

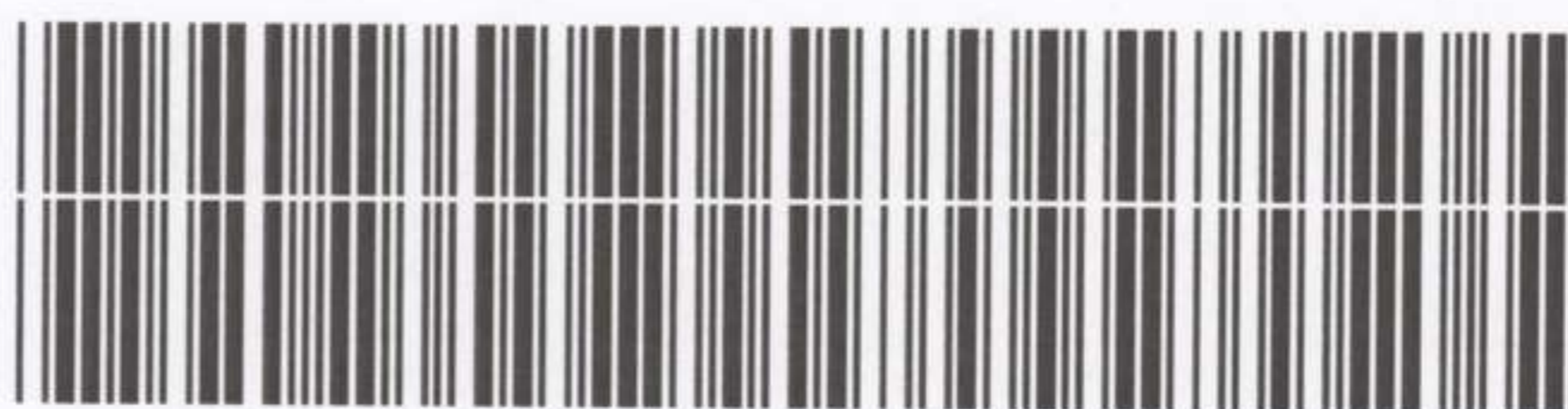
AWM4
Australian Imperial Force unit war diaries,
1914-18 War

Engineers

Item number: 14/17/13

Title: 5th Australian Pioneer Battalion

March 1917



AWM4-14/17/13

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

(Erase heading not required.)

369

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
WATERLOT FARM	1917 May 2		<p>Under orders from D.H.Q. A Coy were taken off work the ^{on} Light Railways & handed to the 15th Inf Bde for work under their orders. They were given the task of digging a sap from PORK to BAYONET trench which is in that portion recently vacated by the enemy. This leaves C² B Coy on trench maintenance; with ^{on} D Coy on ^{on} Light Railways.</p> <p>3. Anniversary of formation quiet. ETERNAL ALLEY (B Coy sector) was heavily shelled last night & filled in for 75 yds completely. This was cleared. A Coy owing to the distance from their work commenced digging forward quarters for themselves in WATLING STREET just south of QUERDELWANT.</p> <p>5. Formation of the NEEDLE LINE Railway (D Coy) is now complete to within 750 yds of our front line trenches. Platelaying is also being pushed ahead. A Coy completed their sap which was called EGG ALLEY.</p> <p>6. A Coy found suitable quarters for themselves in GRASS LANE near FLEAS. There is a deep dugout here with accommodation for 60 which is a good start. There is also a good steep bank for making more dugouts. D Coy are taking over those dug in WATLING STREET.</p> <p>7. 149 Reinforcements arrived all appear to be a good class of man. This brings us well over strength. Casualties are not serious but shelling in forward trenches is increasing & the number of direct hits are considerable. A Coys work in 15th Bde area has been practically nullified by rain - all the trenches have slipped & become impassable.</p>	Appendix 1.

WAR DIARY

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Erase heading not required.)



