

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

Infantry

**Item number:** 23/4/19

**Title:** 4th Infantry Brigade

April 1917



AWM4-23/4/19



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
BAPADOME H12 C.	1/4/17.	10 pm.	Showery day. The 16 <sup>th</sup> Bu. moved from BIEFVILLERS to the First defensive Line; frontage from H12.6.5.5. to H5d 75.30. Bu. H.Q. at H4C.2.0. Working parties supplied for duty on roads Appendix I. Evacuated Sick O.R. 9. Following Rpts. arrived for the Brigade 13 <sup>th</sup> Bu. 6. 14 <sup>th</sup> Bu. 7. 15 <sup>th</sup> Bu. 5. 16 <sup>th</sup> Bu. 2-20.	Appendix I
	2/4/17.	8 pm.	Very cold with rain & snow. The 16 <sup>th</sup> Bu. is supporting the 13 <sup>th</sup> Brigade and two companies have moved to VAULX. Appendix II. Working parties supplied as in Appendix I. Sick to hospital 13. O.R.	Appendix II
	3/4/17.	9 pm.	Windy day - no rain. The 15 <sup>th</sup> Bu. took over the work of supporting the 13 <sup>th</sup> Brigade from the 16 <sup>th</sup> Bu. Working parties as in Appendix I. The attached sketch shows distribution of traps in the Corps main defensive Line. Appendix II. At 7.15 pm. a hostile plane set fire to two of our balloons - the occupants came down with parachutes it is not known if they alighted safely. Evacuated Sick O.R. 14. Wounded O.R. 1.	Appendix I
	4/4/17.	10 pm.	Sleet, rain & snow. Working parties as in Appendix III. Wounded O.R. 4. Evacuated Sick O.R. 1.	Appendix III
	5/4/17.	8 pm.	Fine day. Working parties as in Appendix III. Evacuated Sick O.R. 15. Wounded O.R. 5.	

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.

WAR DIARY  
or  
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)



Army Form C. 2118.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
BAPADME H 22.C.	6/4/17	8pm	Showery day. Working parties as in Appendix III. Eight hundred men burying cable from VAULX to NOREUIL. Preparations being made for move forward. The 15th Bn. relieved tonight moved into camp FAVREUIL at 3 A.M. 7/4/17. Evacuated sick O.R. 7 Wounded O.R. 5.	
NOREUIL C10 C1.2.	7/4/17	10pm	Fine day. The 14th & 16th Bns. with Vickers & Stokes relieved the 51st Bn. in the right sector of the Divisional front. Relief completed by 12.30 Am. Appendix IV Evacuated sick O.R. 10. Casualties - Nil.	
	8/4/17	8pm	Showery day. Quiet on our front. Intelligence Summary Appendix. Preparations in progress to drive the Germans from the HINDENBURG LINE. Our line advanced 200 yards. Evacuated sick O.R. 9. Killed O.R. 5 Wd. O.R. 24.	
	9/4/17		Fine day. Zero hour for attack 4.30 Am. 10/4/17. Orders attached. Owing to the non-arrival of TANKS at the starting point the attack was cancelled at 5 A.M. The 13th & 15th Bns. returning to FAVREUIL. One officer & one O.R. were taken prisoner by our patrol. Intelligence Summary attached. Casualties Sick O.R. 13. Killed O.R. 2 Wd O.R. 10.	
	10/4/17		Snow-sleet & rain. Owing to late arrival of Tanks the attack timed for 4.30 Am. did not take place and was postponed for 24 hours. Plan of attack modified fresh orders issued & attached hereto. Casualties Sick O.R. 11 Killed O.R. 5 Wounded 20 O.R.	

WAR DIARY

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)



Army Form C. 2118.

63

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																						
NOREUIL C10 C1.2.	11/4/17 -		<p>The Brigade attacked this morning at 4.45 A.M. &amp; gained the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> objectives but were unable to push on to the 3<sup>rd</sup>. After <del>seven</del> and a half hours fierce fighting &amp; the supply of bombs and S.A.F. had given out &amp; under pressure of repeated counter attacks our men were forced to fall back. Orders &amp; reports attached.</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Casualties.</td> <td>Officers</td> <td>Killed 16</td> <td>Wounded 21</td> <td>Missing 13</td> <td rowspan="3">The brigade was relieved by 9 pm. &amp; moved back to the FAVREUIL area.</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Other Ranks</td> <td>231</td> <td>507</td> <td>200</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Total</td> <td></td> <td>Officers 77.</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Other Ranks 2230.</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Casualties.	Officers	Killed 16	Wounded 21	Missing 13	The brigade was relieved by 9 pm. & moved back to the FAVREUIL area.		Other Ranks	231	507	200		Total		Officers 77.					Other Ranks 2230.			Appendix IV Appendix V
Casualties.	Officers	Killed 16	Wounded 21	Missing 13	The brigade was relieved by 9 pm. & moved back to the FAVREUIL area.																					
	Other Ranks	231	507	200																						
	Total		Officers 77.																							
			Other Ranks 2230.																							
MAMETZ CAMP.	12/4/17 -		The Brigade moved from the FAVREUIL area by train from BAPAUME to ALBERT & thence by route march to MAMETZ Camp. Rain & snow.																							
	13/4/17 -		Fine day. Men very tired & worn. Bathing & cleaning up. Sick OR 5.																							
	14/4/17 -		Fine day. General Birdwood addressed the brigade at 11 A.M. and afterwards said a few words to individual men of each unit. Bathing & cleaning up. Sick & Hospital OR 13.																							

