	
VAUX-EN ARMIENNOIS	8.4.18		Practised open work without guns during morning, with special reference to allocation of duties, & in afternoon rapid action from timbers.	
"	9.4.18		During morning, practised bringing guns into position in a surker road and found much had to be burnt. Afternoon had an intercompany competition in packing & unpacking timbers. At 3pm OC's & S.I.C's went out with CO. to carry out a tactical scheme. 36 ORs attacked from 1st Aust Pen Bn.	
"	10.4.18	9 am	OC's & S.I.C's with C.O. went to complete tactical scheme started yesterday. Gun gear was cleaned, packed on mules and taken to quarry near village & a few rounds fired to test guns. Practised packing on mules during afternoon, 9 ORs joined Coy from 10th Aust Inf Bn. Coy's present strength 11 offs & 196 ORs	
"	11.4.18		During morning packed gear finally for moving. Inspection of Gas Helmets in afternoon.	

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AMIENS 3.	12.4.18	10.30 am	Marched out of VAUX en ARMIENNOIS arriving at bivouac next to cemetery at AMIENS at 1 PM. Just after dark enemy bombing planes were busy in our vicinity dropping several close to our lines. One of our bombing planes crashed to ground close to cemetery with result that pilot was killed and observer badly wounded.	
"	13.4.18		We went to entrain early this morning but entrainment of the division was delayed. Marched out of bivouac at 11.30 am. proceeding to St. Reck. B. Station, - Entrained without event. Train left at about 4 pm. and proceeded northwards via VIGNACOURT.	
HAZEBROUCK (SHEET 5A)	14.4.18	6.45 am	Arrived at detraining station near HONDEGHEM at 6.45 am and there received orders for O.C. to report to G.O.C. 3 <sup>rd</sup> Aust. Inf. Bde. and company to move with transport to about V.23 D. Received orders from 3 <sup>rd</sup> A. I. Bde. to form two mobile groups, each of eight guns, one at BORRE, the other at AV SOUVERAIN. but later in day, as situation was more certain G.O. located guns as follows: No 1. Sect. - D 23 B 85.60, D 24 A 28.75, D 18 D 38.20, E 13 C. 50.20. No 3. Sect. - E 9 A. 10.93, E 3 C 20.05, E 3 C. 70.20, E 3 C. 85.55. No 4. Section - W 27 C. 30.28, W 27 C. 35.32, W 27 A 75.60, W 27 A. 88.60. No 2. Sect were to relieve 4 guns of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Aust. M.G. Coy but this did not take place. All above gun positions were made before dawn on 15 <sup>th</sup> inst.	
"	15.4.18		after reconnaissance a good farm-house for C.H.Q. was found at E 7. B 05.80 and C.H.Q.	

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REF. SHEETS HAZEBROUCK SA SHEET 27 " 36A (1/40. 800)	15.4.18		was established here before 6 P.M. Rear Head Quarters remained at V. 29 C. 13. with transport lines in the vicinity Nos. 1, 3 & 4 Sections have their fighting ladders and mules close to them so as to move quickly if necessary. No. 2 Section reported to 1 <sup>st</sup> AMB Coy tonight and occupied positions forward of STRAZELLE. OC. visited 1 <sup>st</sup> and Inf Bde tonight who want guns forward of present locations. Coy's present strength 11 off & 203 ORs.	
..	16.4.18		Positions forward of Nos 3 & 4 Sects. were reconnoitred with a view to pushing guns forward.	
..	17.4.18		Very heavy shelling during morning on SEC BOIS with occasional bursts during afternoon. No 3 Sect. suffered the following casualties. NO. 723A PTE BUCHANAN L.L.F. killed, - NO. 371 CPL JONES O.W., NO. 324A PTE EYRE, G.H. & NO. 813 PTE GRACIE, J. wounded by shell fire. No 1. Section moved a gun from D 19 D. 38. 20. to E 13. A. 15. 22.	
..	18.4.18		Reconnoitred in morning positions for two guns of No 4. Section now at W 27 A. for the purpose of giving flanking fire along slope of STRAZELLE HILL should enemy attack from south. During night the two guns in question under Lt Phelan were moved forward to E 4 B 10. 30. & E 4 B 20. 40. As the gun of No 3. Section at E 3. C 70. 20 was in centre of a heavily shelled area, a new position was found at E 3 C. 40. 58. and gun moved there during the night of 18/19. At present the distribution of officers is as follows - Captain L. P. Sewell. C.C.	

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HAZEBROUCK SA	18.4.18		and Lt Martin M.C. at C.H.Q. Lieut C.D. Raymond S.I.C. Lt W Browning & Lt Ward at Rear HQs. Lieuts Watson & Wilson with No 1 Sect. Lieuts Bromley & Williams with No 2 Sect. Lt Gordon with No 3 Sect. & Lieuts Ferner & Phelan with No 4. Section.	
SHEET 27 36A				
"	19.4.18		Today No 1. Section moved complete with transport, from present locations to W 13. F. 2.8. Here to come under orders of O.C. 3 <sup>rd</sup> Aust. M.G. Coy. The left two of this section's guns were relieved by 31 <sup>st</sup> M.G. Bn and the right two were withdrawn. Relief complete by 3.30 pm. On night 19 <sup>th</sup> this section relieved 4 guns of the 33 <sup>rd</sup> M.G. Bn in Left Brigade Sub-Sector. Three ORs wounded by shell-fire. No 359 Pte Hunter R.W., No 2378 Pte Luvor R.W. & No 593 Pte Elbery C.	
"	20.4.18		During night of the 20 <sup>th</sup> the four guns of No 2. Section attached to 1 <sup>st</sup> Aust. M.G. Coy were relieved by a section of that unit and were put in position at E 3 B 58.35, E 3 B. 60.50. W 27. D 98.95. W 28. F. 08. 08. Coy strength today 11 OFF. & 198. ORs.	
"	21.4.18		Lt Bromley evacuated with a bad knee. No 3 Section was relieved by 4 guns of 31 <sup>st</sup> M.G. Bn and on relief proceeded to W 7 B 16 and reported to O.C. 3 <sup>rd</sup> Aust. M.G. Coy.	

