

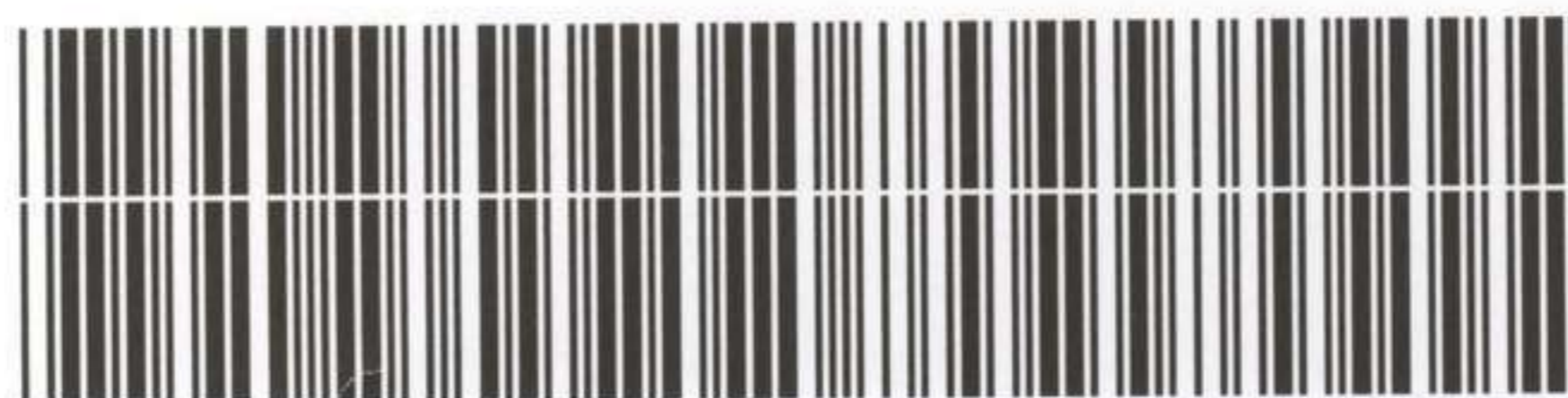
AWM4
Australian Imperial Force unit war diaries,
1914-18 War

Infantry

Item number: 23/18/19

Title: 1st Infantry Battalion

May 1917



AWM4-23/18/19

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.

1st Australian Bn

458

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	1.5.17		The operations from 1 st to 7 th May are attached (is)	
	6			
	7.5.17			
Vaulx	1.5.17		LT BACKHOUSE AN AN. EVAC to Hospital	
	2.5.17		PLTS ROBERTSON T.A., MOSS A.D., JOHNSTON W.I., TUDEHOPE A.E. from Reinforcements - PLT PRESNELL F.A. to on leave U.K.	
Bullecourt	4.5.17		PLT C. LAMBERT to 5 th Army Visual Sig School; PLT HOWELL PRICE R.G. & PLT HOLT C.G. Evac Wided.	
	5.5.17		MJR P.S.S. WOODFORD. Evac wounded. LT H. E. a' BECKETT Evac wounded. LT E.C. WEBB & PLT MOSS A.D. Killed in action.	
	6.5.17		LT SPORKE E.R. & PLT SYMONS A.E. Evac wounded. LT BOARDMAN H rejoined from 5 th Army School, PLT BULL L.M. rejoined from 1 st Aust. Div School. CAPT. EDGLEY rejoined from on leave; PLT MORLEY joined from on 1 st appointment, LT KELBWAY C rejoined from second list.	
	7.5.17		Brigade Memo of this date advise following decorations MILITARY CROSS. LT W.R. YATES, LIEUT. R.W. SAMASON, PLT R.G. HOWELL PRICE	

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118.

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	7.5.17		LT Col B V STACY from on leave U.K. LT YATES W.R. M.C. 1/2LT STOBO A.J.H., WELLS F.W., WEST C.B. Evac home 1/2LT CRUISE A.J. rejoined from 1 st Aust Div School	
Vaulx-Vraucourt	8.5.17		BN rested LIEUT. Blake W.M. & 1/2LT WAUGH.C. Evacuated sick - LT BUCHAN V.J. to on leave U.K. 1/2LT CHAMPION rejoined from leave	
"	9.5.17	1500	BN moved to SUGAR FACTORY near LE TRANSLOY. Capt CHAPMAN JESSOP W.B. attached as C.E. Chaplain.	
LE TRANSLOY	10.5.17		BN rested; Genl. Sir W.R. BIRDWOOD visited camp Capt KIRKWOOD N.E.B. to England on leave LT PARKINSON W.H. joined from reinforcements, LT GRAHAM F.A. & 1/2LT BENNETT. IV ^J rejoined seconded.	
"	11.5.17		BN resting 1/2LT HUMPHREYS R.G. joined on 1 st appointment 1/2LT ROBERTSON T.A. to HQ LT SAMPSON R.W. M.C. & 1/2LT PAGE F.H. transferred to 6 th Division.	