WAR DIARY

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

Army Form C. 2118.

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
MAMETZ CAMP	15.4.17.		Showery day. Owing to the bad weather no church parades were held but there were Communion Services in the Hub. Reinforcements for 15 <sup>th</sup> Bn. OR 44. Evacuated sick OR 13.	
	16.4.17.		Showery day. Training commenced as in Syllabi attached. Sick OR 10.	
	17.4.17.		Wind & rain. Lectures in Hub. Signal Class commenced at DIV. HQ. Evacuated sick OR 3.	
	18.4.17.		Showery day. All preparations being made for move tomorrow. Sick OR 3.	
RIBEMONT.	19.4.17.		Fine day. Brigade moved to RIBEMONT. Appendix. Last unit marched in at 1.40 pm. Evacuated sick OR 3.	
	20.4.17.		Fine day. Training resumed. Brigade rifle range being repaired also Bayonet fighting course. Sick OR 1.	
	21.4.17.		Fine sunny day. Training as in Syllabus attached Appendix. Sick to hospital. OR 6.	
	22.4.17.		Fine day. Brigade church parade at MERICOURT. G.O.C. addressed newly appointed officers. Evacuated sick OR 4.	
	23.4.17.		Fine day. Training proceeding as in Syllabus attached Appendix. Sick to hospital. OR 3.	

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

WAR DIARY

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

Army Form C. 2118.

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
RIBEMONT.	24/4/17.		Fine day. Musketry and general training proceeding. Evacuated sick OR. 4.	
	25/4/17.		Fine day. ANZAC DAY. Memorial service at 9.15 A.M. Sports commenced at 10 A.M. finished about 5 P.M. Programme attached Appendix.	
			Rpts 100. Other ranks. 2 officers. Sick OR. 3.	Appendix 6
	26/4/17.		Fine day. Musketry & general training. Sick to hospital OR. 8.	
	27/4/17.		Fine day. Musketry & general training. Evacuated sick OR. 1.	
	28/4/17.		Fine day. Musketry & general training. Evacuated sick OR. 5.	
	29/4/17.		Fine sunny day. Church parades held. The 16 <sup>th</sup> Bn. on range. Evacuated sick OR. 3.	
	30/4/17.		Fine sunny day. Musketry and general training proceeding. Sick OR. 3.	
			Strength of Brigade. Officers 129.	
			Other Ranks. 2357.	
			Chaplain Major	
			Brigade Major	
			4 A.I. Brigade	

## Appendix I

Fourth Australian Infantry Brigade.  
HEADQUARTERS.  
1/4/1917.

Headquarters,  
4th AUSTRALIAN DIVISION.

Following is the locations of Units of this Brigade :-

Brigade Headquarters.	H.22.c.6.7.
4th A.L.T.M. Battery.	H.22.c.2.9.
4th M.G. Company.	ONEVILLERS.
13th Battalion.H.qrs.	H.13.d.7.3.
14th Battalion.H.qrs.	2nd Defensive or Intermediate line. H.12.d.5.0.
16th Battalion.H.qrs.	1st Defensive line from Sunken Road I.7.b.2.2. to road H.12.b.Central. H.12.a.Central.
15th Battalion.H.qrs.	1st Defensive line H.12.b.Central to H.5.d.6.4. H.4.e.2.0. 1st Defensive line H.5.b.4. to sunken road H.4.a.2.0.

*Chyohusto Maja*  
for  
Brig-General.  
Comdg 4th Aust. Inf. Brigade.

Appendix II

S E C R E T.