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REF. SHEETS HAZEBROUCK SA 22 SHEET 27 36A	22.4.18	4.18.	During night 22/23. No 2 section (section) relieved following guns - two of 1st Aust. T.G. Coy at E 4 B 1.2. + E 4 B 2.4. This section came under command of 2nd Aust. T.G. Coy. On relief the above two guns of No 4 section reoccupied the position in vicinity of W 27 A. No 3. Section reported to 3rd Aust. Inf. Bde. to be a mobile section and was stationed with its pack animals at 3rd Aust. T.G. Coy at road in R 33. C.	
"	23.4.18		On night 23/24 C.H.Q. moved from SEC. BOIS. to lines of 1st Aust. T.G. Coy. at W. 7. B. 4. 5. On same night No 4 section was relieved by one section of 1st a.m.g. Coy. No 2. Section was relieved by A Section of 2nd Aust. T.G. Coy. and both moved to above location. Enemy planes were very active during night, bombing in vicinity.	
"	24.4.18		At 4 am. O.C. + Lt Fernee left to reconnoitre positions for eight guns - 4 in front of ROUGE CROIX and 4 in vicinity of LE ROUKLOOSVILLE. Early in afternoon No 4. Section moved to LE ROUKLOOSVILLE and during the night two guns were emplaced at [X 1 B 85.50] No 2 Section emplaced guns at W. 16. B 82. 55, W 17 A. 00. 60, W 17 A 72. 82, W 11 C 75. 00 No 2 Section H.Q. were in cellar of farm at W 11 C 65. 65.	

A6945 Wt. W11422/M1160 350,000 12/16 D. D. & L. Forms/C. 2118/14.



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REF SHEETS HAZEBROUCK 5A SHEET 27 " 36A	24.4.18		Lieut F. P. Bethune M.C. reported as S.I.C. Rear H.Q.s moved to Q. 2.6 D. 6.7. C.H.Q. temporarily located in shelters at X. 1 A. 30. 70. Telephonic communication to Left Brigade established.	
"	25.4.18		C.O. visited No 4 Section and positions fixed for two guns not yet emplaced, at X.I.C 58. 62 & X. 1 D 08. 45. These guns were dug in on night of 25/26. C.H.Q. moved to R. 31 D 42. 22 during afternoon and permanent location fixed at farm at R. 31. C. 48. 32. Nos 478A. Pk Strand T.W. & No. 4106 Pk Daddy T.W. were wounded by shell today. Coy strength at present 12. OFF & 200 ORs	
"	26.4.18		Company H.Q. moved to farm at R. 31. C. 48. 32 and connected by phone to Bde H.Q.	
"	27.4.18		Lt Gordon posted to take charge of No 2. Section. During the afternoon a very heavy destructive shoot was done in the vicinity of No 2. Section H.Q. Twelve ORs attached from 1st Aust. Prov. Bn. marched out and rejoined their unit. Five ORs rejoined the Company from Base Depot after sickness. Seventeen ORs marched in from 1st Bn. Reinf. Camp.	
"	28.4.18		Lt F. P. Bethune M.C. was wounded by shell-fire, (77mm. H.E.) at about 1 p.m. Trench slits were dug at C.H.Q. to accommodate personnel in case of a bombardment.	

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REF. SHEETS				
HAZEBROUCK SA.	29.4.18		Lieut Ward reported back to No 4 Section from Reinforcement Camp & Lieut Phelan took his place.	
SHEET 27			Lieut C.S. Williams was transferred to 1 <sup>st</sup> a n 9 Coy and reported to that Unit today. Lieut	
" 36B			Luscombe reported from Reinforcement Camp. Alternative emplacements for guns were made during night 29/30 at W6 B. 42.00 & W6 B 63.00. Twenty ORs. marched out to Reinforcement camp, attached to Coy from 1 <sup>st</sup> Aust Prov. Bn to be trained as Machine Gunners	
	30.4.18		During the afternoon O.C. and Lt Genessee reconnoitred FLËTRE with reference to its close defence. Several suitable places for machine guns and Lewis guns were found and reported on. Material at No 2 Sections H. Cos., originally 5 <sup>th</sup> Aust. Div. Rft. Camps are being salvaged & sent to rear. Distribution of S.A. A. of Company, less Nos 1 & 3 Sections.	
			Bn. men 9,000 rounds	
			Bulks on S.A.A. Ambers, No 2 Section - 18,000	
			" " 4 " - 18,000	
			With Sections, No 2. Section Bulks 44,000 Belts 14,000	
			" " 4 " " 44,000 " 14,000	
			Coy Strength today - 11 Offs & 205 ORs.	

A6945 Wt. W11422/M1160 350,000 12/16 D. D. & L. Forms/C.2118/14.