

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

Engineers

Item number: 14/15/8

Title: 3rd Australian Pioneer Battalion

June 1917



AWM4-14/15/8

WAR DIARY

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.

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
PLOEGSTEEBRT	1917			
	1st. JUNE		Ten (10) Signallers sent to each of the 9th and 10th Brigades for duty during "Wagnu Opus".	L.S.
	2nd. JUNE		Forty-one (41) Lewis Gunners attached to the 41st Battalion for Anti-aircraft defences, during "Wagnu Opus". CASUALTIES:- Two (2) Other Ranks "Wounded".	L.S.
	3rd. JUNE		Five (5) O.R. "Wounded".	L.S.
	4th. JUNE		Two (2) O.R. "Killed in Action" and 1 Officer 17 O.R. "Wounded".	L.S.
	5th JUNE		Ten (10) O.R. "Wounded".	L.S.
	6th JUNE		Up to this date we had been engaged on preparation of Communication Trenches, Trench Mortar Emplacements, Road Repairs, Deviation Paths, Bridges, Ramps and Water Supply. Full consideration was given to work we would be required to undertake, and alternative schemes considered in event of necessity arising.	L.S.
			At 2-20 p.m. "ZERO" hour was received. Parties on duty on roads, water supply, trams, etc., and living away from the work, were immediately ordered to remain there, the Officers to return to receive instructions in order to conform to orders, and be in their positions as near as possible to time laid down. Orders were immediately got out for the Battln. to move to Battle positions. 1 O.R. "Killed" and 7 O.R. "Wounded".	L.S.
	NIGHT OF			
	6th/7th			
	JUNE.		"A" & "B" COMPANIES paraded at the Chateau (NIEPPE) before marching off. "A" COMPANY left at 11-45 p.m., following the GREEN ROUTE, and "B" COMPANY at 11 p.m., following the RED ROUTE. BATTALION HEADQUARTERS and H.Q. DETAILS, together with "C" & "D" COMPANIES, moved from the Chateau at 2-30 a.m., arriving at their Battle Position (OOSTHOVE FARM) at 3-5 a.m. Before the whole had arrived, the operation had commenced, and the mines blown. A good deal of gas was encountered in the vicinity of the Farm and in the Line. Box Respirators and Goggles were worn.	L.S.
	7th JUNE.		WORK OF THE B ATTALION:- "A" COMPANY:- Attached to the 10th Inf. Brigade Area, Constructions of a Communication Trench from the vicinity of THE ONLY WAY to the DOUVE at U.8.b.8-1 and to bridge the DOUVE at this point with an ar tillery Bridge.	L.S.

WAR DIARY

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.

