

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

Engineers

**Item number:** 14/14/19

**Title:** 2nd Australian Pioneer Battalion

December 1917



AWM4-14/14/19

2nd AUSTRALIAN PIONEER BATTALION.  
 No. 11908  
 Date 26/1/18

original 105  
 Army Form C. 2118.  
 DECEMBER 1917

WAR DIARY

or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

2nd AUSTRALIAN (Erase heading not required.) PIONEER BN

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
BN Hd QRS FAIRY FARM NR LOCRE 2 Coy's (less 2 Platoons at BUTTERFLY CAMP NR KEMMEL 2 Coy's at LURGAN HUTS NR DRANOUTRE	1		1 Company engaged on bomb-proof parapets around huts at DIV Hd QRS at RAVELSBURG CAMP.	
			3 Coy's engaged lowered water supply pipes to minimum of 30 inches below ground level to avoid freezing.	
			2 OR joined from hospital	
	9		Finished work on NORTH KEMMEL PIPE LINE from N20 d central through N26 b, N27, N28 to N29 a central thence generally South through N28 d + N35 to N35 d 8.5	
			Finished work on LOCRE-CHATEAU-NEUVE EGLISE pipe system from M34 a through M35 c, S5 b, S6 a + b to SE of road junction at about S6 b 7.1; also from M29 c 9.7 South through M35 a + 3 to S5 a central and from M35 c 5.4 to DRANOUTRE CHURCH at M36 c 2.7.	
	10		27 ORs joined from hospital from 2nd to 10th inclusive	
			Commenced lowering 3 small water pipe systems in N19 d, N31 c and M36 b to N31 a respectively.	
			Party of 1 off + 30 men set to work clearing & improving channel of the HILLEBEKE Stream with view to preventing flooding of adjacent lanes	

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	11		13 OR joined from hospital; 3 OR joined from 9th Rfts. Commenced lowering of HAEGEDORNE pipe system in S 9 btd, & S 15 b and h. also of the short system in village of LOCRE. Completed building COFFEE STALL at LOCRE BATHS commenced yesterday. Commenced erection of HUTS and other conveniences and comforts at CAESTRE Rly S <sup>er</sup> for shelter & of men going on & returning from leave.	Lowering of PIPE LINES Notes on lowering pipe lines
	12		Took BALLOT on Australian Military Service REFERENDUM Completed <sup>improvements to</sup> 2550 yds of <del>imp</del> HELLEBEKE Stream from M 36 d 8.7 to M 24 a 2.1 Completed pipe lowering of HAEGEDORNE and LOCRE systems. Commenced Rifle Range shelters at CAESTRE. 2 OR joined from hospitals Sent advanced party of officers and NCOs to go out to work with 3rd and Pioneer Bn to get details of locality & types of work in hand, methods of supply & transport of material, routes &c. with view to retrieving 3rd and Pioneer Bn	

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	13		Improvements to HOLLEBEKE Stream. 800 yds of subsidiary drains cleared from T 1 a 3.9 to T 1 c 4.6 and 250 yds of subsidiary drains cleared & improved in locality of T 1 a 6.5. Job completed at CAESTRE Camp 1 off & 19 O.R. living huts, cutting & framing windows, fixing doors, rifle racks, boot scrapers etc.	
NIEPPE	14		Bn moved to billets at NIEPPE, relieving 3rd Aust. Pioneer Bn on work in Divt. area from LA LYS River near HOUPLINES to LA DOUVE River near WARNETON.  1 Company constructing & maintaining TRAMWAYS in Divt. Area. 2 Comps constructing improving & maintaining C.Ts & forward trenches. 1 Comp constructing & maintaining ROADS in Divt. Area. Capt. NEEDHAM appointed Divt. Tramways officer Capt. NEVEIN appointed Divt. Roads officer.  The following works were undertaken :- Cleaning, draining, re-laying & generally maintaining & improving the communication trenches and part of the support trenches in	

