

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

Engineers

Item number: 14/20/20

Title: 1st Field Company, Australian
Engineers

August 1916



AWM4-14/20/20

WAR DIARY

OR

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

1st Div. Coy. Engrs.
1st Aust. Div. -

Army Form C. 2118.

VOL

II 381

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Pernois	1/8/16		Company training carried out. Drill, laying out strong points, route marching.	
do	do	2/8/16	Same work as carried out yesterday.	
do	do	3/8/16	Received orders from C.R.E. to dump pontoon and tiddon truck gear at Contay to enable the waggons to be used for carting material. Mechanical equipment overhauled and deficiencies replaced. Company training as mentioned above carried out.	
do	do	4/8/16	Under instructions from C.R.E. returned searchlight waggon & two horses to Abberille.	
do	do	5/8/16	Route marching and the laying out of strong points practised.	
do	do	6/8/16	Training as usual.	
do	do	7/8/16	do do do Received orders from 1st Inf. Bde to be prepared to move at short notice.	R. John Dyer Major

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Perruis	8/8/16		Preparations being made to move out tomorrow morning.	
La Vieogne	9/8/16		Moved out from Perruis at 1000 and arrived at La Vieogne at 1500	
Hervissant	10/8/16		Moved out from La Vieogne at 1005 and arrived at Hervissant at 1230.	
do do	11/8/16		Standing by.	
do do	12/8/16		do do.	
do do	13/8/16		do do. Lieut J. E. G. Stenison taken on strength as second in command from 2 nd F. Coy. -	
do do	13/8/16		2/Lieut Crossland taken on strength from 3 rd Field Coy. -	
Vadencomt	14/8/16		Moved out from Hervissant at 1600 and arrived at Vadencomt at 1800.	
Albert.	15/8/16		Moved out from Vadencomt at 0945 and arrived at Albert at 1230. Company bivouaced on Brickfield Hill just outside the town.	

R. John Major

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15th Field Coy
15th Aust. Div.

Army Form C. 2118.

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La Boisselle X14C 12	16/8/16		<p>Major Byer, Lieut Stimson, Keast & McPoye, two senior NCO's from each section, 4 runners and a burrower left Pinnerfield Hill bivouac at 0400 to make a reconnaissance of the area to be taken over by 15th Inf. Bde. Guides as far as Kay trench were obtained at 13th Bde H.Q. Gordon Dump. In a fair amount of shelling we reached an old German trench running from Kay towards the left and followed it for about 300' till we came to some men belonging to the Gloucesters & Bucks. then returned a short distance and entered a newly dug sap leading towards the front. This was somewhere near R33d 46. Followed this for about 200' and continued on land for another 100' following a tracing tape and entered another O.G. trench very much battered about and unoccupied. Followed this trench some distance to left and then to right. Continued to right, striking the road bridge across the trench (probably R33a 7 1/2). 4th Bn were in occupation here. The gully to the right of this was not occupied and there was no junction with the company on the next ridge. We then returned to the second line and worked over to the right, obtaining a good view of our</p>	<p>Photo 15/8/16 Byer</p>

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1st Div Coy

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1st Australian Division 381

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La Boisselle	16/8/16 (cont.)		<p>front line from about R 34 a 52. This trench was in a filthy condition, being strewn with dead, equipment and rubbish. Returned about 0830.</p> <p>Lieut Sturson reported to 1st Inf Bde H.Q. (Gordon Dumb) at 1530 as liaison officer & arranged for working parties as follows. -</p> <p>I. 2 off. 150 O.R. to report to Lieut Keast at Chalk Pit at 2015 to be met by 3 guides from 3rd Bn. Working parties to be supplied by 4th Bn.</p> <p>II 2 off 150 O.R. from 1st Bn to report to Lt McBrayde at Chalk Pit at 2045 to be met by 3 guides from 3rd Bn. Working parties to be supplied by 4th Bn.</p> <p>Each man to carry 1 pick + 1 shovel - the work being to cut saps & T heads from front line forward.</p> <p>Lt Keast, McBrayde & Crossland (IC No 4 section) met their parties at Chalk Pit as arranged but found it impossible to arrive at their destinations owing to faulty guidance and heavy shelling as per report as follows: - "Do C.R.E. 0830 17. 8. 16</p>	

R/John [Signature]

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18th Aust. Div.