399

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
WATERLOT FARM.	1917			
	Mar 9		Shelling very heavy especially in front line system & NEEDLE DUMP. We had 4 men killed & 2 wounded & snowed hard towards evening.	
	11		'B & D' Coys interchanged work; D going to trench maintenance & B to Railway construction.	
	14		Started a mule haulage system on the GINCHY - NEEDLE DUMP line. Memo issued re Lewis Gun. A Coy completed EEL ALLEY running from BACON to BARLEY Branch - length of trench 860 yds. ETERNAL ALLEY was badly knocked about - especially forward portion.	Appendix 7 Appendix 8
	16		Continued EGG ALLEY into No Mans Land. 320 yds completed. Mule track is being made alongside GINCHY railway to facilitate haulage. 7 direct hits on ETERNAL ALLEY during the day.	Appendix 9
	17		Enemy retired from his front line system.	Appendix 10
	18		2 Coys were put on Railway work making mule track & extending line. The extension of ETERNAL ALLEY by a duckwalk track over the top was also put in hand & the repairs of road running from FLERS to FACTORY CORNER. 'C' Coy moved to billets in GUEVDECOURT and all 'D' Coy were concentrated at WATLING ST. all surplus kit stored & arrangements made to reduce the number of men on ration on water fatigue.	" 11.
	19		FLERS - FACTORY CORNER Road stopped & Coy put on GUEVDECOURT - BEAULENCOURT Road. 980 yds of duckwalk has been laid in extension of ETERNAL ALLEY.	
	20		All 4 Coys employed on BEAULENCOURT Railway; which is to be pushed thro' as fast as possible - 530 yds of formation was completed & 390 yds track laid.	
	21		Pushing on Railway. ETERNAL Duckwalk completed - 1615 yds long.	Appendix 3

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or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Erase heading not required.)

369

Place	Date 1917	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
WATERLOT FARM.	Mar 23		Formation of SINCHY - BEAULENCOURT Railway completed throughout - 1125 yds of rail were laid today. We had assistance of 2 sections of 25 th tunnelling Coy.	
	24		Railway completed right thro' to BEAULENCOURT. 672 yds of new track were laid & about 900 yds of old German track squared up.	
	25		Mule trains ran thro' to BEAULENCOURT delivering Artillery Ammunition. 'B' Coy moved from Waterlot Farm to billets in BEAULENCOURT.	
	27		A+C Corps went to work digging light railway under orders of Corps Light Railways 'B' Coy maintained BEAULENCOURT Railway. Snow blizzards all day. Put D Coy also in charge of the railway traffic management.	
BEINCOURT LES-BAPAUME	28		Headquarters moved to REINCOURT.	Appendix 4
	30		BEAULENCOURT Railway suffering from the fearfully wet weather we are having; but is still standing up well - Traffic returns improving daily.	
	31		Total Casualties for March 1917. 8 killed; 9 wounded; 102 all ranks admitted to hospital	
	Apr. 2		Violent snowstorm in the evening. A Coy moved to BANCOURT yesterday & C Coy to BAPAUME. This makes only one coy ^(D) in back area.	
	6		A+C Corps were detailed for work under 4 th Aust Div & moved quarters into their area A to VAULX COPSE & C to a sunken road behind VAULX-VRAUCOURT.	
8		'B' Coy & 1/2 'D' Coy moved camp to near FREMICOURT for work on roads under C.E. Corps. We had to fill in a very large crater on main BAPAUME-CAMBRAI Road. The remaining 1/2 of D Coy is controlling traffic of BEAULENCOURT Railway.	Appendix 5. Appendix 12	

Headquarters,
5th Pioneer Battalion.

To,

C.R.E.

5th Australian Division.

Work Report ending March 6th 1917.

Communication Trenches.

3 Coys have been employed in maintaining and improving the Communication Trenches in our old Divisional sector.

Since March 2nd an additional Company has been employed in digging trenches in the Left Brigade sector.

ETERNAL ALLEY is in good condition - another 150 yds has been revetted and the trench has been widened. This trench has been shelled heavily of late - on night of 2/3rd March it was completely filled in for a distance of about 75 yds.

ENERGY ALLEY. this is in poor condition, has been kept passable.

ENDLESS ALLEY, in good condition - about 300 yds further has been revetted.

OZONE ALLEY. in good condition.

A new trench has been dug in the left brigade area connecting FORK TRENCH to BARLEY TRENCH. This trench runs approximately due north from N.20.b.3.9. It is about 350 yds long, averages a depth of 4'3" - about 18" wide at bottom and 4'3" at top.

Light Railways.

The formation for the extension of the light railway to NEEDLE DUMP has been completed to N.24.a.4.7.