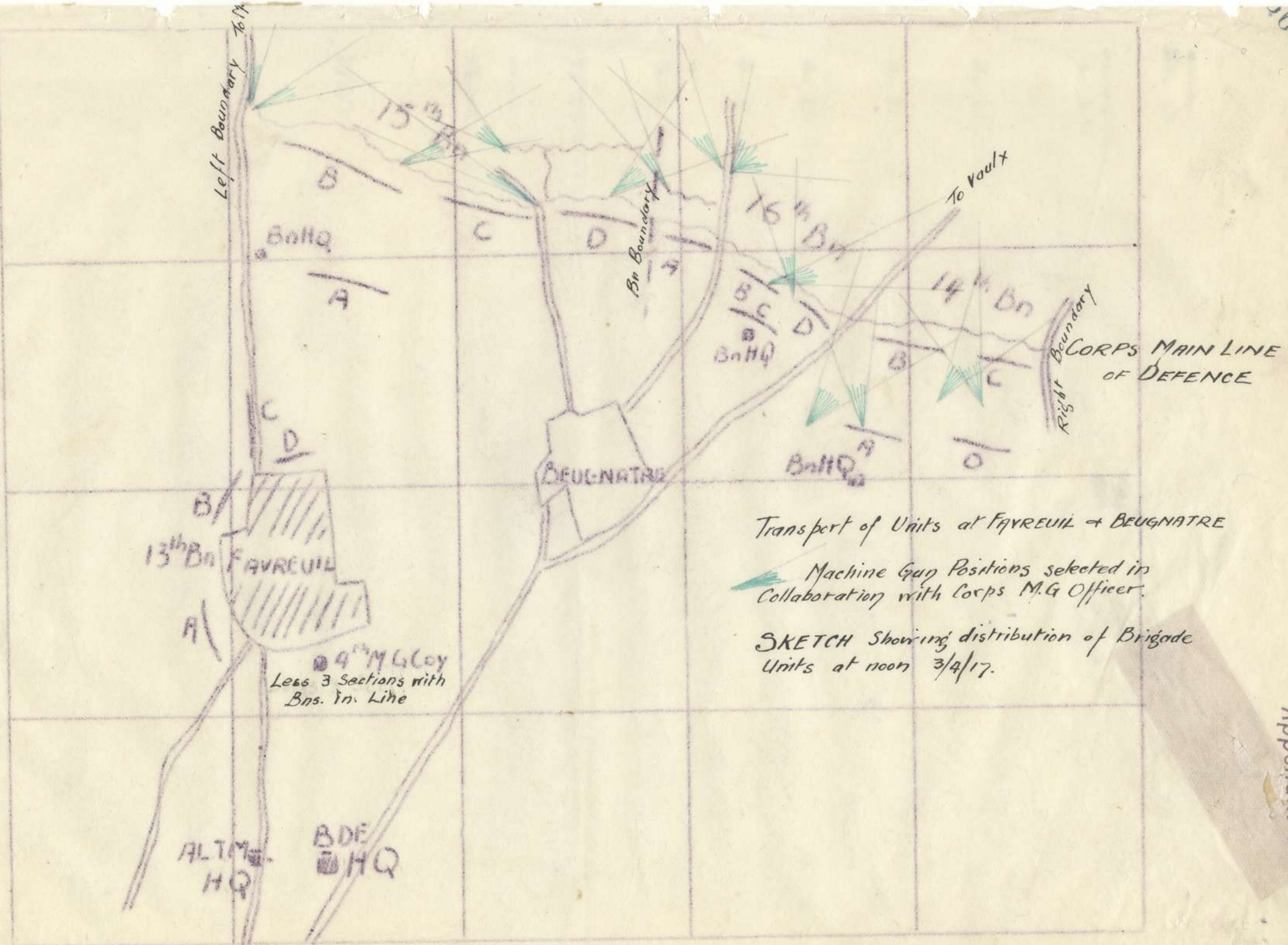
Fourth Australian Infantry Brigade.  
HEADQUARTERS.  
3/4/1917.

Headquarters,  
4th AUSTRALIAN DIVISION.

Reference G.28/117/3, the attached shows the distribution of the 4th Australian Infantry Brigade at noon on 3/4/1917.

Brig-General.  
Comdg. 4th Aust. Inf. Brigade.





THIS CANCELS ALL OTHER LISTS.WORKING PARTIES TO BE SUPPLIED BY UNITS OF 4th AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY BRIGADE.

REVISED TO 9.a.m. 4/4/1917.

No. Unit.	Strength.	Where to report.	When to start work.	Nature of work.	R.E. Officer.	Remarks.
1. 13th Bn.	4.Officers 300.Men.	CHATKAV FAVREUIL H.16.e.3.9.	9.a.m.	On road	Lieut. WILKINSON	Unit to supply as far as possible.
2. 13th Bn.	2.Officers 100.Men.	MONUMENT H.15.e.	9.a.m.	On road	Lieut. LEWIS	Unit to supply tools.
3. 13th Bn.	1.N.C.O. 4.Men	Guard on Brigade Canteen	Relieved Regiment- ally.	-	-	-
4. 14th Bn.	5.Officers 450.Men.	On same job as to-day.			Lieut. McLean	-
5. 14th Bn.	3.Officers 150.Men.	At Grater BRUGNATRE H.11.d.1.4.		(These who worked on road (from H.17.a.7.3. towards (BAPAINK.		
6. 16th Bn.	3.Officers 200.Men.	BRUGNATRE CRATER H.11.d.1.5.	9.a.m.	On road to LONGATTE	Lieut. WILKINSON	Tools 150 by R.E.
7. 16th Bn.	2.Officers 100.Men.	As arranged with Lieut. WILKINSON.	"	"	"	150 by Unit.

Mid-day meal to be carried.

3/4/1917.

*Chief Quarter*  
Major.  
Brigade-Major.  
4th Aust. Inf. Brigade.



363

War Diary  
Appendix

Fourth Australian Infantry Brigade.  
HEADQUARTERS.  
8th April, 1917.

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.  
From 7/4/1917 to 9.a.m. 8/4/1917.

Relief. The 14th and 16th Battalions successfully relieved the 51st Battalion and was complete by 12 midnight.

Patrols. An Officers patrol went out from C.5.a.5.2. and patrolled along Sunken road from U.29.c.4.0. to C.5.b.4.8. and the Sunken road was found to be unoccupied. A Sergeant's patrol went out from C.5.d.7.6. at 1.30.a.m. to sunken road running through C.5.b.central. After skirting around until reaching C.6.a.central the patrol returned at 2.15.a.m. An Officers patrol went out at 2.30.a.m. from the same place C.5.d.7.6. leaving the sunken road on their left and went well forward into U.30.c. Nothing could be seen or heard of the enemy. The ground traversed forward is very level and is bare of folds of the slightest size. Connection was maintained along our front and with flanks.

Snipers. Snipers have been put out along our front and will remain out during the day.

Machine Guns. The valley of the Herondelle River is swept by enemy fire from Queant while the railway cutting is fired on from a North Easterly direction. Our Lewis Guns played continually on enemy wire in our front.