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La Boisselle	16/8/16	(cont.)	<p>I have to report that no work was done on the construction of the line from R34 a 35' to R35 b 55', advancing the line on the left to include R33 b 55' and pushing forward saps and T heads on the right in accordance with 18th BDE order 1027. Great difficulty was experienced in getting the working parties on the job owing to congested traffic in the communication trenches over heavy shelling which made advancing without heavy casemates impossible. Lieut Keast reports that the guide who was to meet him at the Chalk Pit did not report. He started at 9 pm. and then pushed down along the centre track towards the front line. Parties of men were encountered going both ways causing considerable delay and finally he left the infantry behind and went on to reconnoitre with a few sappers. Owing to the absence of guide he lost his way & by the time he returned to his party, after being unable to find the trench, it was about 1215. He attempted to advance again, and, by this time, as it would have been too late to do any work, he discussed the matter with</p>	57

R/John Dyer

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La Boisselle.	16/8/16		<p>Lieut McBoyd who was working in conjunction with him and decided to return to HQ.</p> <p>The completion of the trench from R 33 d 28 to R 33 b 3 2 was not accomplished. Lieut Crossland who was to have carried out this work experienced the same difficulties also. Encountered a barrage placed across the place where he had to work. He waited till 2 am for the barrage to lift and, as it had not done so then, decided to return with his party. The trench which he was occupying at the time was deepened and improved. These works will be attempted again to-night. R. John Dyer-Hay.</p>	
do do.	17/8/16		<p>Yesterday the company moved into deep German dugouts at La Boisselle.</p> <p>Copies of section officers reports on work of night 17/18 as follows:-</p> <p>"No 1 Section met party of 75 OR. of 2nd Bn at 2100 at 6 half R Pit & proceeded to the work. Held up by working parties ahead and by Pioneer working party which cut ahead. Improved communication trench about 4 x 28 for 3/4 hour while held up. Left there at 2300 and arrived at the work at 2400.</p>	<p>R. John Dyer-Hay</p>

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1st Field Coy
18th Aust. Div.

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La Boisselle	17/8/16		<p>and continued till 0300 when we left, having deepened and widened the trench. 10 officers & 20 men were "lost en route". The portion of trench improved was front line from R 34 a 8 1/2 to R 34 b 12 1/2.</p> <p>"104 Section in conjunction with 102 section deepened front line trench (33 d) but were hindered by having to stand to from 0100 to 0200. Lieut Crossland killed by shrapnel."</p> <p>"Lieut Rogerson ^{3rd Coy} had orders to meet 104 and 75 men at 6 half R Pit at 2030 and then proceed to 33 b 81 according to instructions to cut a communication trench from that point to C Coy's (4th Bn) line. He met the working parties and arrived with them at the intersection of Ration trench and main Road (R 33 d 80) to Moquet Farm under guidance of Cpl. Austin 1st Coy. They got to this point about 2300 with only two slight casualties though the enemy were shelling heavily. Lt Rogerson then left his men shelling while he went ahead in search of the job. The cross road at R 33 d 81 was obliterated and so could not be picked up. He then went ahead along the main</p> <p style="text-align: right;">R/John T. G. ...</p>	

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
La Boiselle	17/8/16	(cont.)	<p>road and struck an old German trench which he decided to clean out and improve, as it ran towards the firing line. With this in view he brought his men up and distributed them along this old trench for a distance of 150'. This would be about 0130. The men started work and almost immediately after starting the enemy began shelling all round the vicinity with H.E. The O.G. trench was quite unsuspecting as shelling during this bombardment and it became necessary to protect the men elsewhere, so they were advised to make over to a communication trench just on the right. They sheltered here for some time during heavy shelling till about 0300 when Lt Rogerson made his way with his party back along Carter Way. His casualties were 2 inf killed + 5 emps + 3 inf. wounded.</p>	
La Boiselle	18/8/16		<p>1st Inf. BDE HQ. advanced to O.G. dugout between Chack Pit and Posins about 1830 in preparation for action. Our artillery gave intense bombardment at 1700 and at the same time smoke clouds were sent out on our right. Intense bombardment by our artillery from 2100 to 2130. 1st Field Coy task was to construct strong points at R28 C 21, Sun Run Road</p>	

R. John Bygones

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La Boisselle	18/5/16 (cont)		<p>in R28C and R33 b 55, assisted by Lt Mackay's section from 3rd Coy.</p> <p>Following is report on night work sent to CRE. "20 CRE. On the road to Moquet Farm our line was advanced by infantry from 3366 1/2 to the objective at 33655. After the usual delays from shell fire and lack of guides Lt Mackay reached the latter point at about 2230. Consulting with O/C company in line he decided the most important work was to dig a communication trench to the new capture so commenced a zig zag trench along the left side of the road between the above mentioned points. He also improved the fire trench at 33655 for a length of 30', making it practically a strong point. The communication trench referred to was about 175' in length. The casualties sustained by his party were - 4 Pappas (3rd Coy) wounded, 1 inf. Killed and 2 wounded. To the right of this the infantry did not advance. However, a fair amount of work was done on the existing post. At the road at 34 a 2.8 1/2 the trench across the road was deepened for 10' or 15' and at the junction of the trench and</p>	