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
PLOEGSTEERT. 1917.	7th JUNE (Contd.)		<p>WORK OF THE BATTALION (Continued).</p> <p>"B" COMPANY:- Attached to 9th Inf. Brigade Area. Construction of a trench from head of Sap 3 across NO MAN'S LAND only, in the direction of U.9.c.9-1 in ULSTER AVENUE (1 Platoon) and construction of a Communication Trench formed by opening up the ANTON'S FARM Russian Sap and continuing it across NO MAN'S LAND only, towards ULRICA AVENUE at U.9.c.7-6 (3 Platoons).</p> <p>"C"&"D" COYS. remained in Reserve at OOSTHOVE FARM, where B.H.Q. was located during operations.</p> <p>ROAD PLATOON:- Patrolling of Divisional Roads. Clearing the MESSINES ROAD of timber and debris, filling in holes and trenches on it as far down as our Front Line inclusive. Reconnoitring the road up to BON FERNIER CABARET Corner (U.2.b.3-2) and sending info of location report).</p> <p>TRAMWAY PLATOON:- Maintaining the PLOEGSTEERT TRAM SYSTEM. Reconnoitring and preparing a track to enable Tram Head to be pushed from PROWSE POINT to U.9.c. Central.</p> <p>WATER PLATOON:- Maintaining and repairing water supply, RED LODGE, PLOEGSTEERT SYSTEM.</p> <p>8-40 The LEWIS GUNNERS attached to 11th Brigade for anti-aircraft defences, reported back.</p> <p>A.M. 2-35 Message received from "A" COMPANY asking for relief, as the men were practically exhausted and work progressing very slowly owing to heavy shelling. Information forwarded to C.R.E., and it was not considered advisable to reinforce.</p> <p>P.M. 10-41 Further report received from "A" COMPANY that all work was progressing favourably and no fresh casualties.</p> <p>p.m. 6-30 "B" COMPANY report their work not then started as it was impossible to work in the daylight, due to their tasks being at the Pivot Point, and therefore under very intense fire.</p> <p>p.m. TOTAL CASUALTIES:- KILLED 4 O.R. DIED OF WOUNDS 4 O.R. WOUNDED 1 Officer and 101 O.R.</p>	<p>LB</p> <p>LB</p> <p>LB</p> <p>LB</p>
8th JUNE	1:0	A.M.	<p>"A" COMPANY report good progress with work and trouble with gas shells. 1 additional man wounded.</p> <p>5.0 "A" COMPANY work proceeding satisfactorily. THE ONLY WAY in excellent order. Two Platoons resting and two working. A considerably amount of lachrymatory gas in the wood.</p> <p>A.M. 11 am. "A" COMPANY work going ahead well, shelling decreasing.</p> <p>8 p.m. "A" COMPANY had to withdraw party owing to heavy artillery fire, started work again and had to withdraw at 10-55 p.m.</p>	<p>LB</p>

WAR DIARY

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.

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

SHEET NO. 3.
(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
PLOEGSTEERT	1917. 8th JUNE (Contd.)		<p>"B" COMPANY altered location of work, taking over TORONTO EXTENSION, which was then right across to BOSCHE PARAPET at a depth of 4' and parapet of 2 to 3 feet. Proposed working on the old Front Line to GLOUCESTER AVENUE on the night of the 8th/9th, the men resting during the day. The enemy continued to shell the new work.</p> <p>ROAD PLATOON and TRAMWAY PLATOON going ahead with the work. Roads and tram lines in good order and trafficable.</p> <p>WATER PLATOON. Considerable trouble was experienced. Many pipes had been blown out, sand reported in RED LODGE BORE, but the party, although shelling was extremely heavy, worked continuously throughout, and a supply of water was always obtainable.</p> <p>4-15 P.M. A defensive scheme was prepared to hold the Farm in case of anything unforeseen happening. Owing to constant shelling of the Farm, and as at any moment heavy casualties may occur, positions were allotted all Platoons, so that they could rapidly find suitable cover, and so minimise casualties.</p> <p>9-30 P.M. Heavy shelling of roads in the vicinity of the Farm occurred, and all ranks were ordered to cover in the trenches. This was carried out without casualties.</p> <p>5-25 P.M. The trench from SEAFORTH FARM to the DOUVE RIVER was completed by "A" Company, except for approaches. The trench was cramped in several places, and ground generally very bad and drainage difficult. The quantity of wire about was interfering with digging.</p> <p>ROAD PLATOON report HYDE PARK CORNER to the DOUVE RIVER - BESSINES ROAD in good condition and fit for transport. The bridging of the River was then in progress.</p> <p>CASUALTIES:- 1 O.R. Killed. 26 O.R. Wounded.</p>	<p>dh</p> <p>dh</p> <p>dh</p> <p>dh</p> <p>dh</p> <p>dh</p> <p>dh</p> <p>dh</p>
	9th JUNE.		<p>6 a.m. "A" COMPANY resumed work. B.H.Q. moved back to the Chateau, NIEPPE, and were joined by "A" & "B" Coys. later in the day.</p> <p>2-30 p.m. "B" COMPANY report work progressing favourably. The C.T., TORONTO EXTENSION, was in right up to ULSTER SWITCH, junction with ULSTER AVENUE, and the Sap between LONE HOUSE AVENUE running right over the enemy Front Line and about to be continued.</p>	<p>dh</p>

WAR DIARY

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.

