

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

Artillery

**Item number:** 13/126/11

**Title:** 15th Australian Light Trench Mortar  
Battery

May 1917



AWM4-13/126/11

**CONFIDENTIAL.**

ORIGINAL.

~~DUPLICATE.~~

~~TRIPLICATE.~~

**Australian Imperial Force.**

**WAR DIARY**

OF

*15<sup>th</sup> A L I M Bty*

FOR

*May* 191*7*

Signature of Officer compiling.....

Signature of Officer Commanding.....

WAR DIARY

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

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.

15<sup>th</sup> A. L. T. M. B. (Erase heading not required.) Sheet No 1.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
In the field.	1/5/17.		Nothing of interest. Usual parades were held.	E.K.B.
" "	2/5/17.		At 8 p.m. the battery marched out of camp & took up a position behind railway embankment in U. 28. C. Everything was quiet & position was taken up without incident.	E.K.B.
" "	3/5/17.		Zero time for the attack on the Hindenburg line was fixed for 3.45 a.m. The orders for this battery were to have four guns emplaced in the vicinity of U. 28. Central to deal with suspected machine guns on the South-Eastern edge of Bullecourt. Our <del>det</del> four detachments were in position with an adequate supply of ammunition a quarter of an hour before zero. The position selected was in a Sunken Road which afforded a certain amount of protection from shell fire. From zero to zero + 4 we bombarded enemy trenches in vicinity of U. 28 A. 6. 3. After the advance started we remained in position to protect our left flank in case of a counter attack from Bullecourt. At 7.15 a.m. a battalion of the 7 <sup>th</sup> Bde advancing to support the 6 <sup>th</sup> Bde came under heavy machine-gun fire	



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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
In the Field	3/5/17	Continued	<p>from the vicinity of U. 28. A. 7. 5. We immediately opened fire on this spot, but owing to the smoke caused by the heavy artillery fire, observation of our fire was practically impossible.</p> <p>At 8.46 p.m. we bombarded enemy trenches in vicinity of U. 28. A. 2. 4., in connection with an operation by the brigade on our left.</p> <p>Our expenditure of ammunition for the day was 237 rounds.</p> <p>Our principal object now was to deal with any counter attack from the left flank as it was now definitely known that the brigade on our left had failed to reach its first objective. With this end in view we collected all available ammunition &amp; stood by to await developments.</p> <p>Throughout the day our position had come in for considerable shelling, our casualties here being 1 officer &amp; 6 ORanks wounded. But for the protection afforded by the bank of the road our casualties would have been much heavier.</p> <p>Of the remainder of the battery, in reserve behind the Railway Embankment, two other ranks were killed &amp; one wounded.</p>	



C.K.B.

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Sheet 3

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
In the Field	4/5/17		During the night the detachments in the Sinken Road were relieved by the reserve detachments. The enemy maintained a violent bombardment on our positions during the day and night.	E.K.B.
" "	5/5/17.		<p>At 10 a.m., acting under instructions from 2<sup>nd</sup> Division, the battery returned to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Divisional Concentration Camp in H. 22.C. The men had undergone a very trying time and were completely worn out. Sgt Doughtlin, Cpl. Benton, &amp; Pte Harris did splendid work during the operations and have been recommended for distinctions.</p> <p>The outstanding feature of the operation, from the point of view of co-operation of trench mortars in attack, was the fact that of the four detachments which accompanied the first &amp; second waves of the 6<sup>th</sup> Bde. not one reached the first objective, the four mortars having to be blown up to avoid them falling into the hands of the enemy. As against this two detachments which went forward on the captured trenches being consolidated arrived without a single casualty &amp; did invaluable work in repelling counter-attacks.</p>	E.K.B.



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Sheet 4.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
In the Field.	6/5/17		Church parade was held this morning. At 1 p.m. battery, less 25% reserve, marched out & took up a position on the Tauloe - Houruib Road in reserve to the 6 <sup>th</sup> Inf Coyde.	E.K.H.
	7/5/17 8/5/17		Nothing of interest to report. Battery rejoined our own brigade.	E.K.H.
	9/5/17		This battery relieved the 2 <sup>nd</sup> A.L.T.M.B. on the night of Bullecourt. The change-over took place without incident. Two guns are in position in front line at U. 23. C. 90. 05. & U. 22. D. 80. 40., and two in support line at U. 28. B. 70. 10. & U. 28. B. 20. 96. The remainder are in reserve. An enemy light minenweeper is also in use in the front line & at 6.30 p.m. we fired 15 rounds with this weapon into Rinecourt.	E.K.H.
	10/5/17		The captured minenweeper was used with good effect through-out the day, both gas & high explosive shells being fired, mostly into Rinecourt & a strong point in the vicinity of U. 23. B. 4. 3. Our front line was thoroughly reconnoitred & possible positions for emplacements noted. Casualties, 3 O.R.'s wounded.	E.K.H.