The track laying is now well in hand - about 100 yds so far has been laid. 2 Coys were employed on this work up to March 1st - since then only one Company. Road crossings are being made at convenient places.

Forward Accommodation.

Arrangements are in hand to provide accommodation forward in event of an advance. One company is digging splinter proof accommodation in WATLING STREET in the vicinity of N.32. central and another is being quartered in the GRASS LANE DUGOUTS and vicinity.

H. G. C.

3/3/17.

Lieut Colonel.
Commanding 5th Pioneer Battalion. A.I.F.

Headquarters,
5th Pioneer Battalion.

To,

C.R.E.

5th Australian Division.

Work Report ending March 14th 1917.

Communication Trenches.

3 Coys have been employed in maintaining and improving the Communication Trenches as before.

ETERNAL ALLEY is in fair condition only - about another 150 yards has been revetted. The trench has been badly knocked about by shell fire, especially in the forward portion, where it has been impossible to work in daylight. The recent rains have also made the trench very muddy and the infantry frequently use this trench for living purposes during the day when withdrawing from the forward portions.

Where revetted the maintenance is not heavy except for direct hits from shells: the trench is now revetted well forward of the ridge.

ENERGY ALLEY. Is in bad condition - the trench is little used and only a small amount of work is being put into it; priority being given to the other trenches.

ENDLESS ALLEY. Except for water from the recent rains this trench is in good condition - it is now revetted throughout: from entrance to SPECTRUM TRENCH with stakes and wire netting and thereon with A frames and hurdles.

OZONE ALLEY is in good condition.

EEL ALLEY. This trench 360 yards ^{long,} has been dug in the 15th Brigade Area and runs from N.21.a.9.3. to N.15.d.3.8. It is 4'3" deep, 1'9" wide at the bottom and 4'9" at the top. The sap reported in my last report has been named EGG ALLEY.

Light Railways.

The railway extension from NEEDLE DUMP has been completed to ROSE TRENCH about N.33.b.5.5. Material for further extension is being carried forward and the present line improved: but no addition is as yet been started pending the fixing of the new location.

Forward Accomodation.

3 Platoons ² Lone Company ^{all} now ^{living} ~~being~~ forward at GRASS LANE and another Company is distributed between the MILLERS SON and dugouts in WATLING STREET.

H.E.B.

Lieut Colonel.

1477/17.

Commanding 5th Pioneer Battalion. A.I.F.

369

3

Appendix No 3

6

Headquarters.
5th Pioneer Battalion.

To,

C.R.E.

5th Australian Division.

Work Report ending March 21st 1917.

COMMUNICATION TRENCHES.

From 14th to 18th one Company was employed digging Communication Trenches for the 15th Brigade, i.e. EGG ALLEY, and EEL ALLEY. From 14th to 17th two other Coys were employed on ETERNAL, ENERGY & ENDLESS ALLEY'S.

ROADS.

On 19th inst one Company started from FACTORY CORNER and repaired 400 yards of road, and from the centre of GUEUDEECOURT 200 yards of road were put in working condition. On 19th inst we took over the maintenance of the GINCHY PLANK ROAD.

DECAUVILLE TRACK.

On the 14th to 17th inst one Company was engaged in making the formation and laying plates from NEEDLE TRENCH to MILLERS DAUGHTER. This formation was completed but the direction of the line being changed the plates stopped short of the SUNKEN ROAD. On the 18th and 19th two Company's were employed on this line including mule walks alongside. Portion of another Company were employed in making mule tracks from FLERS to GUEUDEECOURT. On 20th and 21st the whole 4 Coys were employed on DECAUVILLE TRACK. Two Companies were making the formation one Coy salvaging rails and one Company, less a few men on PLANK ROAD, were laying the plates. By the evening of the 21st the rails had reached the sunken road at the foot of the LARK HILL ridge in front of GUEUDEECOURT.

DUCKWALK TRACK.

On 19th one Company started a duckwalk track from ETERNAL ALLEY across valley to BEAULENCOURT and on 21st 1315 yards were completed and 600 yards of it were wired.

23/3/17.

MAJORE.
Commanding 5th Aus. Pioneer Battalion.

369

4

Headquarters,
5th Pioneer Battalion.
30th March 1917.

To,
C.R.E.

5th Australian Division.

