

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

Signals

Item number: 22/13/8

Title: 3rd Australian Division Signals
Company

June 1917



AWM4-22/13/8

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
STEENWERCK	1 st June	Friday	<p>Continued fine weather. Alteration of switchboards in Signal office, D.H.Q., to conform with tactical and administrative considerations of Magnum Opus. Information as per B.213:- Struck off strength - Cpl. Matthews R.A. to No. 2 A.C.C.S. - 23/5/17. Spr. Smart R.A. to 3rd Div. Base Depot 1/6/17. Taken on strength:- Spr. Mitchell H.W. from Sig. Depot, ABBEVILLE 27/5/17; Spr. Lilburn A.A. do. 29/5/17; Sgt. McCarthy H. from A.G.B.D. ETAPLES. Rejoined Unit - Lieut. C.E.H. Ferguson rejoined from Hospital 30/5/17. Promotions, etc: Dvr. Wylie W. remastered Sapper dated 31/5/17; Spr. Kennedy W.A. to be Driver vice Wylie; Cpl. Roberts H.L. to be Sgt. vice Mayman dated 28/5/17. Mentioned in despatches - Cpl. Cpl. Milliken E. No. 25427 Driver Waterston C.A., signal personnel, "J" Group, Arty., - killed in action; No. 8424 Spr. Hosking B.E. (also "J" Group) wounded at duty. Traffic in Signal office D.H.Q. and Bde. offices also becoming heavier. Additional Morse circuits to BUO installed and working O.K. Second line to STEENWERCK exchange connected to No. 13 Administrative Board. 11th Corps report Zeppelin over ARRAS at 11.30 p.m. All concerned warned.</p>	<p><i>J.W.</i> Cpl. Smith to be Sgt vice dated 28/5/17</p>
"	2 nd June	Sat	Nothing to report.	<i>J.W.</i>
"	3 rd June	Sun	Nothing to report.	<i>J.W.</i>
"	4 th June	Monday	<p>Enemy heavily shelling. 3 buried routes cut - CF - DA, BN - BS, BN - BT. No. 3 Sect. (11th Bde.) handed over Signal office G.I.1 at 9.0 a.m. Section proceeded to new Hdqrs. at GF 76 where office arranged, and communications established with local units, also GI 1 and GT 2 (including sounder). 3 N.C.Os. and 8 men returned to GI 1 resuming communications at 9.0 p.m.</p>	<i>J.W.</i>

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STEENWERCK	5 th June	Tuesday	No.3 Section (11th Bde.) handed over control of communications GI 1 sector (under orders from Brigade Major, 11th Bde.) to composite Section 57th Division.	Jwd
"	6 th June	Wed.	Y Day. Final preparation and testing of communications prior to offensive. 11th Brigade in reserve.	Jwd
"	7 th June	Thursday	<p>MESSINES RIDGE offensive. O.C. Signals reports:-</p> <p>Buried Telephonic communication to Cable Heads in the front Cable. line was maintained throughout the operations.</p> <p>Buried routes were repeatedly hit by shells of large calibre but only one new main bury was actually cut - which occurred during the artillery battle on X day. This was repaired by two skilled linemen - L/Cpls. Nichol J.F. and Chadwick H. - who worked under heavy shell fire and restored communication in a remarkably short time under extremely difficult and trying conditions.</p> <p>Another route was badly smashed for a considerable distance through the explosion of a large dump of heavy gun ammunition stacked on it.</p> <p>Several others of the old buried routes were cut, but no material delay occurred, traffic being diverted by other routes or the break bridged across temporarily by ground cable until proper repairs effected.</p> <p>Traffic. Telegraphic and telephonic traffic was exceptionally heavy at Divisional H.Q. Signal office. A total of 1,876 messages was handled on Z day and 1,350 on Z/A day. The messages were generally of a lengthy character, the totals not giving an adequate description of the actual amount of business transacted. Thanks, however, to the splendid efforts of the highly skilled personnel of the Signal office staff the business was disposed of expeditiously. 8 telegraph circuits were used.</p>	Jwd

