

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

Engineers

Item number: 14/17/9

Title: 5th Australian Pioneer Battalion

November 1916



AWM4-14/17/9

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Erase heading not required.)

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
LONGUEVAL.	1916. Nov 1.		Operation postponed till Nov 2. Weather still pretty bad - CT's are in a fearful state but we are improving a track along the top - this soon gets clogged with mud. Started on a deep dug-out in COFFEE TRENCH.	
	Nov 2.		operation postponed indefinitely - CT's almost impassable - men fell they are working to no purpose and get very exhausted. Boots go very quickly.	
	Nov 3.		Got orders that Div ⁿ is moving out but that Engineers & Pioneers are staying on. Trying to get trenches in some condition for use. - the dry day to-day has helped considerably. Sledges are not proving useful for any weights - the varying character of the ground seems to be the trouble.	
	Nov 4.		Operation fixed for tomorrow - we are to dig CT's as before. Men put on light work.	
	Nov 5.		Operation came off at 9.10 am. 2 Coys went out at mid day but to cut CT's to position gained.	
	Nov 6.		Coys returned without being of any use - no gain made. Handed over all my work to 2 nd Div & went over my new tasks - Drainage of Catupillas Valley & a Decauville Railway - double track.	
	Nov 7.		Started work on new jobs - made fair progress.	
	Nov 8.		Got orders to move on to the repair of the LONGUEVAL-BARNAFAY Road which we did - this road is in a fearful state especially towards upper end.	
	Nov 9.		Got a Bn canteen going which helps men considerably. Also supply depot is considerably closer so we get our rations quicker.	

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WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118.

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
LONGUEVAL	Nov 10		Road Repair well under way - fine weather favouring us considerably - difficulty in to get the material there - lorries to take 3 hours to come from dump which is 1 1/2 miles away - held up by traffic on road. we are continuing our attention particularly to drainage & culverts for roads crossing same.	
	Nov 11		Commenced a detour for water carts round the Water Point. At present all water carts stand in the road & block traffic.	
	Nov 14		2 men killed by shell ^(HE) hitting drain on side of road.	
	Nov 15		3 Men killed - HE shell hit road direct. cut down	
	Nov 17		The Main Railway is now extended up to our road & we have started clearing back for a large dump at the head of it. Commenced work in laying out a regular system of dugouts for whole Ben at Carlton Trench. Also got a drying shed going. Culvert is doing well & now our rations are being drawn from the new rail head supplies are a great deal better.	
	Nov 18		Carlton Trench shelled badly last night - 3 men buried in a dugout & killed. Snowed in morning. Kept men working on road all day.	
	Nov 19		Recd orders that Ben Div ⁿ were taking over from the Guards Div on 21 st /22 nd inst.	
	Nov 21		Two coys of ours are to relieve the Guards Pioneer Ben tomorrow, the remaining two coys being employed on Decauville Railway.	
	Nov 22		C & D Coys with Head Qrs moved out to Waterloo Farm at 9.0 am - also B Coy moved from CARLTON TRENCH to Montauban thus leaving Carlton Trench altogether. A Coy started work on Decauville under Col Fawcett. Front line system was reconnected.	