Artillery. Our heavies were observed to be shooting fairly accurate but our 18 pounders appeared to be falling short.

Artillery (Enemy). The Sunken roads in C.10 and Herondelle Valley were incessantly shelled during the night with Shrapnel and 7.7.c.m. H.E. while lachrymatory shells were fired at 9.p.m.

Fires. A burning building could be plainly seen from our line at midnight in Pronville, while a thick smoke could be seen rising from Heudecourt indicating fire.

2/Lieut.  
Intelligence Officer.  
4th Aust. Inf. Brigade.

WAR DIARY.  
Appendix

SECRET.

Copy No.....

FOURTH AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY BRIGADE ORDER NO. 74.

Reference ECOUST ST. MEIN 1/10,000

9/4/1917.

1. On a date to be notified hereafter the enemy will be driven from the HINDEMBURG LINE.
2. The objectives of the 4th and 12th Infantry Brigades are as shown on the attached sketch map.
3. Barrage table is as follows :-  
 ZERO PLUS 16. Barrage lifts off First objective and comes down between First and Second objectives.  
 ZERO PLUS 24. Barrage begins to creep back to Second objective.  
 ZERO PLUS 33. Barrage lifts off Second objective and comes down 200 yards beyond.  
 ZERO PLUS 38. Barrage lifts another 200 yards beyond.  
 ZERO PLUS 60. Barrage begins to creep forward to Third objective.
4. The 16th, 15th and 14th Battalions in that order from the right, each with 4 Companies in line distributed in depth in 4 waves will capture the First and Second objectives allotted to the 4th Australian Infantry Brigade.
5. The 52nd and 13th Battalions will capture the Third objective. This, however, is dependent on circumstances of which the amount of resistance encountered in securing the First and Second objectives will be the main governing factor.
6. Units will be formed up on the "jumping off line" indicated by tape  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour before zero which will be communicated later.
7. 1 Section of tanks two on either flank of the Brigade will co-operate. C.O's. are responsible all ranks are familiar with the signals to be used when working with tanks.
8. O.C. 4th Machine Gun Company will allot 4 guns to 16th Battalion, 2 to 15th Battalion, 4 to 14th Battalion, 4 to 13th Battalion keeping two in Reserve.
9. O.C. 4th Light Trench Mortar Battery will allot two Stokes guns each to 16th and 14th Battalions keeping 2 in Reserve.
10. The 1st and 2nd Divisional Machine Gun Companies are allotted to the 4th Australian Infantry Brigade for the protection of the right flank. A sketch showing arcs of fire of each group of guns is attached hereto.
11. At.....a.m. on .....instant flares will be lit by units in their advanced line and also in any forward posts.
12. Advanced Brigade Headquarters will be established at C.5.central when the Second objective is secured.
13. Watches will be synchronised 2 hours before zero.
14. ACKNOWLEDGE.

Issued at 10.a.m.

Major.  
Brigade-Major.  
4th Aust. Inf. Brigade.

Copy No. 1. WAR. DIARY.

2. DAB.

3. DAB.

4. FACT.

5. FAD.

6. FADE.

7. FILE.

8. FALL.

9. FAIR.

10. ARTILLERY GROUP COMMANDER.

11. GABY.

12. KATE.

13.

SECRET.

Appendix

Copy No.....

Fourth Australian Infantry Brigade.  
HEADQUARTERS,  
9th April, 1917.

With reference to para 10 of 4th Australian Infantry Brigade Order No. 74, the following arrangements for Machine Gun co-operation are forwarded for information :-

The following Machine Guns have been placed at the disposal of the G.O.C. 4th Aus. Infantry Brigade to guard his right flank -

5th Australian M.G. Company.  
7th " " " (less 4 guns).  
13th " " " (4 guns only).

At the disposal of the 13th Aus. Infantry Brigade, to guard his left flank -

7th Australian M.G. Company (4 guns only)

The hour at which all guns are to be in position will be notified later.

Dispositions will be as under -

(a) Attack Guns, to cover infantry advance.

- 7th Aus. M.G. Company. 4 guns at about C.18.b.4.4. To enfilade enemy trench from U.30.b.7.0. southwards to road in C.6.  
5th Aus. M.G. Company. 8 guns at Sunken Road in C.4.d. To traverse enemy trench in U.30., particularly on the higher ground. Left limit of traverse - Road in U.30.s.  
7th Aus. M.G. Company. 4 guns at C.9.b.3.3. To traverse and enfilade trench round S.E. Corner of BELLECOURT from road in 27.b. to 28.a.7.7.

(b) Barrage fire.

5th Aus. M.G. Company. 8 guns dug in on railway line along cutting in C.5.d.

The object of these guns is to prevent counter attack from enemy trenches running from V.13, 19 and 25, and U.30. These form very likely jumping off trenches for that purpose.

The roads leading into the rear of BELLECOURT should also be intermittently fired on for the first 45 minutes after Zero

A careful watch will be kept to the East for any direct flank movement from QUEANT.

(c) Reserve Guns.

- 7th Aus. M.G. Company. 4 guns at about C.18.c.2.8. To fire towards QUEANT.  
7th Aus. M.G. Company. 4 guns at about C.17.central. To fire towards C.6.central.  
13th Aus. M.G. Company. 4 guns at about C.11.a.4.1. To fire towards QUEANT.