WAR DIARY

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
LE TRASSOY	12/5/17		BN reorganisation and specialist training Lt. RICHARDS, T. to 1 st Aust Dir School LtS HUMPHREYS, R. and Lt. DAVIS H.H. to Div King Camp School	
LE TRASSOY	13/5/17		BN left ^{at 0400} and proceeded by Fliers to BAZENTIN LE PETIT. arriving at 0800 Capt. G. C. Willcocks ^{mc} as T/RMO vice Kirkwood where	
BAZENTIN LE PETIT	14/5/17		BN specialist training	
"	15/5/17		do Musketry & RANGE Practice	
"	16/5/17		do	
"	17/5/17		BN TRAINING depos Syllabus attached Lt FA PRESNELL from leave to BOARDMAN, H. to UK where	
"	18/5/17		do	
"	19/5/17		do	
"	20/5/17		Church service. Lt. SOMERSETT, C.W. MC to base 5 Army School	
"	21/5/17		BN moved by road back to LAVIEVILLE via ALBERT. starting 0500 arriving at 0930	
LAVIEVILLE	22/5/17		Specialist training widows work of raid	
"	23/5/17		do also recreational training in afternoon	

WAR DIARY

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
LAMIEVILLE	23/5/17		LT BUCHAN V. J. from U.K. home.	
	24/5/17		BN close order work, ^{range practice} & Recreational training - 50 OR to AMIENS for leave for the day.	
	25/5/17		do 40 men on leave - 14 men to rest camp.	
	26/5/17		LT. BAUTON F. J. on leave	
	26/5/17		do range practice & recreational training - 40 men to AMIENS home	
	27/5/17		Capt KIRKWOOD N. from home ^{Capt WILLIAMS GC} relate 3 FAM to Lts GRAHAM FA + KELLAWAY C to 6 th Div	
	27/5/17		BN church parade - then all bathed at BUIRE	
	29/5/17		LT FLANNERY F. L. to U.K. leave, Coms CLOUGH A, Sgls JUDD EC, WILLIAMS E + 4c	
			MORTLOCK ^{app} promotion to commensurate rank A.I.F. order	
	29/5/17		BN close order work, range practice & recreational training. 40 OR to AMIENS home	
	29/5/17		do do do " and for investment	
	30/5/17		How Capt WELLS H. + 25 OR from details, Capt MOTTAT H. H. MC to U.K.	
	31/5/17		BN close order work, range practice & recreational training including competitions in same 40 men leave to AMIENS.	
	31/5/17		do do do	

REPORT OF 1ST. AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY BATTALION OPERATIONS DURING
PERIOD 28TH APRIL TO 7TH MAY 1917.

5

Reference Map.
1.20.000. Edition 2.

Battalion Headquarters,
10th May 1917.

I have to report that the Battalion under the command of Major P.S.S. WOODFORDE on 29th April moved from N24 D26 into Corps Line near VAULX relieving 17th Battalion in l.7 central and remained there till on 3rd May at 11-30 it moved to VRAUCOURT at C 19 B central.

At 2100 it moved into front line, less two platoons left on escort duty, having received orders to report to 6th. A.I. Brigade the latter ordering it to take over line then held by details of 17th, 22nd, 23rd, and 24th Battalions.

The trench taken over was part of O.G.1 from road (inclusive) at U29 A8580 to U28 B05 95. Dispositions from right to left D. C. A. Companys in front line, B. Company being in supports and used for carrying purposes in Railway Department running through C4 and C5. Relief was complete by 0330 on 4th May. The Third Battalion occupied front line O.G.2. The enemy were on both our flanks. The line was in very bad order being badly knocked about by shell fire. The garrison at this time was approximately 19 Officers and 400 other ranks.

On 4th May at 0400 the enemy made a bombing attack on our right post at U29 A8570 using a FLANENWERFER without success, attack lasting five minutes when he returned leaving 5 dead.

At 1300 the Battalion in conjunction with 3rd Battalion sent party 1 Officer (Lieutenant RICHARDS) and 16 other ranks to bomb along O.G.1 WEST from U22D90. Party bombed to U28 B59 and established a block gained touch with 3rd Battalion, captured 12 prisoners and killed 25 of the enemy, our losses 3 Killed and 3 Wounded. This party further bombed along trench at U22 D90 and took 4 more prisoners and killed 2 others. Very good work and excellent leadership was shown by Lieutenant RICHARDS during these operations.

At 1400 the 2nd Battalion bombed down O.G.1 to the right and established a post 300 yards from our right post thus making our right flank more secure. The 3rd Bde. took over this part of trench from 2nd Battalion shortly afterwards. From 1630 onwards the enemy shelled our position very heavily.