WAR DIARY

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
LH 6, VEVAL	Nov 23		<p>Had our responsibility as regards work outleaved by C.A.E. We are responsible for commencing trenches forward of ROSE ^{NEEDLE} TRENCH. Two coys not working all night by front line - and other two coys working on Decauville - every body was wounded ^{gathered wounded}</p> <p>Total Casualties to date since our arrival on the Somme 16 killed, 12 wounded, 56 to hospital sick - of these latter a great many have already returned with reinforcement drafts - we had 72 reinforcements on 21st Nov.</p>	
	Nov 25		<p>A & B Coys moved out to Waterloo Farm from Montauban - it was a awfully wet and cold day - the men had a pretty poor night, a great many of the dug outs fell in during the night the ground loses all holding power when wet. We managed to get a good deal of dug out material for the men.</p>	
	Nov 26		<p>C Coy had 3 killed some wounded last night. Our boots wear very fast with the amount of walking we have to do & the quality of boot does not seem so good.</p>	
	Nov 27		<p>Weather fine today so we were able to get things straightened up a little. One of our aeroplanes fell in flames quite close to us today. The C.T.'s on the front system are progressing we have one practically thro' to the front on the Left Brigade & we well on with a second. On the Right we have not had nearly so much infantry assistance and consequently are not so well ahead - we have one trench thro' the crest line & one nearly up to Rose Trench - the left trench in this area has still to be reconnoitred. Decauville is getting on fast.</p>	
	Nov 28		<p>Arrangements made for moving our transport to new site - the present site is quite unsuitable takes 8 horses over an hour to get a waggon (1/2 loaded) on to main road - a distance of about 400 yards. Another 46 reinforcements received yesterday & 1 officer - a good many old men with them. A large mail (chiefly parcels) in today, and we are getting a liberal supply of comforts.</p>	

2449 Wt. W14957/M90 750,000 1/16 J.B.C. & A. Forms/C.2118/12.

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
LONGUEVAL	Nov 29		<p>Very cold day this' fine - C & D Coys seem to be knocking up from their work near the front they had a rough time last night in a barrage altho no casualties - the shelling is chiefly on certain spots & these spots are pretty well known now. Arranged for 'D' Coy to be off duty tonight & 'C' Coy tomorrow.</p> <p>Nov 30</p> <p>'C' & 'D' Coys marched to Vincourt for bath. Transport practically all moved out on to new site. Total Casualties since arrival on the Somme 19 Killed 15 wounded 89 to hospital sick - very few of these latter are serious, not more than 10%, we have had no cases to date of the regular trench feet; our chief foot trouble is from cuts and sores turning septic.</p>	

FOR THE BATTALION.

Work on Communication Trenches.

The following orders will be followed by the boys engaged in the construction and maintenance of the above.

- 1. The boys are allotted for work on the brigade sectors as follows :-

U. Company. Left brigade sector.
 J. Company. Right brigade sector.

The work is to be carried out under the direction of the S.M. S.O.C.'s brigades. Company Commanders should keep in close touch therefore with their respective brigade headquarters.

- 2. The trenches are to be dug in each brigade sector forward of ROSE TRENCH and one between ROSE and RAINBOW TRENCHES. The former are to be undertaken first.

The general lines of these trenches have already been fixed and the points on the front line with which it is desired to connect are :-

W. 21. d. 2. 4. } Left brigade sector.
 N. 22. c. 1. 3. }
 N. 23. d. 1. 8. } Right brigade sector.
 W 13. d. 8. 0 }

- 3. The trenches will be 1-1 1/2 ft deep as far as possible during daylight with bases; but where this is not possible by bearings at night.

- 4. All work under direct observation of the enemy is to be carried out on the pot-hole system - i.e. the men will be spread over the whole length of the task and will commence by digging a hole direct where they stand about 1 foot deep & will have to take the earth in the proper direction. The trench will then be completed by connecting the holes.

- 5. The trenches will be made every 30 yards between respective waves with a 5 yards effect. This effect is to be increased to 10 yards on the last side of each of Rainbow Trenches.

- 6. The trenches will be 7 feet deep - 18" wide at the bottom and not less than 5' 6" wide (pref 6' 0") at the top. Earth to be thrown back on sides of trench. Every 6 feet to be taken to get uniform sides to secure drainage - where sides are broken by a shell, another revolution will be taken.

- 7. The trenches crossing the flat portion of the Valley between Rose and Rainbow trenches will be built by breastwork, not dug the sides being made from barrow pits. Revetment will be made either sand bags or wire netting and cloths according to material available. Ample drainage in the shape of top drains at frequent intervals through the sides must be provided. This portion of the trench will be 1-1 1/2 ft to the left but sufficient earthwork should be provided on the other side of the valley to screen movements.