12 guns, 13th Aus. M.G. Company will be in Reserve near NORRUIL.

Rates and times of fire will be notified later.

Ammunition. Bulk Reserve at 4th Aus. Infantry Brigade Dump near NORRUIL. 14 boxes per gun to be with guns.

As guns in railway are in a forward position, the O.C. will arrange a forward dump for these.

*Chaplain* Major.  
Brigade-Major.  
4th Aust. Inf. Brigade.

- Copy No. 1 War Diary.  
2 4th Aust. Division.  
3 4th Aust. Division.  
4 13th Battalion.  
5 14th Battalion.  
6 15th Battalion.  
7 16th Battalion.  
8 4th M.G. Company.  
9 4th A.L.T.M. Battery.  
10 Artillery Group Commander.  
11 12th Aust. Infantry Brigade.  
12 13th Aust. Infantry Brigade.  
13 3rd Aust. Infantry Brigade.  
14 File.

FOURTH AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY BRIGADE ORDER NO. 75

Reference ECOUST - St. MIEN 1/10,000

9/4/1917.  
1.p.m.

1. Reconnaissance will be made during the next 24 hours to ascertain whether the MINDENBURG LINE is held lightly or in force.
2. If held in force the operation referred to in Brigade Order No. 74 will be carried out on a date and hour to be notified hereafter, but if only lightly held an Advanced Guard, in order of march as under, will move at short notice covering the 4th Divisional Front and co-operating with the Advanced Guard of the 62nd Division. The dividing line between the two Advanced Guards is the ECOUST - BULLECOURT - HENDECOURT road.

Brig-General C.H. BRAND,  
C.M.G., D.S.O.

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| Van Guard  | (1 Troop "C" Squadron 13th A.L.H. Regiment.<br>(16th Battalion.<br>(1 Battery 11th A.F.A. Brigade.  |
| Main Guard | (14th Battalion.<br>(4th Brigade Headquarters.<br>(2 Sections 4th Field Company.<br>(11th A.F.A. Brigade less 1 Battery.<br>(13th Battalion echeloned to right of 14th Battn<br>(15th Battalion (less 1 Company) echeloned to<br>left of 14th Battalion)<br>(4th M.G. Company less guns allotted to Battalions<br>(4th A.L.T.M. Battery.<br>(1 Company 15th Battalion.<br>(1 Section 4th Field Ambulance. |

3. The direction of the centre of the advance will be approximately C.4.central - U.23.central - U.12.central. C.C. 14th Battalion to be prepared to "picquet" the high ground in C.24 by means of Vickers and Lewis Guns strongly supported by infantry.
4. Instructions as to transport and rations will be issued later.
5. Where units have not already quarters at Headquarters 4th Australian Infantry Brigade C.10.e.l.2. steps will be taken to have same quartered there day and night.
6. ACKNOWLEDGE.

Issued at 4.p.m.

*C. H. Brand*  
Major.  
Brigade-Major.  
4th Aust. Inf. Brigade.

- Copy No. 1 War Diary.  
2 13th Light Horse Regiment. x  
3 11th F.A. Brigade. x  
4 4th Field Company. x  
5 13th Battalion. x  
6 14th Battalion. x  
7 15th Battalion. x  
8 16th Battalion. x  
9. 4th A.M.G. Company. x  
10. 4th A.L.T.M. Battery. x  
11. 12th Aust. Infantry Brigade. x  
12. 4th Australian Division. x  
13. 3rd Aust. Infantry Brigade. x  
14 File.

THIS CANCELS ALL PREVIOUS ORDERS.SECRET.

Copy No. ....

## FOURTH AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY BRIGADE ORDER NO. 76

10/4/1917.

Reference ECOUST - St. MIEN 1/10,000.

1. On 11th April (zero hour 4.30.a.m.) the enemy will be driven from the HINDENBURG LINE in co-operation with the 12th Australian Infantry Brigade and 62nd Division on our left. Diversions have been arranged to deal with our right.
2. The First and Second objectives of the 4th and 12th Australian Infantry Brigades are as previously indicated. The 16th and 14th Battalions will capture the First and Second objectives the 13th and 15th Battalions securing the Third objective REINCOURT the left of the 15th Battalion linking with a unit of 12th Australian Infantry Brigade in U.22.b.
3. All troops will be formed up in rear of their jumping off line at 4.a.m. under cover of the railway embankment cutting and Sunken road.
4. At 4.30.a.m. on 11th April the artillery will put down a flank barrage on QUEANT and BULLCOURT and the 12 Tanks will move forward. On reaching the trenches and as soon as they have occupied them, the Tanks will display a green disc meaning "come on". The 16th and 14th Battalions will then advance and occupy the trenches. The 13th and 15th Battalions being ready to follow so as to follow on with the Tanks to the Third objective.
5. The 6th and 7th Machine Gun Companies plus 4 guns 13th Machine Gun Company are so distributed as to beat off hostile counter attacks. The O.C. 6th Machine Gun Company will be at C.5.central. The allotment of the 4th Machine Gun Company and 4th A.L.T.M. Battery to units to be as already arranged.
6. After the 4th Australian Infantry Brigade advances the 52nd Battalion will be responsible for holding the outpost line linking with the 10th Battalion at about C.6.central and 51st Battalion at about C.5.a.2.5. Communication must be kept up with 16th Battalion whose right rear will be at U.30.a.2.4. The Headquarters 52nd Battalion will be at 14th Battalion Headquarters C.10.c.6.8.
7. At 6.a.m. and 8.a.m. flares will be lit by units in the advanced line and also in any forward posts.
8. Advanced Brigade Headquarters will be established at C.5.central when the second objective is reached.
9. Conference of all C.O's. will be held at Brigade Headquarters at C.10.c.1.2. at midnight 10th/11th April.