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15th A. L. T. M. B.

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Sheet 5

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
In the Field	11/5/17		<p>At 11.30 a.m. we fired twenty five rounds, including a few gas shells, with the captured minenwerfer, on a strong point at U. 23. C. 8. 6. Three Germans were seen to run away from this position. We have now exhausted our supply of ammunition for the minenwerfer.</p> <p>At 1 p.m. we fired forty rounds on enemy post at U. 23. D. 1. 8. when considerable movement had been observed. During this shoot we used the new ring charges for the first time &amp; were found highly satisfactory.</p> <p>At 3 p.m. we fired thirty rounds into Sunkers Road at U. 23. C. 7. 5. with good effect. Registrations were effected on cross roads &amp; trench at U. 22. D. 1. 2. and U. 22. D. 8. 4.</p> <p>Broken men, attached for training, reported. Casualties - 1 O'R wounded</p>	E.K.B.
	12/5/17		<p>At 3.15 a.m. two detachments which were in position at U. 28. D. 8. 4., in readiness to co-operate with 58th Battalion, were buried by the trench being blown in, both guns being put out of action.</p> <p>Two reserve guns were immediately got into position at U. 28. B. 7. 1. &amp; were ready to fire five minutes before zero (3.40 a.m.)</p> <p>From zero to zero + 6 we bombarded enemy trench &amp; sunker road at U. 22. D. 1. 2.</p>	E.K.B.



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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
In the Field	12/5/17	Continued	<p>and U 22. D. 25: 30., firing a total of 115 rounds. We then stood by to await developments.</p> <p>One of the members of the battery, Pte. Mc Bride, did very good work in digging-out, under heavy shell-fire, men of his detachment who were buried, his prompt action undoubtedly saving their lives. He has been recommended for distinction.</p>	EKB
" "	13/5/17		<p>Battery was relieved by the 173<sup>rd</sup> A. L. Y. M. B. at 7.30 a.m. &amp; moved back to the Reugny - after line.</p>	EKB
" "	14/5/17		<p>Indents were submitted for their mortars to replace those destroyed in action.</p> <p>Two H. C. Os marched out to 1<sup>st</sup> Angas Corps School</p>	EKB
" "	15/5/17		<p>All men of the battery had a bath &amp; received a change of clothing at Divisional bath at F. circuit.</p> <p>Word was received that Pte Duggan wounded on 10 inst had since died.</p>	EKB





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15th A.L.Y.M.B.

Sheet 7

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
In the Field.	16/5/17		Nothing of interest to report.	E.K.B.
" "	7/5/17.		Commenced training of new men attached to battery.	E.K.B.
" "	19/5/17.		Two new mortars were received from D.A.D.O.S. carried on with training of new personnel.	E.K.B.
" "	19/6/17.		An inspection of clothing & equipment was held & shortages noted. Training of attached men was proceeded with.	E.K.B.
" "	20/5/17.		Today being Sunday no parades were held. Capt. Truman, Lieut Gamble, & three O.R.s. marched out to Fifth Army School.	E.K.B.
" "	21/5/17		Battery was relieved in the Plagny-Cybus line by the 61st A.L.Y.M.B. and moved back to camp at Ft. 20.A.F.2. Taking over from the 2nd A.L.Y.M.B.	E.K.B.



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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
In the Field.	22/5/17.		Raining all day. Parades cancelled. A syllabus of training has been arranged and will be carried out while in this area.	C.K.B.
	23/5/17.		Carried on with training as laid down in syllabus. Lt. Keys marched out on English leave.	C.K.B.
"	24/5/17.		Parades as laid down in syllabus.	C.K.B.
"	25/5/17.		Parades as laid down in syllabus. During the afternoon crosses were erected on graves of men of battery who were killed in the fighting at Bullecourt.	C.K.B.
"	26/5/17.		Musical parades were held. Nothing else of interest.	C.K.B.



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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
In the Field	27/5/17		Church parade was held at 9 a.m. At 11 a.m. lines were inspected by P. O. C. Brigade.	C.R.B.
	28/5/17		Usual parades during the morning. In the afternoon the battery played a cricket match against B. H. Q. The battery team won by seven runs.	C.R.B.
.	29/5/17		Usual morning parades. At 2 p.m. all members of the battery were inoculated at 14 <sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance.	C.R.B.
.	30/5/17		Parades were cancelled owing to men suffering from the effects of inoculation. I.O.R. admitted to hospital.	C.R.B.
.	31/5/17		morning parade took the form of a route-march.	C.R.B.