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STEENWERCK	7 June	Thursday	<p>A special feature was the installation of a telegraph set (superimposed) to the Forward Artillery Exchange. This idea worked exceedingly well and disposed of large numbers of messages that would otherwise have had to have been transmitted by telephone, which, undoubtedly, would have caused serious congestion and delay on the speaking lines. An extra 20-line switchboard was installed for the operations and the circuits adjusted to make one Tactical and one Administrative Board. This scheme was very beneficial. Both boards were taxed to their utmost capacity but calls were put through promptly and the system worked smoothly. Another great saving of time was the fact of running the Artillery system off the same switchboards, thus cutting out an unnecessary exchange, and giving a better and more efficient service than would otherwise have been possible.</p>	Jm
			<p>PIGEONS. A large number of pigeons were issued for Z day and a fair number of messages were received. Special direct telephones were placed at the Lofts at NIEPPE and STEENWERCK so that no time would be lost in getting the messages through immediately the birds came into the Lofts. Some very important messages were received this way when other means were not available.</p>	Jm
			<p>This means might well be further exploited. The writing of messages needs improvement - some of the addresses "To" and "From" being very vague.</p> <p>POWER BUZZER & AMPLIFIER. A few important messages were handled by the Right Brigade, who were constantly in touch by this means, but it was not used to any extent on account of other methods being available. Left Brigade sent messages by power Buzzer but were apparently not picked up. Ascertained afterwards Amplifier out of order.</p>	

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STEENWERCK	7 th June	Thunder	<p><u>VISUAL.</u> Visual was attempted from Forward Stations but was not read owing to thick dust and smoke caused by barrage.</p>	
		Report contained	<p><u>RUNNERS.</u> Did excellent service and brought back information through heavy shell fire when lines were temporarily broken.</p>	Lent
			<p><u>MOTOR CYCLISTS.</u> A special service was installed to HYDE PARK CORNER and a number of motor cyclists stationed there for dealing with traffic from Brigades in the event of a breakdown in telegraph and telephonic communication.</p>	
			<p><u>BRIGADE FORWARD STATIONS.</u> Parties moved out from each cable-head, on the principles laid down in S.S.148, and established Bde. Forward Stations in the vicinity of pre-determined localities.</p> <p>The Right Brigade found it impossible to maintain lines from the Brigade Forward Station at U.O.c.7.5 to the cable-head on account of severe enfilade shell fire and consequently opened a station at the cable-head, the Forward communications being maintained by Runners, pigeons and Power Buzzer. Subsequently, when fire eased off, cables were run out and telephonic communications re-established and a shallow bury, containing 16 pair of lines was laid out and was working through when Division relieved.</p> <p>Left Brigade established lines from Zero hour to suitable dug-out at U.3.c.6.0 and worked same until 8.25 a.m. when, owing to heavy enemy barrage, it was found impossible to maintain same right through. A relay station was, therefore, run up to the fringe of the barrage and the intervening distance to cable-head covered by Runner service. This arrangement was carried on till 6.0 p.m. when fire slackened somewhat and telephone lines were again established.</p> <p>Lateral lines were run out from Advanced Battalion Hdqrs. to Brigade Forward Stations and held well.</p> <p>Right Brigade also ran lines to Companies after</p>	
			<p>consolidation. Forms 6218/10n.</p>	

A6945 Wt. W11422/M1160

35,000 12/10 D.I.C.L. ~~Forms 6218/10n.~~

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STEENWEACK	7 th June	Thurs. O.C. Signals report concluded	<p>ARTILLERY FORWARD F.O.Os. Artillery F.O.Os. laid cable from cable-heads which were maintained and rendered valuable service until 8.0 a.m. when enemy's barrage was so severe that it was impossible to further maintain same. Each observer, in addition, carried two pairs of pigeons and important messages were also received by this means.</p>	JW
			<p>GENERAL. Generally speaking, the communication throughout worked well, and so far as is ascertainable there was not a single hitch or delay in getting messages through quickly to their destination. The resources of the Company were taxed to the utmost in order to provide a thoroughly efficient service and I cannot speak too highly of the way that the whole of the Officers, N.C.Os. and Men, including the attached personnel from Pioneers and Infantry, carried out their duties; in some cases under the most trying circumstances.</p>	
"	8 th June	Jordan	<p>Continuation of Offensive. Lines generally holding. Heavy signal traffic maintained. (period covered by O.C. Signals report.) Records as per B. 213:- Taken on strength from 8th Aus.F.A. Bde on 1/6/17: Cpl. Bevan F.L., Bdr. Taylor R.M., Gnr. Smiles G., Henderson H.W.L., Brearley C.H., Rowe S.A., Thomas W.S., Phillips P.D., Case S.J., Dvr. Channon A.J., Waterston G.A., Diamond G.R., Mazzarol C.C., Cruickshank W. From Signal Depot, ABBEVILLE - Spr. Eddy M.T. 7/6/17. Struck off strength - Dvr. Waterston G.A. 7/6/17 Killed in Action., Spr. Hosking B.E., 3/6/17, to C.C.S. Wounded., L/Cpl. Skidmore A. 4/6/17 to C.C.S., Cpl. Dale T. to 6th Div. Sig. Coy. A.E. 8/6/17. Remustered as Sappers Dvr. Channon A.J. Cruickshank W.</p>	JW
"	9 th June	Sat.	<p>Forward parties from 11th Bde. Sigs. sent out to relieve 10th Bde. Sigs.</p>	JW