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

SHEET NO. 4.
(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
PLOGSTEEBT.	9-30 9th JUNE - P.M. (Contd.) 11.45 P.M. 2-25 A.M.		<p>"C" COMPANY report relieving "B" COMPANY, and Coy.H.Qtrs. at FORT HERKS, U.19.b.6-4. One Platoon reserved for roads.</p> <p>"D" COMPANY relieved "A" COMPANY, with the exception of one Platoon working for C.R.A.</p> <p>TRAIWAY PLATOON report all personnel had returned to CANPAC DUMP owing to intense enemy shelling. Train lines holding out well. WAVERLEY Line had been damaged considerably, but PROWSE BOYD Line and SEAFORTH had not suffered as badly. The PROWSE EXTENSION from PROWSE POINT to the AVENUE FARM had been located and formed up, but it was impossible to make great progress on account of the limited personnel, and very badly broken state of the ground.</p> <p>ROAD PARTY reports all work progressing favourably. Bridge on MESSINES ROAD over the DOUVE RIVER nearly completed. This party worked 12 hours on and 4 hours off. At the present time they are urgently requiring relief, or an alteration of hours will be necessary. Approval given for this party to return to Billets and rest for the night.</p> <p>CASUALTIES 4 O.R. KILLED, 14 O.R. WOUNDED.</p>	<p>llh</p> <p>llh</p> <p>llh</p>
10th JUNE.	6 a.m.		<p>"C" COMPANY report having been engaged building up TORONTO SAP and ANTON'S FARM Sap. A fair night's work had been done but shelling exceedingly heavy and a fair number of gas shells over. At times the fire was so intense that the party had to withdraw.</p> <p>ROAD PLATOON went out again, as a convoy of material was awaiting them.</p> <p>11-15 Message from C.R.E. to construct crossings over trenches at U.26.a.5-1 and U.26.b.0-1 to permit passage of artillery. This work was very urgent as the guns may have to be taken out that night.</p> <p>4-15 ROAD PLATOON report work progressing favourably. Bridge across the DOUVE complete and all holes in road repaired. They were then repairing the road leading up MESSINES HILL and placing a foundation of Pit Props.</p> <p>4-20 "D" COMPANY reported heavy shelling all night. The Platoon detailed for artillery work completed all the work before it. "D" COMPANY commenced digging in the vicinity of U.8.a.9-2 to UNGODLY AVENUE</p> <p>5-30 Exceedingly heavy shelling in the vicinity of MESSINES ROAD, BOSCHE LINE and ASH AVENUE.</p>	<p>llh</p> <p>llh</p> <p>llh</p>

WAR DIARY

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.

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

SHEET NO. 5.
(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information <i>laid</i>	Remarks and references to Appendices
PLOEGSTEERT	1917. 10th JUNE (Contd.)	9-30 P.M.	<p>TRAMWAY PLATOON report about 300 yards of new line from PROUSE POINT to U.14.b.9-5 and formation completed to U.19.c.2-2. The Junction of the light railway and PROUSE POINT LINE had been badly knocked about by the explosion of a Dump. CANPAC DUMP was heavily shelled during the night, and line damaged considerably.</p> <p>C.R.E. ordered the relief of "C" & "D" COMPANIES. Two Platoons of "A" & "B" COMPANY to start work at 2 a.m. Marched out and reported 6 p.m. C.R.E. called regarding the relief of "C" & "D" Companies., and it was suggested to work them on alternate days from 2 a.m. to 6 p.m.</p> <p>CASUALTIES:- 1 O.R. DIED OF WOUNDS. 1 O.R. KILLED IN ACTION and 14 O.R. WOUNDED.</p>	<p><i>ll</i></p>
	11th JUNE	10-45 A.M.	<p>"C" COMPANY report two Platoons working on TORONTO TRENCH and two Platoons on ANTON'S FARM TRENCH. Work on the Farm completely upset by an unexpected raiding party, the consequent barrage stopping the work. This work was carried on from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., when the enemy's barrage fell upon portion of our line necessitating retirement. At midnight they were still unable to commence work owing to an attack on the POTTERIE FARM. Throughout the night, the wood has been heavily shelled with the result that casualties occurred.</p>	<p><i>ll</i></p>
		2-30 P.M.	<p>Party from "A" COMPANY ordered to report to "B" & "C" Batteries to construct bridges to allow the passage of guns, clearing foreground, felling trees, removing hedges, construction of dugouts.</p> <p>Relief arranged for "X" COMPANY, trains and water supply.</p> <p>Two Platoons "C" & "D" COMPANIES ordered for duty on the Right and Left Brigade Areas, to leave at 2 a.m. and remain till 6 p.m.</p>	<p><i>ll</i></p>
		12.0 M.N.	<p>"A" COMPANY report work completed for batteries. 4 trees felled. Road cleared, 2 bridges completed, one Dugout completed. Work progressing favourably.</p>	<p><i>ll</i></p>
	12th JUNE	6 a.m.	<p>The Battalion moved from the Chateau, NIEPPE, to new Billets at 28 S.W. T.26.a.5-8.</p> <p>The ROAD PLATOON proceeded to work on MESSINES ROAD, where they were relieved in the evening by the New Zealand Pioneers.</p>	<p><i>ll</i></p>