10. ACKNOWLEDGE.

Issued at 6.p.m.

*Chapman*  
Major.  
Brigade-Major.  
4th Aust. Inf. Brigade.

Copy No. 1 War Diary.  
2 4th Aust. Division.  
3 4th Aust. Division.  
4 12th Aust. Inf. Brigade.  
5 13th Aust. Inf. Brigade.  
6 13th Battalion.  
7 14th Battalion.  
8 15th Battalion.  
9 16th Battalion  
10 4th Machine Gun Company.  
11 4th A.L.T.M. Battery

Copy No. 12 4th Field Company.  
13 13th L.H. Regiment.  
14 6th Machine Gun Coy.  
15 7th Machine Gun Coy  
16 Artillery Group. Comdr.  
17 O.C. Anzac Cycle Company  
18 A.D.M.S.  
19 3rd Aust. Inf. Brigade.  
20 52nd Battalion.  
21 File.



SECRET.Fourth Australian Infantry Brigade.  
HEADQUARTERS.  
11th April, 1917.INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY - ATTACK.  
-----

7 4th Aust. Infantry Brigade in conjunction with 12th Aust. Infantry Brigade and Tanks attacked the HINDENBURG LINE as indicated in 4th Brigade Order No. 76. No assistance was derived from the Tanks as our Infantry reached the enemy wire some time before them and were forced to push on. The First and Second objectives were seized but owing to severe casualties and enemy resistance the Third objective was not taken.

Fierce bomb fighting took place from the moment our men entered the captured position.

At 12.30.p.m. the Brigade was forced to retire owing to exhaustion of bomb supplies - "ours" and "theirs" and enfilade Machine Gun and Trench Mortar fire; the withdrawal was assisted by a light Artillery barrage which greatly assisted.

Artillery. Enemy artillery very strong and active 3 guns blown out at 2.p.m. in Herondelle Valley.

Aircraft. An enemy plane flew over at 1.30.p.m. flying low.

2/Lieut.  
Intelligence Officer.  
4th Aust. Inf. Brigade.

REPORT ON OPERATIONS CARRIED OUT ON  
11th APRIL NEAR  
REINCOURT.

- 12 midnight. Final conference of all Commanding Officers at Brigade Headquarters.
- 12.15.a.m. Battalion Intelligence Officers patrolled ground in front of jumping off place. Tapes were then attached to the small pegs fixed two nights previously, to indicate flanks of Battalions and Companies.
- 2.15.a.m. Units started to move into position. This was completed at 3.30.a.m.
- 3.a.m. First "Tank" arrived at rendezvous at RAILWAY CROSSING C.5.d. The "Tank" Officer was asked how long it would take the tanks to reach 1st objective. 600 yards away. The reply was 15 minutes. The Brigade Major then brought the Officer to the C.O.'s. who were in telephonic communication with the Brigadier, who asked Divisional Headquarters to start the Tanks earlier i.e. at 4.15.a.m. The reply came stick to programme. The result proved the infantry were correct in their surmise that the Tanks unless they started earlier would only be a hindrance instead of a help.
- 3.5.a.m. Two other Tanks arrived, another the 4th being reported out of action.
- 3.20.a.m. Tanks were led out to and lined out in front of jumping off place. The interval between Tanks was approximately 100 yards. Three Tanks were in position and ready to move off by 4.20.a.m. Two other Tanks to co-operate on our left front were not then in position. A Battalion Intelligence Officer pointed out the level crossing but the driver ignored the directions given consequently got into the Sunken Road and could not get out. The other complained of engine troubles. This left 3 Tanks only to co-operate on the 4th Brigade front instead of 6. It is important to note that while the Tanks were moving from NORBUIL to and forming up in front of the Brigade hardly a round was fired by our artillery though earlier in the night I rang up Divisional Headquarters to know if this provision was made and was told "yes". The sparks from the engines and the noise must have been heard by the enemy.
- 4.30.a.m. The 3 Tanks already in position moved out.
- 4.45.a.m. 16th Battalion on right and 14th Battalion on left began to move in four successive waves followed closely by the 13th Battalion behind 16th Battalion and the 15th Battalion behind the 14th Battalion. About half way to 1st objective 2 Tanks stopped and commenced to open fire thus giving away the position and proclaiming an attack. The infantry now under Machine Gun fire decided to push on alone and soon were in the first objective. The third Tank had now also reached the first objective and crossing over but failed to reach the second objective and was then immediately put out of action by a gun near REINCOURT. On the way across NO MAN'S LAND the rear Battalions suffered heavily from cross machine gun fire, the leading Battalions having most of their casualties in hacking their way through the wire of first objective.
- 5.16.a.m. First objective taken and units bombing up the communication trenches between 1st and 2nd objective.
- 6.50.a.m. Second objective taken.
- 7.48.a.m. First contact plane flew over and drew extraordinarily heavy fire from machine guns in QUEANT.