Work report ending March 29th 1917.

DECAUVILLE TRACK.

From 22nd March to 24th March four Companies were employed on track formation and plate laying. This line was open for traffic right through on 25th inst. On 25th inst two Coys were employed on improving the line, making mule track etc, and one Company on salving rail sets and trucking same to BEAULENCOURT. The other Company moved over and found new billets in BEAULENCOURT.

On 23th C.&D.Coys had a spell, B.Company went on main - tenance, A.Coy, salved 309 rail sets and trucked same to BEAULENCOURT. On 27th inst A.&C.Coys started work for Corps Light Railways and were employed in laying a track from approximately N.8.c.7.9. to corner of WHITE AND BLACK STREET, then through village of THILLOY to junction of roads at N.2.c.3.9. This formation was completed on 28th when the Coys started laying sleepers and rails. On 27th and 28th B.&D.Coys were on maintenance of the GINCHY - BEAULENCOURT line.

Good assistance was forthcoming on the 23rd inst from No's 2.&4.Sections of the 258th Tunnelling Company, who worked on salving ~~sets~~ and pushing up rail sets for our use, and on the 25th inst and following days. One section was employed on maintenance from GINCHY to MILLERS LOOP. D.Company had two platoons engaged in running traffic and two platoons on maintenance on 27th and 28th inst.

During the period under report the Decauville line was running a series of trains drawn by mules by which all S.A.A. and artillery ammunition, as well as all rations for the Division were sent forward by this Battalion, as quickly as possible.

PLANK ROAD.

1 Sergeant and 10 men have been repairing the plank road at GINCHY for the last 7 days.

On 28th instant Battalion Headquarters moved to REINCOURT Map reference N.5.d.9.3 $\frac{1}{2}$. where I hope to billet two Companies with two other Companies at BEAULENCOURT.

Handwritten signature

MAJOR.

for C.O.5th Pioneer Battalion.A.I.F.

7 $\frac{1083 \text{ tons}}{28 \text{ tons}}$

5th PIONEER BATTALION.

C I R C U L A R M E M O R A N D U MSUBJECT :- Lewis Gun Equipment.

1. Lewis Gun equipment which has recently been handed over to Coys appears to be regarded somewhat in the nature of an incubus and outside the regular sphere of company duties.
2. This must not be the case; the Lewis Gun and Equipment are part and parcel of the Company just as much as a rifle, gas helmets etc, and Coys will be held responsible that this equipment is properly cared for.
3. With the increased establishment of N.C.O's, one ~~per~~ Corporal per Company must be made definitely responsible for this equipment - which is of a valuable nature - it must be inspected at least twice per week and thoroughly cleaned - all deficiencies and breakages indented for.
4. There is no objection to this equipment being kept in Battalion Quartermaster's Store if neatly packed - but this does not relieve the Coys from carrying out these bi-weekly inspections.
5. Lieut Cunninghame will generally supervise these inspections and one inspection per fortnight will be made under his supervision, and all indents for Lewis Gun equipment will be made through him. He will indent direct on the Quartermaster for the same.

H. G. Carter

Lieut Colonel.

11/3/17.

Commanding 5th Pioneer Battalion. A.I.F.

Copies to :-
 Major Morrison.
 C.O.
 O.C.A. Coy.
 O.C.B. Coy.
 O.C.C. Coy.
 O.C.D. Coy.
 Lieut Cunninghame.
 Quartermaster.
 War Diary. ✓
 C.R.E.
 File. ✓

369

5th PIONEER BATTALION.

8

C I R C U L A R M E M O R A N D U M .

SUBJECT :- New Work arrangements.

1. The following alterations and additions as regards work will take place from 9.am.15/3/17.

(1). C.Company will take over in addition to their present tasks the maintenance of ENERGY ALLEY. This is to be kept cleared as far as possible especially over the crest line. No revetting will be done for the present. It must be understood however that ENDLESS & OZONE ALLEY'S are to be given prior consideration in event of any heavy work.

(2). D.Company will be responsible for ETERNAL ALLEY only which must be kept passable. Revetting is to be continued as fast as possible from the rear forward.

(3). C.Company will arrange to lay a wired duckwalk (single) track from the terminus of the existing track at S.3.a.8.3. to the vicinity of FACTORY CORNER and on to N.19.a.5.7. if sufficient boards are available.