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118.

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(~~Erased 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
PLOEGSTEERT	1917.			
	12th JUNE (Contd.)		One Platoon from "C" COMPANY, engaged in preparing the way for the tram lines, carried on until relieved at night time by the New Zealanders. The TRAMWAY parties for ordinary trench and artillery lines, returned at 7 p.m., having handed over. CASUALTIES:- 1 O.R. WOUNDED.	ll ll
	13th JUNE		All the Battalion is now practically at rest, except for one or two parties on odd jobs.	ll
		1-30 P.M.	Conference at C.R.E.'S Office, where it was found that the Pioneers and Engineers were to be given Corps work. The work allotted this Unit was the making of two Communication Trenches joining up MESSINES ROAD, through the ONLY WAY to THE PIPPLE near ULRICA AVENUE, and a second one from LA HUTTE, via COOK'S WAY and WESTWOOD AVENUES, right over towards THE NOAT (Sheet 28 U.16.a.1-6) in a Westerly direction. Officers were detailed to make a reconnaissance of the proposed trenches and furnish reports. "X" COMPANY ordered to stand by until further orders.	ll ll
	14th JUNE		Officers detailed, went out to make a reconnaissance as ordered, and the Battalion stood by awaiting orders to construct these trenches.	
		4-15 P.M.	Instructions received that no work was to be started until further orders.	ll
		11 p.m.	C.R.E. Ordered the work on the trenches to be started, leaving Camp at 9 a.m. the following morning.	
	15th JUNE		"A" & "B" COMPANIES moved out at 9 a.m. to construct the trenches as ordered. "A" COMPANY'S task was the making of a C.T. joining up MESSINES ROAD, through THE ONLY WAY to THE PIPPLE near ULRICA AVENUE, and "B" COMPANY, the making of a C.T. from LA HUTTE, via COOK'S WAY and WESTWOOD AVENUES, right over towards THE NOAT in a Westerly direction.	ll
		10.6 p.m.	80% of THE ONLY WAY from MESSINES ROAD to head of THE ONLY WAY was completed, and about 250 yards of trench from the head of THE ONLY WAY in hand, 150 yards completed.	ll

WAR DIARY

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.