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STEENWERCK	10 th June	Sunday	11th Bde. Forward station blown out. Sappers Simons and Watson killed. Communications re-established within 5 minutes and relief effected.	<i>Jwd</i>
"	11 th June	Monday	Maintenance of Forward Brigade (11th) communications under heavy fire during progress of our attack.	<i>Jwd</i>
"	12 th June	Tuesday	11th Brigade relieved 8.0 a.m. and No. 3 Section returned to NEUVE EGLISE where Signal office established.	<i>Jwd</i>
BAILLEUL	13 th June	Wednesday	11th Brigade moved from NEUVE EGLISE to DOULIEU and Signal office established. 3rd Divnl. Hdqrs. moved to rest at BAILLEUL.	<i>Jwd</i>
"	14 th June	Thurs.	Nothing to report.	<i>Jwd</i>
"	15 th June	Friday	Artillery communications in U.26 area very badly cut by enemy counter battery work. Records as per B.213:- Taken on strength - From 7th Aus.F.A.Bde. 1/6/17 Cpl. Patrick R.K., Bdr. Tulley A.L., Spr. Robinson H.W., Tinsdale F., Smith T.V., Cameron F.C., Skelton B.D., Moroney W.J., Shannon A.G.H., Williams H.M. Dvr. Walker T.C., Wilson E.M.; Spr. Patterson J., Talbot J.G. From Signal Depot, ABBEVILLE 13/6/17, Spr. Earnshaw W.J., Anderson V.R., Singleton G.H. Struck off strength - C.S.M. Houlihan T.F. to Sig. Ofc's. Cadet Course and placed on Supy. List 13/6/17, Spr. Simons N.G. Killed in Action, Spr. Watson T.J. "X" Estab. Killed in Action, 10/6/17; Spr. Scully J.S. to C.C.S. wounded 7/6/17, Spr. Petschler G.V.D. to C.C.S. wounded 7/6/17, Spr. Cox H.E. to C.C.S. wounded 8/6/17, 2/Cpl. Brownsmith S.H. to C.C.S. 9/6/17. To Hospital Spr. Risbridger J.D. to D.R.S. 9/6/17, Spr. Ross T.A. to D.R.S. 10/6/17.	<i>Jwd</i>
"	16 th June	Sat	Nothing to report.	<i>Jwd</i>

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BAILLEUL	17 th June	Sunday	Support Artillery Brigade withdrawn.	Jm
"	18 th June	Monday	Spr. Abernethy R.J. (No. 3 Sect.) admitted 9th F. Amb. "J" Artillery Group dissolved. 8th F.A. Bde. recollected under command.	Jm
"	19 th June	Tuesday	8th Aus. F.A. Bde. moved to T. 18. d. 3. 9. Alteration of 7th Aus. E.A. Bde. sector involving use of different O.P.'s. O.C. Artillery Signals arranging requisite lines.	Jm
"	20 th June	Wednes.	7th Aus. F.A. Bde. again changed sector returning to cover Southern sector. The lines utilised running through RC - SF - SL - LS - LF system.	Jm
"	21 st June	Thurs.	Nothing to report.	Jm
"	22 nd June	Friday	11th Bde. moves from DOULIEU to NEUVE EGLISE. At 5.0 a.m. advanced party forward to Bde. H.Q. in MESSINES sector. Panel points at C.D. 1, C.D. 2, WM, DM, XH, PQ, LH, manned. Advanced Div. store established at WM. 9th Bde. took over Sig. office FQ 46 at 11.0 a.m. Communication in this area is all through buried systems. Communication being maintained by PB between Left Bde. and LD 3 thence by phone to Bde. H.Q. Pigeon service carrying on satisfactorily. Runners used used to Forward and Back areas. Delay occasionally caused by Units not notifying their Headquarters when moving. Records as per B. 213:- Taken on strength from 3rd Aus. Div. Arty. H.Q. 1/6/17:- Gnr. Doughty A., Martin H.S., Christensen G.A., Iggulden G.E. From Sig. Depot, ABBEVILLE, Spr. Hosking B.E. 18/6/17. Struck off strength:- Spr. Talbot to C.C.S. 15/6/17, Spr. Green E.J. to 4th D.A.C. 8/6/17, Sgt. Findlay L.S. Killed in Action 18/6/17, Spr. Leyden P.J. to 3rd London Gen. Hospital 18/6/17, Gnr. Doughty A. to 3rd Aus. Div. Arty. H.Q. 22/6/17. Entered Hospital:- L/Cpl. Nichol J.F. 16/6/17, Dvr. Miller K.V.B. 20/6/17. Promotions, etc. C.Q.M.S. Allan J.W. to be C.S.M. & W.O. II vice Houlihan, dated 13/6/17. Cpl. Pynor S.E. to be C.Q.M.S. vice Allan, dated 13/6/17. T/Sgt. Gifford to be Sgt. vice Hughan 16/3/17. T/Cpl. Howie to Cpl. vice Gifford 16/3/17. T/2nd Cpl. Kennedy to be 2nd Cpl. vice Howie dated 16/3/17.	Jm