- 2 -

- 8.a.m. S.O.S. signals were sent up 18 times by our troops but failed to get any response from artillery.
- 8.45.a.m. Written confirmation received that both objectives had been taken, and if artillery will assist the positions could be held until bombs could be brought up under cover of darkness.
- 9.10.a.m. Artillery Liaison Officer at Brigade Headquarters instructed to secure an S.O.S. artillery line 200 yards beyond second objective and 200 yards to right of our right flank which rested on the road in U.30.a.  
Most aggravating telephonic communication took place between the Artillery Liaison Officer and Group Commander as to the wisdom of having the S.O.S. line as indicated in view of the rumour that our men were reported in HEINCOURT. This is a matter which will form the subject of separate correspondence.
- 10.15.a.m. Message received asking for more bombs and S.A.A.
- 11.20.a.m. Lieut. Aarons, 16th Battalion, ran the gauntlet through the machine gun barrage to give first hand information as to the situation. - about 25% of the Brigade not casualties, bombs run out and Germans squeezing in on all sides, doubtful if can hold out.
- 11.30.a.m. 12th Brigade units on our left ~~seen~~<sup>seen</sup> to be retiring.
- 11.45.a.m. Our left units had to give way and eventually the whole line retired to the original line. A very prompt and effective artillery barrage was put down as indicated in my message to Group Commanders (Col. RABBIT, C.M.G. - Col. STEVENSON, C.M.G.) at 9.10.a.m.
- 12.5.p.m. Divisional Headquarters informed that retirement was in progress.

Despite very exhaustive enquiries I have failed to gather the slightest clue which would lead one to believe that any of our men got beyond the second objective except by bombing parties up a C.T. running along the road leading from the second objective in U.29.d. into HEINCOURT. Many reports prove that our men got to within 100 or 150 yards of HEINCOURT. No doubt these were 15th Battalion men commanded by Captain DUNWORTH, M.C. who at 7.10.a.m. sent a pigeon message for more bombs. There is reason to believe that this party are prisoners for at one stage they were practically surrounded.

The following extract from report by G.O. 13th Battalion reads -

- "About 7.20.a.m. a large amount of enemy movement was seen around HEINCOURT. Captain Murray sent up S.O.S. flares for an artillery barrage but none was forthcoming.
- "At about 7.30.a.m. the Germans counter-attacked by bombing down a communication trench from HEINCOURT. This was beaten off and a combined party of 13th and 16th bombers beat the enemy back this trench to within 100 yards of HEINCOURT putting in a block.
- "At the same time the enemy counter-attacked our right in the 2nd objective with bombs but were beaten back suffering heavy loss.
- "At 9.a.m. a battalion of the enemy in close formation moving from QUEANT to the N. of HEINCOURT was dispersed by our machine gun fire, suffering heavy loss.
- "From then till 10.45.a.m. our men were re-organizing and consolidating, during which time two small bombing attacks by the Germans on our left were beaten off. All the bombs were collected and dumps made near each bombing block.
- "Captain Murray went along the whole position and reports that the 4th Brigade held 900 yards of the Hindenburg line. He commenced the organization of the whole brigade position. At 10.45.a.m. heavy bomb attacks by the Germans were started from the right and left of both objectives, also down the communication trench from

"REINCOURT and a communication trench running N and S on the  
 "W. of REINCOURT, six attacks in all.  
 "These attacks were very severe and our bombs were quickly ex-  
 "hausted, and our men pressed back to the centre of our position  
 "from all sides. The Germans had machine guns trained on the  
 "parapet which frustrated every endeavour on the part of our  
 "men to go along the top and attack the bombers with the bayonet.  
 "Attempts to call up an Artillery barrage by power buzzers and  
 "S.O.S. flares failed, the buzzer being jammed by the Germans  
 "and the flares apparently not being observed."

Thus ends one of the most heroic achievements by any body of  
 troops. Unaided by Artillery, forsaken by Tanks on which so much depended  
 the Brigade crossed formidable unbroken wire and secured both objectives  
 which they held on to for 7 hours and only then forced to retire owing to  
 overwhelming numbers of the enemy, numerous casualties, shortage of bombs  
 with no immediate hope of getting more up; and hesitating co-operation  
 from the Artillery.

The casualties were -

Unit.	Officers.	Other Ranks.
13th Battalion	21	546
14th Battalion	19	582
15th Battalion	20	380
16th Battalion	13	623
4th M.G. Company	5	99
4th A.L.T.M. Battery	1	30
Total :-	79	2260

A special report on the part played by the "Tanks" will be for-  
 warded later.

Attached are a few points which might serve to assist any other  
 troops detailed to carry out a similar operation.

Many acts of gallantry were performed by all ranks. In due  
 course recommendations for immediate rewards will be submitted.

15th April, 1917.

Brig-General.  
 Comdg. 4th Aust. Inf. Brigade.

63

SPECIAL REPORT ON "TANK" CO-OPERATION IN ATTACK NIGHT OF 10/11th APRIL 1917.

To 4th Aust. Inf. Brigade.  
From 16th Battalion & 14th Battalion.

TANKS.