- 8. Shovel-boards will be carried out as they are available, if possible they should be sent forward ready fixed in pairs, two boards being fixed over one another.

9. As soon as the main portion of the work is completed, Coys will organise a system of maintenance in conjunction with their Brigade Headquarters.
10. Coys should arrange to ascertain daily what infantry parties are available for working on communication trenches and for carrying material. Every means should be availed of for pushing this work forward.

H. H. H. H.

Lieut Colonel.

5th Division, A.I.F.

Copies issued to :-

C.O.	No	1.
O.C.C. Coy.		2.
O.C.D. Coy.		3.
Lieut Barnes.		4.
O.R.		5.
8th Inf. Bde.		6.
th. Inf Bde.		7.
War Diary.		8.
File.		9.

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APPENDIX
APPENDIX
COPY NO.....

5th PIONEER BATTALION ORDER No 7.

by

Lieut Colonel H.G. Carter Commanding 5th Pioneer Battalion.

1. The 5th Australian Division is to relieve the Guards Division during the next two days. Relief is to be completed by 8 am. on 22nd November.
2. The front line occupied by the Division extends from O.O.S. N.34.b.9.9. to N.31.d.2.9. The 23th Division will be on our right and the 4th Australian Division on our left. The 16th Brigade will hold the left saxon and the 8th Brigade the right of the Divisional sector.
3. The 5th Pioneer Battalion will relieve the Guards Pioneer Battalion. Headquarters and two Companies (C.A.D. Coys) only will effect this relief - the remaining two Coys (A.S.B. Coys) will be detailed for work under the Decauville Tramway Officer Longueval and will remain in their present quarters until further orders. They will be ~~xxxxxxx~~ in charge of Major Morrison.
4. C.A.D. Coys together with Headquarters (which includes Signallers Pioneers, and Lewis Gun Section) will be ready to move from east their present quarters at 9 am. on 22nd instant. Advance parties consisting of 1 Officer per Company and 1 N.C.O. per platoon and H.Q. details will proceed at 7.30 am. on this date and take over the dugouts of the Guards Pioneer Battalion. The Lewis Gun Hand Carts will not be taken forward but will be left with the Quartermaster.
5. The following Officers will report at the Headquarters Guards Pioneer Battalion at 8 am. 21st November in order to take over the work that they have in progress as regards communication trenches. Captain Vidal, Lieut Hassall, Lieut Ross Kerr, and S/Lieut Barnes. D. Company will take over the Brigade Communication Trenches leading from Windmill and Needle Trenches to Rose Trench - C. Company will take over the main communication trenches leading over the Ginchy ridge up to the trenches and Lewis Gun Section will take over the ~~xxxxxxx~~ maintenance of paths etc about the camp site. The Guards Pioneer Battalion are camped near Waterlot Farm S.18.c.9.1.
6. All tents not required will be struck, neatly folded and packed by the Q.M. Store. The Q.M. and Transport Officer will remain at Montauban - and all horses, Company cookers and water carts will be taken forward. Horses will be sent daily for these as required.
7. Men will move out in full marching order with full water-bottles - waterproof sheets will be carried by the men but both blankets on the transport. These are to be rolled in bundles of 20 and properly labelled. In the case of C. Company and pioneers owing to the short distance and difficulties of transport, one blanket will be carried on the man and a fatigue party sent to carry the second blanket - these second blankets should be rolled in bundles that one man can handle.
8. A detail of Signallers will be left at Montauban only.

H.G. Carter

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

Copies issued to :-

- C.O. No 1.
- Major Morrison. No 2.
- Adjutant. No 3.

P.T.O

War Diary

5th PIONEER BATTALION.

Headquarters,

November 28th, 1916.

CIRCULAR MEMORANDUM.

SANITATION.

The following regulations are to be observed with regard to the Camp sanitation not only in our present area but in all areas in which the Battalion may be situated.