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
			<p>whole of the Divisional area, also the Duckboard track in DOUVE VALLEY</p> <p>The maintenance and improvement of the roads:-</p> <p>(a) LE BIZET to MOTOR CAR CORNER (C 14 a 9.8)</p> <p>(b) GASOMETER CORNER (C 7 b 5.1) to SUFFOLK AVENUE (C 3 d 4.8)</p> <p>(c) PLOEGSTEERT-WARNETON RK from centre of Ploegsteert (U 25 c 8.6) to LE GHEER (U 21 d 7.0)</p> <p>(d) ASH AVENUE from Bressines Road (U 14 a 6.4) to crater at U 15 a 4.7.</p> <p>a &amp; d were in fair order &amp; passable for light traffic</p> <p>b was passable for limbers, but very rough in forward half owing to unfilled shell craters.</p> <p>c was not open to any traffic being covered by mud, knocked about by shell fire &amp; in parts strewn with fallen timber &amp; other debris.</p> <p>The drainage of above roads, Ploegsteert woods, &amp; keeping clear the main drains in forward area was also undertaken.</p> <p>The patrol &amp; maintenance of the following TRAMWAYS:-</p> <p>(a) GREAT NORTHERN from DELENELLE FARM VIA MOTOR CAR CORNER TO LETOQUET STATION</p>	

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
			(b) CALEDONIAN from DELENELLE FM via GUNNER FM to RABERQUE FM (C 4 a 4.7)	
			(c) PROWSE BOYD LINE from BUTLERS HOUSE (U 19 d 1.7) to junction at U 20 b 4.6	
			(d) VANCOUVER TRACK from U 20 b 4.6 to UMPIRE RESERVE TRENCH about U 16 d 8.6	
			(e) WARNETON TRACK from U 20 b 4.6 to a point on ASH AVENUE about U 10 c 9.4.	
			We also took over from 3rd and Pioneer Bns the work of substituting steel rails for wooden in a line running from the SHRINE (T 18 c 4.7) to an 18 ft Battery on HILL 63 at about U 13 c 8.5. As the C/O considered the extension of VANCOUVER and WARNETON tracks much more important, the work on this Battery line was subsequently discontinued.	
	15		From 15th to 21st the principal work was on the following:-	
	to		Regrading, deepening & re-setting Cans. & Drainage Trench from ULTIMO AVENUE	
	21		to ULTIMO CRATER in U 15 d.	
			Re-setting, draining, deepening & generally improving the following:-	
			ULTIMO AVENUE & ULTIMO LANE from U 15 d 5.5 through U 16 a & b, U 17 a & d to U 17 d 6..8.	
			USEFUL LANE (U 10 b), UMPIRE AVENUE in U 28 a & U 22 c & d; UNA SUPPORT & UNA AVENUE	
			in U 28 b & d and c 4 b; KIWI STREET in c 4 d; NICHOLSON AVENUE c 3 c & d & c 4 c.	

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
			<p>ST YVES TRENCH in U15C+d and UGMONT AVENUE in U11a and c.</p> <p>TRAMWAYS mentioned above were maintained, &amp; improved by draining, ballasting, inserting wooden sleepers, &amp; laying duckboards between the rails &amp; covering duckboards with 'cyclone' netting. A quantity of Beconville track &amp; points salvaged from abandoned lines was trucked forward to use in making extensions of existing lines.</p> <p>Roads mentioned above were cleared of debris &amp; mud, drained and improved by filling holes, resetting broken sides, &amp; laying broken brick &amp; metal.</p> <p>Hessian huts were erected at Divt Gas School &amp; improvements effected at Camp at CAESTRE STATION.</p> <p>HOT DRINK Depots for AUST. COMFORTS FUND were constructed at CHAPELLE ROMPUS (C7C9.3) and near HYDE PARK CORNER (about U19b7.8)</p> <p>Improvements effected to CORPS TELEPHONE EXCH. AT LINDENHOEK.</p>	
	16		9 O/R returned from hospitals; 2 O/R joined from 6 <sup>th</sup> & 9 <sup>th</sup> R/ments.	
	18		Lieut. G. ARMSTRONG killed in action; 1 O/R wounded & evacuated.	

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
C4d4.5 <del>NIEPPE</del>	22		1 O/R killed in action; 3 O/R wounded & died of wounds.	
	23		1 O/R wounded & evacuated	
NIEPPE	26		Lieut KITCHIN & 26 O/R returned from hospital	
			4 O/R returned from tour of duty with Pioneer Training Bn.	
			8 O/R joined from 6 <sup>th</sup> , 7 <sup>th</sup> , 8 <sup>th</sup> & 9 <sup>th</sup> Reinforcements.	
	22		Work done by Bn set out in attached copy of Report	WORKS
	to		sent to C.R.E 2 <sup>nd</sup> Aust. Divn.	REPORT
	28			
	29		Work of Bn will be included in weekly report of 5 <sup>th</sup> Jan. to be	
	to		attached to January Diary.	
	31			
			W. W. G. L. ... Lt Col	
			C/O 2 <sup>nd</sup> Aust. Pioneer Bn.	