(4). B.Company will arrange to continue the Decauville on the new location and also give every assistance to Lieut. Murphy in fixing up a mule track and appliances generally for mule haulage.

H. G. Carter

Lieut Colonel.

14/3/17.

Commanding 5th Pioneer Battalion. A.I.F.

Copies issued to :-

C.O.

Major Morrison.

O.W.A. Coy.

O.C.B. Coy.

O.C.C. Coy.

O.C.D. Coy.

War Diary. ✓

C.R.E.

File.

369

5th PIONEER BATTALION.

Appendix No 9

10

9

SPECIAL MEMORANDUM.

There is no doubt that one of the objects of the present German retreat is to weaken our offensive power by leaving us in an inferior position as regards Roads, Railways, Billets, Water Supply and Communications generally.

It is our work as a Pioneer Battalion to see that this object is defeated. I have not the slightest doubt that as on previous occasions every Officer and man will work his hardest to achieve this result; but however hard a man may work if his energies are misdirected the work is absolutely lost. Officers, N.C.O's and men must therefore make every effort to ensure that their energies are being properly applied: Officers by giving clear and concise orders; N.C.O's and men by carrying these out to the minutest detail.

Any Company Commander who is unable to fully employ the whole of his men will immediately inform me giving particulars.

Officers when reconnoitring forward positions, villages &c, abandoned by the enemy will always make careful notes of such matters as roads, water supplies, wells, pumps and other details necessary for an army's advance and report fully on these as well as on the specific object for which the reconnaissance was made.

Men are again warned to be on their guard against traps and mines left by the enemy.

(Signed) H.G. CARTER, Lieut Colonel.

Commanding 5th Pioneer Battalion, A.I.F.

17/5/17.

Copies issued to :-

C.O.
Major Morrison.
O.C.A. Coy.
O.C.B. Coy.
O.C.C. Coy.
O.C.D. Coy.
Quartermaster.
G. Branch.
C.R.E.
War Diary. ✓
File.

5th PIONEER BATTALION ORDER No 12.

by

10Lieut Colonel H.G.CARTER, Commanding 5th Pioneer Battalion.

1. In order to avoid any delay in a possible forward move Companies and Headquarter Units will at once arrange to collect all surplus kit etc, which will be stored.
2. A hut has been allotted the Battalion for the purpose at TOWNSVILLE CAMP, QUARRY SIDING.
3. All kit, stores etc, that cannot be moved forward at short notice is to be collected forthwith and delivered at the Quartermaster's Store WATERLOT FARM by 10.am. on MONDAY 19th inst. This applies not only to Coys but all Quartermaster's stores canteen goods, comforts, for which no transport is available.
4. The Quartermaster will see the Camp Commandant TOWNSVILLE CAMP and ascertain the hut set apart for this unit and move all goods therein during MONDAY 19th inst.
5. No further kit will be stored after this date; men should only be in possession of what they can actually carry.
6. All parcels for storage must be neatly done up and marked so as to be easily identified.
7. The kit will be stored in the hut in sections, so that any article can be found with the minimum of trouble.

H.G. Carter

Lieut Colonel.

18/3/17.

Commanding 5th Pioneer Battalion. A.I.F.

Copies issued to :-

Commanding Officer.	No 1.
Major Morrison.	" 2.
O.C.A.Coy.	" 3.
O.C.B.Coy.	" 4.
O.C.C.Coy.	" 5.
O.C.D.Coy.	" 6.
Quartermaster.	" 7.
Transport Officer.	" 8.
R.Q.M.S.	" 9.
War Diary.	" 10.
File.	" 11.
Spare.	" 12.

5th PIONEER BATTALION ORDER No 13.

by

Lieut Colonel H.G. CARTER, Commanding 5th Pioneer Battalion.

1. The following arrangements will be carried out in order to reduce the number of men required for carrying rations and water.
2. 2 Pack Mules per Company will be supplied to each of A.C.&D. Coys and will be billeted with them with their drivers. These mules will have racks for carrying petrol tins and will be used for purpose of carrying water.
3. One $\frac{1}{2}$ Limber per Company will carry rations to the nearest Decauville Depot.
A loading party of I.N.C.O. and 3 men per Company will meet this limber at the depot, load rations on to a truck and push same to their Company Quarters - the truck being returned subsequently to the depot.
Companies will make their own arrangements at the depot for this truck.
4. The Depots for transferring rations from limber to rail will be as follows :-

A. Company. Old Ede. Headquarters. (S.18.b.)
B. Company. " " " "

C. Company. Ginchy Dump.
5. This arrangement will commence on MONDAY 19th inst. Transport of all other goods should be dealt with on similar lines.