At 2100 enemy launched a strong counter attack on our left and on 3rd Battalion who were driven out of portion of O.G.2 leaving our left flank rather exposed and a block was therefore made in the communication Trench at our extreme left post. Shortly afterwards 3rd Battalion sent a party to gain touch which was again established. The enemy appeared to suffer heavily during this attack.

On 5th May at 0700 A Company on left who had suffered heavy casualties were relieved by D Company. A Company taking over D Company's portion of line.

At 1930 enemy about 40 strong attempted bombing attack along O.G.1 our post on left checked their advance with rifle grenades and after two attempts he retired to Sunken Road in U28A. leaving a few dead.

At 1130 MAJOR P.S.S. WOODFORDE was fatally wounded. Captain A.K. MACKENZIE was sent for and took over command of Battalion.

At 1300 the enemy about 40 strong again attempted to bomb down O.G.1 but after ten minutes fighting was driven off.

At 1600 enemy made another attempt this time with far more determination. Although heavily bombed with rifle grenades he succeeded three times in getting within hand bombing distance. The attack lasted 45 minutes, the enemy being then driven off finally. Great assistance was rendered at this time to the defence by Stokes

Mortar fire brought to bear on a point at U28 A67 where the enemy reassembled for each attack.

At 1800 B Company (45 strong) were ordered to reinforce the left (D) Company, the two Companies acting together.

At dark the post at U28 B0595 was connected up with post at U22 D01 by a small trench about 4'6" deep.

On 6th May at 0500 enemy again attacked on left attempting to bomb down from O.G.2 and also along O.G.1 and succeeded in throwing several bombs into the post. The enemy used a new bomb on this occasion it was shaped like a stick bomb but apparently was filled with inflammable material. The enemy's attempt failed.

At 0600 put down a heavy barrage. At 0630 the Battalion on our right was driven back practically to our right at U29 ~~A67~~ our right Company held on but the position was a critical one. Orders were immediately issued by the C.O.C. to the Signalling Officer to organise all details at Head Quarters (near which the event took place) consisting of Signallers, Batmen etc. to attack and drive out the enemy. These assisted by the right Company also some men of Battalion on right pushed the enemy back after half an hours fighting, conspicuous bravery being shown by the men. After about an hours fighting, chiefly bombs and grenades being used the enemy were completely driven from the trench and the trench was then held. The Battalion on our right then pushed forward again and took over this trench. Many enemy could be seen at this time on our left and although they did not actually leave the trenches it was very apparent they were ready to do so, had we weakened our left flank, or had the attack on our right succeeded. Two German Officers and 25 dead were actually counted in our trenches and 2 wounded prisoners were taken.

On night of 6th/7th the Battalion was relieved by 4th Battalion relief being completed by 2300. Battalion on relief moved to RAILWAY EMBANKMENT.

On night of 7th/8th Battalion was relieved by 6th Battalion relief being complete by 0200 on 8th. Battalion on relief moved to position occupied by 8th Battalion North of VAULX. On 9th May Battalion moved to SUGAR FACTORY at N24 D26 being relieved by unit of 8th A.I. Brigade.

During the whole tour in the line our Field Artillery were of the greatest assistance, the shooting being most accurate and well placed. The STOKES mortars as already mentioned proved most useful.

The fighting was at close quarters and consequently grenades played a most important part, rifle grenades proving an absolute necessity, undoubtedly it was greatly owing to the range of these that the enemy were prevented from approaching our flank posts in sufficiently large numbers to rush them. Supplies of all kinds were at all times forthcoming from BRIGADE and the carrying parties did fine work.

The casualties suffered while the Battalion was in forward area were:-

5 Officers Killed.	8 Officers Wounded.
44 Other Ranks Killed.	232 Other Ranks Wounded.
29 " " Missing.	
3 Lewis Guns were put out of action.	

The enemy shelling during the period was exceptionally heavy, destructive, and constant and I cannot speak too highly of the spirit in which all ranks bore it nor of the cool and able manner in which they coped with the enemy attacks, using all weapons with judgment and skill. The Officers both Officers Commanding, and Junior Officers and N.C.O.'s led their men with conspicuous ability and set a splendid example.

It is difficult to estimate the enemy casualties- prisoners taken numbered 18 but the large number of enemy dead to be seen show that he suffered very heavily in his repeated counter attacks.

3.

As already mentioned the Battalion was commanded during the operations first by MAJOR P.S.S. **WOODFORDE** and then by CAPTAIN A.K. **MACKENZIE** both of whom acquitted themselves ably . I resumed command of the Battalion on 7th May .

Br Steel

Lieut- Colonel.

Comdg. 1st Australian Infantry Battalion.

In the Field.

Brigade

Regt No.

Rank and Name

Division

Action for which commended

Corps

Recommended by

Reward or Honour

(To be left blank)

Date of Recommendation

458

ARMY FORM W. 3131