SECOND AUSTRALIAN PIONEER BATTALION. APPENDIX.

The water supply systems were mostly of 4" pipes, some connected by flanged and others by screwed joints.

The method employed in lowering was to dig a narrow trench close beside the line of pipe making a ramp of about 40ft at the end, that finished the extent of the day's task. The men then passed slings under the pipe and straddling the trench lifted the pipe line from the old bed and lowered it into the new trench.

It was found that owing to the pipes not having been laid in true lines there was enough 'play' to enable them to fit into the new trench. The pipes fastened by bolted flanged joints gave no trouble. A few of the screwed joints parted, and in each case it was found that a poor connection of but two or three threads had been made when originally laid.

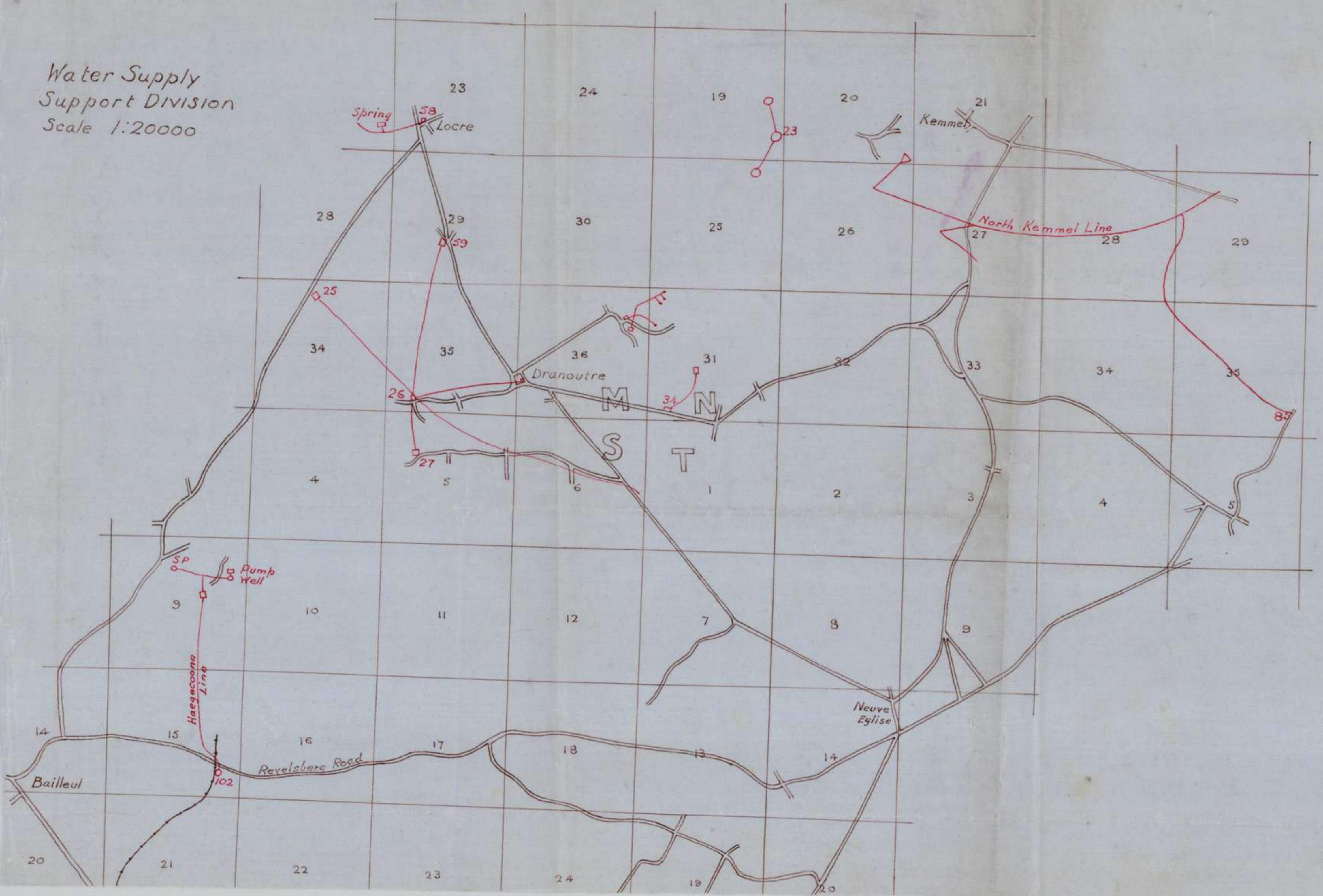
Boxes having internal diameter of 18 inches were made of  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " pine to put around the valves. They were provided with double lids, having a depth of 6" of sawdust packed between upper and under surface of the lid.