Lieut Colonel.

18/3/17.

Commanding 5th Pioneer Battalion. A.I.F.

Copies issued to :-

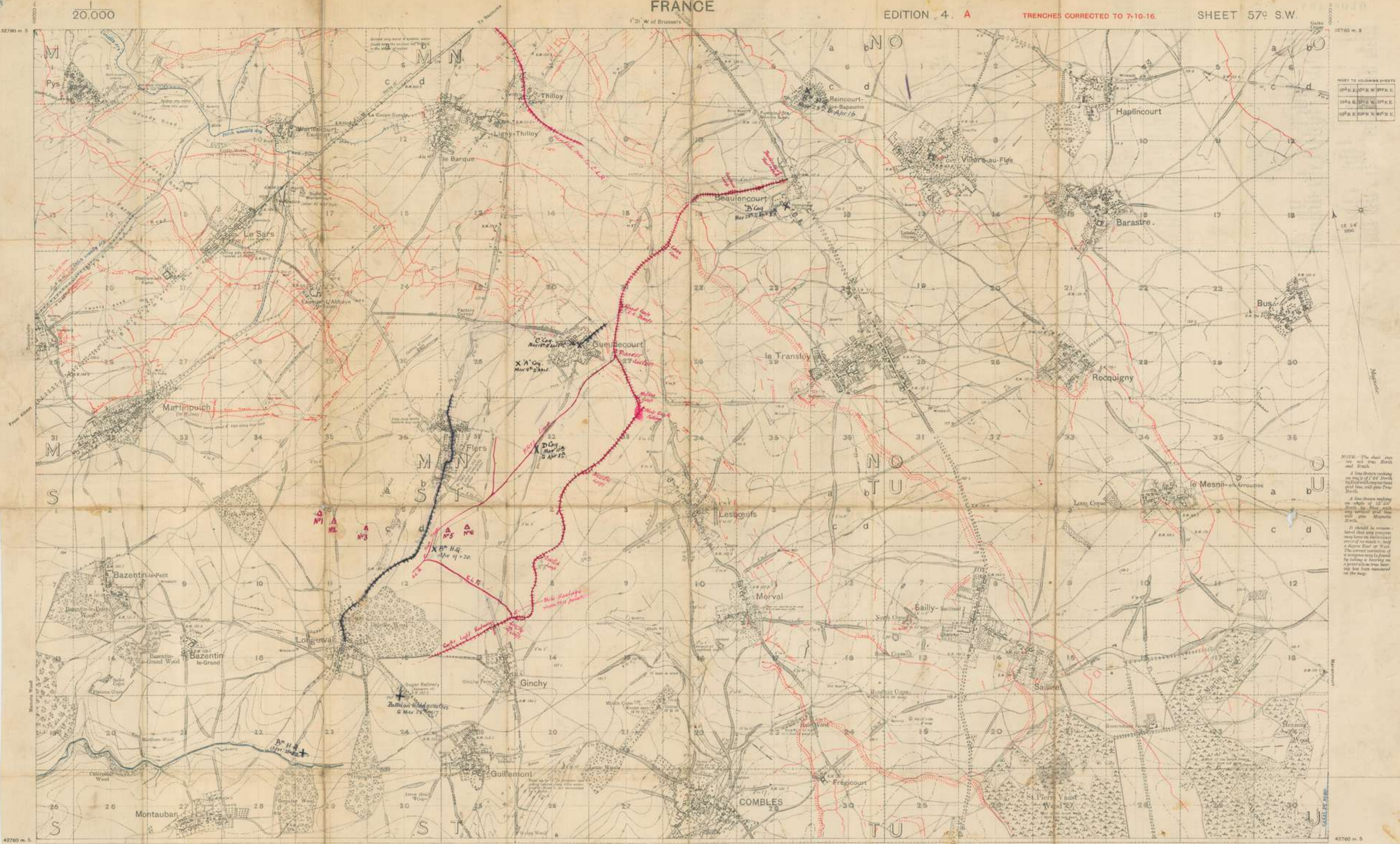
Commanding Officer.	No 1.
Major Morrison.	" 2.
O.C.A. Coy.	" 3.
O.C.B. Coy.	" 4.
O.C.C. Coy.	" 5.
O.C.D. Coy.	" 6.
Quartermaster.	" 7.
Transport Officer.	" 8.
C.R.E.	" 9.
"Q" Branch.	" 10.
War Diary.	" 11.
File.	" 12.