- (1) Proper latrines will be constructed in each Company area, or in each section of dug outs so that any dugout has a latrine within ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ reasonable distance.
- (2) Paths are to be constructed to these latrines marked with chalk or wires on stakes or other method so as to be easily found at night.
- (3) Urine cans will be provided at least one per platoon, during the night and emptied each morning. These must be made a convenient height, otherwise the ground surrounding the can becomes unsanitary through carelessness.
- (4) All exposed faeces found in the area is to be covered up immediately.
- (5) Two men per Company are to be permanently detailed to ~~attend~~ attend ~~to~~ this work, these men will be under the supervision of the Pioneer Sergeant, but this does not relieve Company and Platoon Commanders of their responsibility in seeing that the arrangements are satisfactory for their Company, Platoon etc.
- (6) Arrangements should also be made as time permits for washing - certain shell holes contain good washing water and these should be set apart for that use only; the water being taken therefrom by buckets or tins and the washing carried out on a bench close by which drains well clear of the washing water. The shell holes should be marked clearly and care taken that the water is not fouled in any way.
- (7) A regular system of drainage should be laid out for each Company's area so that in the event of heavy rain there will be no possibility of the water running into the men's dugouts.

H. G. Leuder

Lieut Colonel.

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

28/11/16.

N.B. The above is to be promulgated to all Officers and senior N.C.O's including section Commanders.

Secret

5th PIONEER BATTALION ORDER No 7.

by

Lieut Colonel H.G.Carter Commanding 5th Pioneer Battalion.

1. The 5th Australian Division is to relieve the Guards Division during the next two days. Relief is to be completed by 8.am. on 22nd November.
2. The front line occupied by the Division extends from N.34.b.5.5. to N.31.d.2.9. The 39th Division will be on our ~~right~~ right and the 4th Australian Division on our left. The 15th Brigade will hold the left and the 8th Brigade the right of the Divisional sector.
3. The 5th Pioneer Battalion will relieve the Guards Pioneer Battalion. Headquarters and two Companies (C & D Coys) only will effect this relief - the remaining two Coys (A & B Coys) will be detailed for work under the Decauville Tramway Officer Longueval and will remain in their present quarters until further orders. They will be in charge of Major Morrison.
4. C & D Coys together with Headquarters (which includes Signaller Pioneers, and Lewis Gun Section) will be ready to move from their present quarters at 8.am. on 22nd instant. Advance parties consisting of 1 Officer per Company and 1 N.C.O. per platoon and H.Q. details will proceed at 7.30.am. on this date and take over the dugouts of the Guards Pioneer Battalion. The Lewis Gun Band Carts will not be taken forward but will be left with the Quartermaster.
5. The following Officers will report at the Headquarters Guards Pioneer Battalion at 8.am. 21st November in order to take over the work that they have in progress as regards communication trenches. Captain Vidal, Lieut Bassall, Lieut Ross Kerr, and 2/Lieut Barnes. D. Company will take over the Brigade Communication trenches leading ~~xxxxxxx~~ from Windmill and Needle Trenches to Rose Trench - C. Company will take over the main communication trenches leading over the Ginchy ridge up to the trenches, and Lewis Gun Section will take over the maintenance of paths etc about the camp site.
The Guards Pioneer Battalion are camped near WATERLOT FARM.
S.18.C.9.1.
6. All tents not required will be struck, neatly folded and packed by the Q.M. Store. The Q.M. and Transport Officer will remain at MONTAUBAN - and all horses. Company cookers and water carts will be taken forward. Horses will be sent daily for these as required.
7. Men will move out in full marching order with full water - bottles - waterproof sheets will be carried by the men but both blankets on the Transport. These are to be rolled in bundles of 20 and properly labelled. In the case of C. Company and Pioneers owing to the short distance and difficulties of Transport one blanket will be carried on the man and a fatigue party sent to carry the second blanket - these second blankets should be rolled in bundles that one man can handle.
8. A detail of Signallers will be left at MONTAUBAN only.

H.G. Carter
Lieut Colonel.
Commanding 5th Pioneer Battalion. A.I.F.

20/11/18.

