

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

Artillery

**Item number:** 13/120/4

**Title:** 7th Australian Light Trench Mortar  
Battery

July 1918



AWM4-13/120/4

**CONFIDENTIAL.**

ORIGINAL.

~~DUPLICATE.~~

~~TRIPLICATE.~~

Australian Imperial Force.

**WAR DIARY**

OF

*7<sup>th</sup> Aust. Light Trench Mortar Bty*

FOR

*Month of July. 1918*

Signature of Officer compiling

*F. Brand. apt.*

Signature of Officer Commanding

*F. Brand. apt.*

7<sup>th</sup> Aust Light Trench Mortar Battery.

War Diary For Month of July 1918.

JULY 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>

215 rounds fired on E.M.G. positions, working parties & other selected targets, considerable attention being paid to MONUMENT WOOD. Positions prepared and ammunition worked forward for 8 mortars taking part in proposed operation on 4<sup>th</sup> inst.

4<sup>th</sup>

Battery 4<sup>th</sup> Qrs moved to (Sheet 62 D.S.W) 0.30. G. 20-30 for the operation.

7<sup>th</sup> A.I. Bde in conjunction with 6<sup>th</sup> A.I. Bde & 4<sup>th</sup> Aust Div on left attacked enemy positions. - zero hour 3.10 am.

8 mortars of this Bty took part in the preliminary bombardment (see appendix N<sup>o</sup> 1). All objectives gained. After the operation two of the mortars were brought back into reserve leaving 6 in the line. Bty 4<sup>th</sup> Q. returned to (Sheet 62<sup>nd</sup> S.W.) 0.27. C. 10-45. For report on operation (see appendix N<sup>o</sup> 2).

5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>

Registration on selected targets.

8<sup>th</sup>

27<sup>th</sup> Ptn advanced their line to average depth of 200 yards.

9<sup>th</sup>

28<sup>th</sup> Ptn advanced their line slightly forward to conform to the line taken up by 27<sup>th</sup> Ptn. During this operation one mortar was standing by to engage E. machine guns should they open fire, but was not needed. Several of the enemy attempting to escape overland were engaged by one other of the mortars with good effect.

As result of these local advances four of the mortars were pushed forward to fresh positions to cover the new front.

10<sup>th</sup>

Enemy attacks on new line fails.

11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>

Registration on Strong Points on 26<sup>th</sup> Ptn front

13<sup>th</sup>

Other ranks of nucleus Personnel changed (append. N<sup>o</sup> 3)

14<sup>th</sup>

26<sup>th</sup> Ptn on the right advanced their line through MONUMENT WOOD. Two mortars under Lieut A.H. STEWART, DCM. materially assisted in the success of this operation by rapidity of action & initiative displayed in bringing fire to bear on E.S.P. in U.S.D. which was holding up portion of the advance. 60 rounds were fired during this operation. The two mortars referred to, were then moved forward to positions in the new line. Later in the evening a concentration was suspected in E.S.P. in U.S.D. 20 rounds were fired on to that point. No attacks materialised.

15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup>

45 rounds fired on troublesome Strong Points along the front.

16<sup>th</sup>

Positions prepared, ammunition worked forward & registration carried out for operation by 7<sup>th</sup> A.I. Bde on 17<sup>th</sup> inst.

17<sup>th</sup>

Bty 4<sup>th</sup> Q. moved to 0.35 d. 30-40 for operation by 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> Ptns. Attack by 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> Ptns. Four mortars of the Bty taking part in the preliminary bombardment - two moving forward with the attacking Infantry. Zero hour 9.45 pm (append N<sup>o</sup> 4). All objectives gained & two mortars established in new line with 60 rounds per mortar. For report on operation (see appendix N<sup>o</sup> 5)

18<sup>th</sup>

Enemy counter attacked new line, but was beaten off. Four mortars opened fire on S.O.S. lines expending 110 rounds.

19<sup>th</sup>

Battery relieved by 6<sup>th</sup> A.L.T.M. B. & on relief moved to LAMOTTE (append

20<sup>th</sup>

6) Capt F. BRAND. rejoined from nucleus, taking over from Lieut G.J. RODGER. who had charge of the Battery during the tour in the line.

20-21<sup>st</sup>

Rest.

22-29<sup>th</sup>

Specialist Training & Setting up drill - Refitting, Bathing & Recreation - no strenuous training being carried on.

30<sup>th</sup>

Battery witnessed a demonstration of Infantry, co-operating with Tanks in an advance, at VAUX-EN-AMIENOIS near AMIENS.

31<sup>st</sup>

Specialist Training.

During the period in the line the spirit shown by the men was excellent. Under most trying conditions & during days of strenuous labour due to successive advances of our front line they worked with undiminished courage & vigour, building new emplacements, & carrying ammunition, always on the alert & ready for any contingency. It was owing to this spirit combined with a painstaking assiduity that the Infantry Battalions on several occasions were enabled to express their satisfaction of the invaluable assistance rendered them in their operations by the 3" Stokes mortars.

On several occasions there were complaints of the unsatisfactoriness of the blue Charges chiefly with regard to the enormous flash it produces when carrying on a constant & rapid rate of fire.