FRANCE

EDITION 4. A

TRENCHES CORRECTED TO 7-10-16

SHEET 57° S.W.



KEY TO ADJOINING SHEETS

57° N. 57° N. W. 57° N. E.
57° E. 57° E. W. 57° E. E.
57° N. E. 57° N. W. 57° N. E.

NOTE - The sheet and any of the sheets and sheets.
If the sheets making up any of the sheets are not in the same order as they appear on the map, the correct order of the sheets may be found by looking at the number of the sheet on the map.

20,000

Reduced from 1:10,000 Trench Maps.

Contour interval 10 metres

Ordnance Survey, 1916

INSTRUCTIONS AS TO THE USE OF THE SQUARES

1. The large rectangles on the map, lettered M, N, O, etc., are divided into squares of 1000 yards side, which are numbered 1, 2, 3, etc. Each of these squares is subdivided into four smaller squares of 500 yards side. These minor squares are numbered as lettered a, b, c, d. (See Square No. 6 in each rectangle).
2. To locate a point within a small square, remember the above divided into tenths, and define the point by reading its co-ordinates from W. to E. along Southern side, and so many from S. to N. along Western side; the S.W. corner always being taken as origin, and the distance along the Southern side being always given by the first figure. Thus the point Z would be 81.4 divisions East and 3 divisions North from origin.
3. When more accurate definition is wanted on the 1:10,000 or 10,000 scale use exactly the same method, but divide sides into 100 parts and use four figures instead of two. Thus 81.47 East and 3.147 North of origin (see point X - Point Y in No. 6).
4. Use 0 for 100. Use either two or four figures; do not use fractions (e.g., 1/2).

To Accompany WAR DIARY
5th Aust Pioneer Bn.

Roads Maintained by Bn. -+---+---
Railways built & maintained -+---+---
0/2000 3000

Strong Points - X
Bn. Coy. H.Q. - X



- Diagrams
- Key trench symbols (solid red line, dashed red line, etc.)
 - Other symbols (wavy lines, etc.)