Where a length of pipe was exposed as in crossing a ditch it was 'lagged' with straw bound in bagging.

A fair task was found to be 6 yards per man per day.

The pipes that were lowered one day were not covered till the next, so that joints might be observed as to leakage before the trench was filled in.

Water Supply  
Support Division  
Scale 1:20000



Battalion Headquarters,  
29th December, 1917.

To/-  
C. R. E.,  
2nd Australian Division.  
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REPORT ON WORK DONE DURING WEEK ENDING 28TH DECEMBER, 1917.  
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TRENCHES.

EGMONT AVENUE. U.11.a.5.0.

58 yards revetted, 20 yards repaired.

USEFUL LANE. U.10.b.9.6.

13 yards revetted. Trench generally repaired and improved.

ULTIMO AVENUE. U.16.a. to U.16.b.

183 yards revetted. 38 yards drained and cleaned.  
620 yards of duckwalks wired and repaired from U.16.a. to U.16.b.

CRATER TRENCH. U.15.d.7.9.

29 yards revetted. 70 yards duckwalks wired and repaired.  
Deepening and regrading trench.  
Duckwalks repaired and wired between RACINE DUMP U.14.d.9.8  
and HYDE PARK CORNER U.19.b.4.7. and LOOK SLIPPY TRACK  
U.14.d.7.3. to U.15.c.3.4.

UNA AVENUE. U.28.b.

178 yards revetted. Trench repaired where blown in.  
55 yards deepened. 120 yards drained and cleaned.

KIWI STREET. C.4.d.

12 yards revetted. Trench repaired where blown in.

UMPIRE DRIVE SOUTH. U.23.c.

60 yards revetted. 120 yards deepened to 5'6".

UNA SUPPORT. U.22.d.

Trench repaired where blown in.

NICHOLSON AVENUE.

Trench repaired where blown in.

AVERAGE NUMBER OF MEN EMPLOYED - 190.

TRENCH TRAMWAYS.

WARNETON LINE. Extended 180 yards from U.10.d.6.3. to U.10.d.8.5. 210 yards drained.

VANCOUVER LINE - 210 yards of formation completed from U.17.c.3.8.

25TH BATTERY LINE. - 460 yards ballasted from U.26.b.2.7. to U.26.b.9.5.

Remainder of lines patrolled and maintained. 12 places where line blown out repaired.

AVERAGE NUMBER OF MEN EMPLOYED - 85.

ROADS. Circuit Road LA GHEER to GUNNER ROAD fit for single traffic to U.27.d.9.9.  
 Road PLOEGSTEERT - WARNETON being widened to 16 ft. revetted where necessary and drained.  
 Railway crossing made good at U.25.d.5.8.  
 Gunner Road made good to C.3.b.7.3. and being improved.  
 LE BIZET - MOTOR CAR CORNER Road patrolled and maintained.  
 Approximately 40 tons of metal laid and large quantity of brick has been used to bed metal.

AVERAGE NUMBER OF MEN EMPLOYED:-

Ploegsteert -Warneton Rd.	62
Gunner Road	30

DRAINS. All main drains in Ploegsteert Wood are now free and require maintenance only.  
 Drains along Ploegsteert-Warneton Road and Gunner Road being cleaned. Box drain 22ft long made at C.8.a.4.9. to clear Gunner Road Drains.

AVERAGE NUMBER OF MEN EMPLOYED :- 30.

TRENCH MORTAR POSITION. Two being constructed at U.11.c.5.9.

WISSEN HUTS. Two erected at Divisional Gas School.

(Signed) F.W.G. Annand, Lieut-Colonel.  
 C.O., 2nd Australian Pioneer Battalion.

CHAPELLE ROMPUS - HYDE PARK CORNER. Providing accommodation for Aust. Comforts Fund.

STEENWERCK LAUNDRY. Brick furnace in Drying Room repaired.  
 Woodwork taken down over furnace and replaced by corrugated iron.  
 Air ventilator fixed.  
 Work on ceiling in course of construction.

STEENWERCK DUMP. Preparing timber for construction of Foot-baths.