The Tank Co-operation in the attack made on the RINDENBURG LINE on the night of 10/11th April 1917 was useless, or - worse than useless as shown below :-

- (a). Tanks were late in arriving at rendezvous, which meant that they were late in getting to the jumping off point. In fact only 3 got to the latter place at all.
- (b). Of the 6 Tanks allotted to the Brigade 5 reached rendezvous; 1 being out of action before that place was reached. Of the 5, 1 disregarding guidance by I.O. FAD tried to cross a deep sunken road, and in consequence got in, and could not get out again. A second one was out of action through engine trouble before jumping off place was reached, leaving 3 actually to co-operate in the attack.
- (c). The Tank crews seemed to know little or nothing of an attack by Infantry, and nothing whatever about the particular operation they were to participate in. For instance: in the case of No. 2 Tank, the Tank Commander had not even synchronised his watch; his time being 5 minutes behind true time as given to Infantry. Further, Tank crews did not even know direction of enemy. This is verified by the fact that they opened fire on our own troops, thereby causing us many casualties. One Tank in particular opened fire on our men at jumping off place, killing 4 and wounding others.
- (d). The organization seemed to be bad, and no one appeared to be in direct command of the show. This was shown by the fact that Tanks wandered aimlessly about in every direction, thereby drawing enemy fire on us, and on all our trenches.
- (e). One Tank only reached the objective, and did good work, but was almost immediately put out of action by direct hits from a gun in REINCOURT. Commanders and crews of other Tanks seemed to make no effort whatever to reach their objectives, and although their Tanks were in no way damaged, even after the attack was well under way, and Tanks could have given the greatest assistance in helping to connect up between us and the Brigade on our left, they made no effort to go forward, but wandered back, moving along the front of our jumping off place, and finally pulling up alongside one of our Dressing stations. Other Tanks which apparently had made no effort to get up to their objectives, were found in various places; on fire, although they had not been hit by shells. One crew in particular when asked why they vacated their Tanks stated that it had caught fire, but gave no reason for same. This same crew returned carrying 2 sand bags: one containing enamel ware, and the other food. Personal safety and comfort seemed their sole ambition. Another crew was asked why they did not go forward to help clear a communication trench. They replied that "they had no officer, so could not do so". This showed a great lack of initiative in that the whole affair as far as this Tank was concerned seemed to be the responsibility of one man, and that man gone, the Tank could do no more, though undamaged. One Tank, returning almost to the Reserve Battalion H.Q. pulled up right on the sky line in full view of BULLCOURT, thereby making a splendid aiming mark, and drawing severe enemy gun fire, which made the route very dangerous for troops.

- 63
- (f). The whole outfit showed rank inefficiency, and in some cases, Tank crews seemed to lack "British tenacity and pluck, and that determination to go forward at all costs", which is naturally looked for in Britishers.

In our opinion Tanks armed by the bravest of crews, if placed directly under the Infantry Officers concerned in operations would be of great help, but they should never be relied upon as the sole arm of support in an attack by Infantry. Further, when Tanks are being got into position we think it absolutely necessary that a heavy barrage be put up by our guns to deaden the sound of Tanks.

In this case, not a shot was fired when Tanks were taking up their positions, and so the whole show was given away to enemy.

(Sgd.) E. Drake-Brockman,  
Lieut-Colonel.  
Commanding 16th Battalion A.I.F.

(Sgd.) J. H. Peck,  
Lieut-Colonel.  
Commanding 14th Battalion A.I.F.

363

WAR DIARY APPENDIX

22

SECRET.

Appendix —

Copy No. 19

FOURTH AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY BRIGADE ORDER NO. 77.

Reference ALBERT (Combined Sheet) 1/40,000.

1. The Fourth Australian Infantry Brigade will move to RIBEMONT on Thursday the 19th April 1917 via MEAULTE - DERNANCOURT - BUIRE.
2. Units will pass the starting point WILLOW SIDING at 9.a.m. on 19th April in the following order :-  
 Cookers of Brigade.  
 Brigade Headquarters.  
 14th Battalion.  
 15th Battalion.  
 4th A.M.G. Company.  
 4th A.L.T.M. Battery.  
 16th Battalion.  
 13th Battalion.  
 "C" Section 13th Field Ambulance.  
 Intervals of 100 yards between Companies and 200 yards between units will be preserved.  
 Head of Column will halt for 10 minutes before passing X Roads BECORDEL and for 10 minutes before entering BUIRE.
3. A halt will be made for the mid-day meal near VIVIER MILL E.16.c. The Transport will not halt but move straight to RIBEMONT. After tea has been served the cookers will move to billets under their respective Quartermasters.
4. Transport for blankets will be provided, 4 G.S. Wagons per Battalion. The will report at MAMETZ CAMP at 7.30.a.m. 19th February.
5. Certificates as to condition of Huts also list of Area Stores for handing over will be handed in to Brigade Headquarters at 9.p.m. on 18th February.
6. Cleaning up parties or stragglers are to join the nearest unit, rejoining their own units at first or subsequent halts.
7. Billeting parties to report to Assistant Staff Captain at 2.30.p.m. on 18th February at Town Major's Office RIBEMONT.

A. ACKNOWLEDGE.

Issued at 1.30.p.m.

*Chapman*  
 Major.  
 Brigade-Major.  
 4th Aust. Inf. Brigade.

- Copy No. 1 War Diary.  
 2 4th Aust. Division.  
 3 13th Battalion.  
 4 14th Battalion.  
 5 15th Battalion.  
 6 16th Battalion.  
 7 4th A.M.G. Company.  
 8 4th A.L.T.M. Battery.  
 9 4th Field Ambulance.  
 10 7th A.A.S.C.  
 11 A.D.M.S.  
 12 "C" Section 13th Field Ambulance  
 13 13th Field Ambulance.  
 14 File.