or
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

SHEET NO. 7.
(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
FLOEG STREET.	1917. 15th JUNE (Contd.)		The following were recommended for immediate award, principally for initiative, courage and example under shell fire:- Lieut. J. H. LINDON,) 2nd/Lt. J. H. JAMES) MILITARY CROSS. No. 71. L/Corpl. A.E. HELL.) 1076, L/Sergt. W.L. NO'CONNOR) DISTINGUISHED CONDUCT MEDAL. 1284, Private C.R. WINTER) 234, do L.B. TAYLOR.) 454, L/Corpl. A.C. IRVINE.) 316, T/L/Sgt. J.R. SMETHURST.) MILITARY MEDAL. 259, Sergeant E.E. HANN.) 233, Corpl. D. FRASER.) 471, L/Cpl. N. LEA)	LH
			"B" COMPANY carrying on with work on ONTARIA AVENUE, which had been heavily shelled. Reconstructed and repairs crumps, working till 4 a.m.	LH
			New cut across NO MAN'S LAND commenced for a length of about 200 yards.	
	JUNE 16th		"A" & "D" COMPANIES commenced work in the trenches again, and from then on two Companies worked on alternate days. CASUALTIES:- 13 O.R. WOUNDED.	LH
	JUNE 17th		"A" COMPANY placed at the disposal of the C.E. Corps Troops, for work on pipe lines to Hill 63. "B" COMPANY on Southern Communication trench. "C" COMPANY on Northern Communication Trench.	LH
	JUNE 18th		The Battalion moved to Billets at HILLSIDE CAMP (28 S.W. T.14.C.3-5).	
	JUNE 19th		Companies engaged on work allotted on 17th.	LH
	JUNE 20th		CASUALTIES:- 4 Other Ranks WOUNDED.	

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118.

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
PLOEGSTRAERT	1917.			
	JUNE 21st..		Orders issued that all parties working in Right Divisional Area would rejoin their Unit on the evening of the 22nd. CASUALTIES 1 O.R. WOUNDED.	dl
	JUNE 22nd.		Companies allotted work as under:- "A" COMPANY:- General trade work. "B" COMPANY:- Under Front Line Brigadier. "C" COMPANY:- Construction and maintenance of tramways under the C.R.E. "D" COMPANY:- resting and training. Nine (9) Lewis Gunners from "B" & "C" Companies furnished to each 42nd and 43rd Battln.s, for anti-aircraft defence work. CASUALTIES:- 2 O.R. WOUNDED.	dl
	JUNE 23rd		"A" COMPANY commenced work on general maintenance as allotted.	
	JUNE 24th		"B" COMPANY commenced work constructing bus track from South of MESSINES to the rear of the SUPPORT LINE. The following awards recommended on the 15th JUNE, were received:- MILITARY MEDALS:- No. 1284, Pte. C. R. WINTER. No. 234, Pte. L. B. TAYLOR. 454, L/C. A. C. IRVINE. 316, T/L. Sgt. J. R. SMETHURST. 259, Sgt. E. E. WANN. 233, Cpl. D. FRASER. 471, L/C. W. LIA.	dl
	JUNE 25th		"C" COMPANY commenced work on Tramlines.	
	JUNE 26th		CASUALTIES:- 2 OFFICERS 4 O.R. KILLED. 1 OFFICER 13 O.R. WOUNDED. 1 O.R. DIED OF WOUNDS.	dl
	JUNE 27th		LEWIS GUNNERS furnished for Anti-aircraft work on 22nd, returned. Nine LEWIS GUNNERS furnished 40th and 41st Battln. for Anti-aircraft work, "A" & "D" COYS., supplying the necessary personnel. CASUALTIES:- 6 O.R. WOUNDED.	dl
	JUNE 28th		The Battalion shifted to new Billets as under:- B.H.Q. TAHUTONGA CAMP (T.19.b.5-5) "B" COY. with B.H.Q. "C" COY. HUTTING CAMP (T.20.c.3-7) "D" COY. VAUXHALL CAMP (T.19.d.3-0) TRANSPORT FOREAR CAMP.	dl

WAR DIARY

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.

or
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

SECRET NO. 9
(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
PLOEGSTEERT	1917.			
	JUNE 29th		CASUALTIES:- 2 OTHER RANKS WOUNDED.	
	JUNE 30th		All Units engaged on work as allotted:- CASUALTIES:- NIL.	
<p><i>Plut Law Lt. Col.</i> <i>3/7/17. C.O. 3rd Aust. Pioneer</i></p>				