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RAVELSBERG	23 rd June	Sat.	11th Bde. H.Q. established LA BASSE COUR FARM, relief of 74th Inf. Bde. being completed 3.0 a.m. Existing lines working but no alternative routes available. - Laterals to flank Battns. missing. Cpl. Armstrong and party reported 11th Bde. for Power Buzzer communication work. For "J" Group Arty. - Q.P. lines, one line (buried) arranged to LH exchange. 10th Bde. H.Q. moved to T.2.b.35.75 at 10.0 a.m. - 3rd Divnl. Headquarters moved from BAILLEUL (in rest) to RAVELSBERG Camp.	Jwd
"	24 th June	Sun.	Consequent upon recommendation Military Medals awarded to following N.C.O's and Men for gallantry and devotion to duty during MESSINES offensive:- 2/Cpl. Tully A.L., 7th Aus.F.A. Bde.; L/Cpls. Nichol J.F., Allsop V., Chadwick H., H.Q. & No.1 Sect.; Sgt. Prentice J.T., Spr. Huxley C., Nelson J.M. No. 2 Section; Spr. Grunike M. & Redwood A.V., No.3 Section; L/Cpl. Hallissey V.V. No.4 Section.	Jwd
"	25 th June	Mon	Forward bury work commenced under Lt. Ferguson and Lt. Simpson.	Jwd
"	26 th June	Tues.	Maintenance of forward communications under heavy shell fire. Lines being continually cut. New line laid from AZK - AIDC - AZKR. 8th Aus.F.A. Bde. moved back to rest at T.25.d.6.7. All men temporarily attached to Exchanges withdrawn also.	Jwd
"	27 th June	Wed	Amplifier and power buzzer communication between Advanced Bde. (11th) and Left Battn. stations established.	Jwd
"	28 th June	Thurs.	O.C. No.3 Sect. (11th Bde.) in weekly report states Battn. offices are established in good dug-outs. Company offices are in temporary dug-outs. These are very wet and uncomfortable and render work difficult.	Jwd

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RAVELSBERG	29 th June	Friday	<p>8th Aus.F.A.Bde. addressed by General PLUMER. Communication opened by 8th with PAPOT Exchange. Linesman's dug-out (11th Bde.) blown out and all lines badly cut. Communications restored immediately. No casualties. A.F.B. 213 of 29/6/17 records:- Taken on strength from Sig. Depot, ABBEVILLE -- Sprs. Clark C.L., Howse F.T., Green W.P., and Olive S.L. 22/6/17. "X" Establishment (Power Buzzer personnel) ptes. Kerlin A.H. from 41st Bn. and Small D.J. from 42nd Bn. 23/6/17. Struck off strength:- Spr. Green W.P. wounded to C.C.S. 19/6/17 and Spr. Ross T.A. to No 50 C.C.S. 20/6/17. Admitted Hospital:- Spr. Abemethy R.J. & Ross T.A. 20/6/17, Spr. Liddell R.S. 22/6/17, Spr. McTier J. 28/6/17 and Spr. Small D.J. (X Estab.) to Hospital 25/6/17.</p>	Jm
"	30 th June	Sat.	<p>Shell-burst outside 11th Brigade Signal office cut all lines. Communication only temporarily interfered with.</p>	Jm