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La Boisselle	18/8/16 (cont.)		road as M.G. emplacement was built to fire up the road, while an O.G. trench was improved for about 200' as a communication trench running from the 2 nd to the front line just to the left of the road 34 a 34 to 34 a 2.8 $\frac{1}{2}$. Further, to the right again, Lt Keast reports having made a strong point at 28 c 71 with wings about 30' each side from the centre for flank protection. He also improved the front line for 150' 150' to the left and 100' to the right of this point, making it deeper and wider & having a fire step. It was not considered advisable to put out any wire in front of the strong point in view of our advance from there at any moment.	
do do	19/8/16		18 th Inf. BDE H.Q. returned to Gordon Dump. Major Wyn showed Major Savage & Capt Sinclair over the front during the morning. 3 rd BDE Relieved 18 th BDE during the evening. 18 th Div Coy notes.	
				R. John Taylor Major

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La Boisselle	20/8/16		<p>Lieut Keast took sections 1 & 2 and Lieut Stimson 3 & 4 sections and improved support trench as per report as follows: "To C.R. S. 18th Div Coy worked last night on support trench 34607 to 34a34 and extension to left or west of the latter point. The enemy shelled heavily till 2330 and no work was done until then. Nearly the whole of the trench was improved by deepening and in some places widening, most of the work being done between the forward communication at 34a34 and 60 yards to the right of it - this being the worst place. The trench was extended 110 yards to the left of the forward communication towards the copse. Some of the trench was blown in while the work was being carried out. Lt Peck to Hospital. Shell shock."</p>	
do do	21/8/16		<p>Lieut Stimson and Lieut McBrayde took sections 2, 3 & 4 up to build strong points, which proved to be impossible. Were held up by enemy shelling. Redoubt trench improved on the previous night - this having been subsequently broken in many places by the enemy. Following Report sent to C.R. S. "To C.R. S. Work carried out by</p>	<p>R. John McBrayde</p>

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La Boisselle	24/8/16 (cont.)		<p>1st Field Coy on night 21/22 August.</p> <p>(a) Trench from R 34 a 21 to R 34 b 0.7 improved and cleaned out.</p> <p>(b) Communication trench from R 34 a 65 to R 34 a 73 was also reclaimed.</p> <p>Trench (a) was the work on which the company was employed on night 20/21.</p>	
Albert	22/8/16		Collected transport from Becourt Wood and shifted to bivouac on Brickfield Hill at 1700.	
Warloy	23/8/16		Company moved from Albert at 0930 and arrived at Warloy at 1230.	
Genaincourt	24/8/16		Company moved from Warloy and marched to Genaincourt.	
do do	25/8/16		Standing by.	
Scottish Lines (Mar 4/pos)	26/8/16		Company marched to Boullens and moved out by train at 1230. Detained at Hoponthe at 1530 and marched to billets at Scottish lines.	

R. John Dyer

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Scottish Lines.	27/8/16		Standing By.	
do do	28/8/16		Commenced taking over line from 9th Field Coy R.E.	
do do	29/8/16		Taking over new line.	
Y/pos.	30/8/16		Completed relief of 9th Field Coy R.E. Nos 1, 2 + 3 sections moved to advanced billets in Y/pos. Post Office, Lille Road.	
do do	31/8/16		Commenced work in line. All trenches in a shocking condition. It will be necessary to clean them all out before anything can be done to them. Lt Keast took over Right Section. Lt the Brigade " " Centre " " Sgt Cobbin " " Left Section.	

R. John Dyer Major

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information				Remarks and references to Appendices
			Appendix T.				
			Casualties during 2nd Poona Battle.				
			KILLED Officers		Wounded Officers		
			O.R.	O.R.	O.R.	O.R.	
	18/8/16		1 Lt G Woodland	181-	-	8	
	19/8/16		-	1	-	9	
	20/8/16		-	-	1 Lt Peck	1	
	21/8/16		-	-	1	3	
	22/8/16		-	-	-	1	
	23/8/16		-	-	-	-	

Appendix No. 1

R. John Doyle