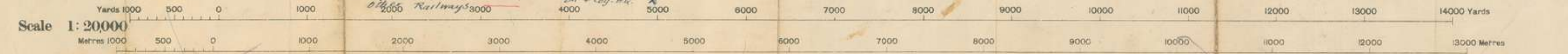


TABLE FOR CONVERTING METRES TO FEET

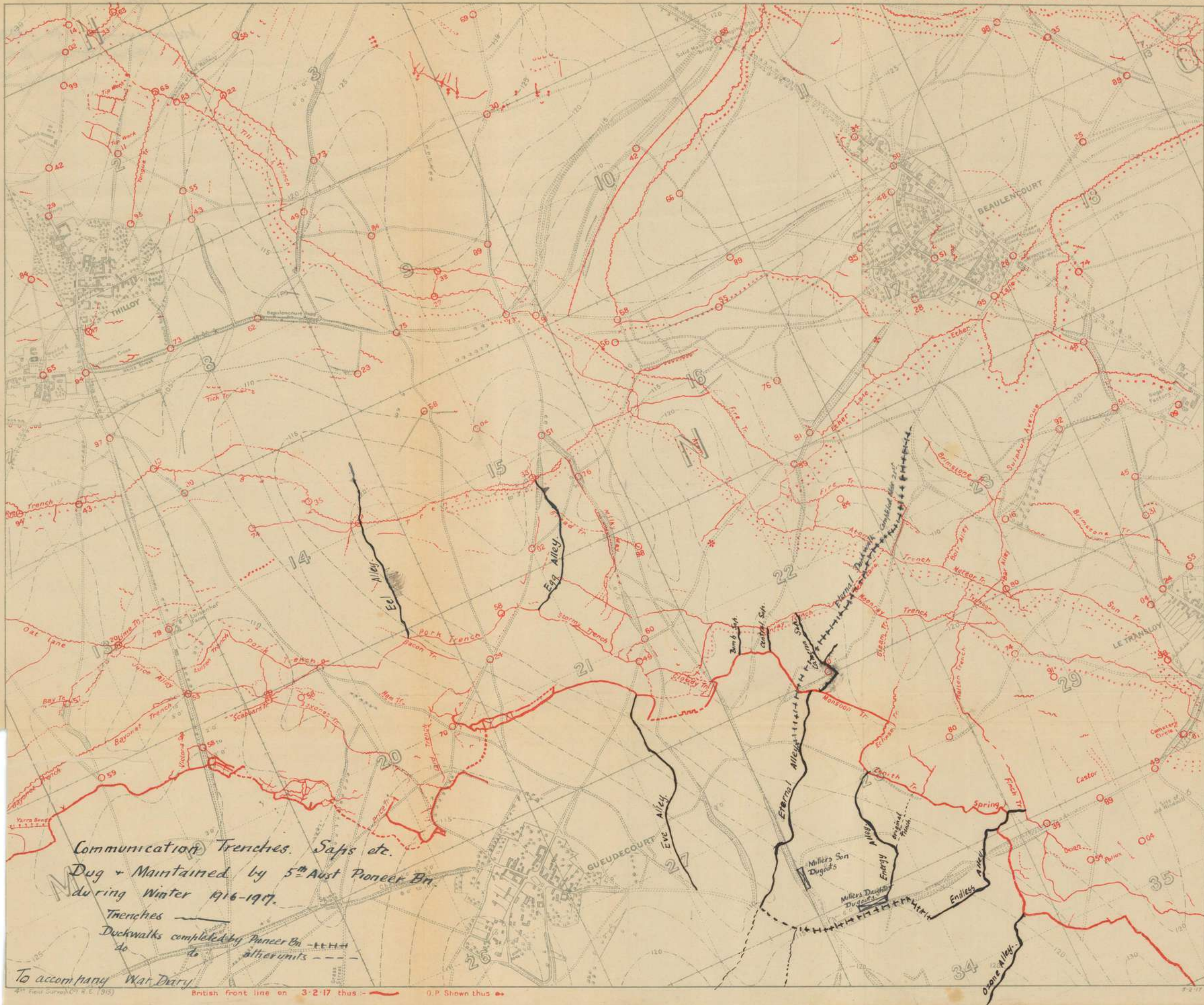
Meters	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	32.8	33.7	34.6	35.4	36.3	37.2	38.1	39.0	39.9	40.8
20	65.6	67.1	68.6	69.9	71.5	72.8	74.1	75.5	76.8	78.1
30	98.4	101.7	104.9	108.1	111.2	114.3	117.4	120.4	123.5	126.6
40	131.2	136.0	140.7	145.5	150.1	154.7	159.3	163.9	168.5	173.1
50	164.0	169.3	174.5	179.6	184.7	189.7	194.8	199.8	204.9	209.9
60	196.8	202.3	207.6	212.9	218.1	223.3	228.4	233.5	238.7	243.8
70	229.6	235.4	241.1	246.7	252.3	257.8	263.3	268.8	274.3	279.8
80	262.4	268.7	274.9	281.1	287.3	293.4	299.5	305.6	311.7	317.8
90	295.2	301.7	308.1	314.4	320.7	326.9	333.1	339.3	345.5	351.7
100	328.0	334.8	341.5	348.1	354.7	361.3	367.9	374.5	381.1	387.7

Contours corrected from latest information

GUEUDECOURT TO THILLOY AND BEAULENCOURT

TRENCHES CORRECTED TO 3-2-17.

4TH EDITION



*Communication Trenches. Saps etc.
 Dug & Maintained by 5th Aust Pioneer Bn
 during Winter 1916-1917.*

*Trenches —————
 Duckwalks completed by Pioneer Bn - + + + +
 do do other units - - - - -*

To accompany War Diary

British front line on 3-2-17 thus - - - - - G.P. Shown thus ●●

Scale 1:10,000

3-2-17

Map 2

Accompanying WAR DIARY
5th Aust Pioneer Bn
Mar April 1917