From July 1<sup>st</sup> to July 18<sup>th</sup> 1470 rounds were fired

The health of the troops during the month under review was good. Beyond a few cases of slight attacks of influenza & one by two men with boils, there was no sickness in the unit. Two casualties during the month (see Appendix N<sup>o</sup> 7)

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# WAR DIARY

OF

7<sup>th</sup> Aust. L. T. M. Battery

FOR

Month of July 1918

## LIST OF APPENDICES.

- | No. | Subject.  |
|-----|---|
| 1.  | Attack on enemy line by 7 <sup>th</sup> A.I. Bde in conjunction with 6 <sup>th</sup> A.I. Bde and 4 <sup>th</sup> Aust Div. |
| 2.  | Report on operation 4 <sup>th</sup> July.   |
| 3.  | Change of nucleus Personnel.  |
| 4.  | Attack by 25 <sup>th</sup> & 26 <sup>th</sup> Btms.   |
| 5.  | Report on operation 17 <sup>th</sup> July.  |
| 6.  | Battery relieved by 6 <sup>th</sup> A.L.T.M.B and move to LAMOTTE.  |
| 7.  | Casualty list for month.  |

3/8/18.

F. Brand, Capt  
OC 7<sup>th</sup> A.L.T.M.Bty.

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7<sup>th</sup> Aust. Light Trench Mortar Battery.

Appendix I

Order N<sup>o</sup> 19

Ref. Maps. 62<sup>d</sup> S.W. & S.E. 1/20,000.

July 3<sup>rd</sup> 1918.

1. On a date and at an hour to be notified later 4<sup>th</sup> Aust. Div & 6<sup>th</sup> A. I. Bde on our left will attack with a view of advancing their line.
2. The 7<sup>th</sup> A. I. Bde will assist. The 25<sup>th</sup> Bde capturing enemy trench from & including S.P. at P. 25. d. 35.25 to approx. P. 25. b. 2.4. gaining & maintaining touch with the right of the 6<sup>th</sup> A. I. Bde.  
This line will be consolidated & swung back to our present front line at about P. 25. c. 35.00.
3. This Battery will emplace eight mortars to assist in the operation as under:-
  - (a) Three at P. 25. c. 50.70.  
Three at P. 25. c. 40.15.  
These mortars will play a hurricane bombardment on enemy trench from P. 25. d. 35.25. to P. 25. b. 2.0. two mortars paying particular attention to S.P. at P. 25. d. 45.25. from zero to zero + 4 mins. Four mortars will then lift 100 yds & play for 3 mins then advancing at rate of 100 yds in 3 mins to line P. 25. d. 70.40. to P. 25. b. 7.0. laying down harassing fire for 3 mins. The other two mortars will play searching fire on P. 25. d. 65.25. & vicinity & S.P. at P. 31. a. 70.25. from zero + 4 to zero + 10 mins
  - (b) Two mortars at O. 36. a. 95.30 will keep the ORCHARD at O. 36. b. 8.1. under harassing fire & prevent M.G. fire from thence on to right of attack from zero to zero + 30 mins.
4. Lieut W. L. MILLER will be in charge of 6 mortars taking part in preliminary bombardment.  
Cpl WHILEY, W.F. will be in charge of the two mortars firing on the ORCHARD.
5. Tanks & aeroplanes will take a prominent part in the attack. Planes will drop parachute smoke flares over centre of any impending hostile attack.
6. Watches will be synchronized by runner from Bty H Qrs to gun positions at 11 PM on "Y" day.
7. Battery H. Qrs will be at O. 30. b. 3.2. during operation.

J. Rodger Lieut.  
BC. Battery.

3. 7. 18.

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7<sup>th</sup> Aust. Light Trench Mortar Battery.

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Report on Operation 4<sup>th</sup> July 1918

Appendix 2

In connection with the attack carried out by the 4<sup>th</sup> Aust Div, assisted by the 6<sup>th</sup> A.I. Bde & 7<sup>th</sup> A.I. Bde I have to report as follows:-

This Battery had eight (8) mortars taking active part in the operation east of VILLERS-BRETTONEUX. Three (3) mortars emplaced at P.25. C 50.70. & one (1) mortar emplaced at P.25. C 40.15. from zero hour, carried out four (4) minutes hurricane bombardment on the objective enemy trench from P25 d. 30.40 to P25. b. 2.0. then lifting 100 yds and laying down a three (3) minute bombardment finally laying down slow bombardment for five minutes on the line P25 d. 70.40. to P25. b. 7.0. expending altogether 300 rounds.

Two (2) mortars emplaced at P.25. C. 40.15. carried out a four (4) minute bombardment on the objective enemy strong point and machine gun post at P.25. d. One of these mortars then lifted and carried out searching fire on P.25. d. 65.25. & vicinity for ten (10) minutes. The other mortar carried out a ten (10) minute slow bombardment on enemy strong point at P.31. a. 70.25. between them expending 250 rounds.

Two (2) mortars emplaced at O.36. a. 95.30. from zero to zero + thirty (30) minutes carried out active harassing fire on suspected machine gun emplacements in the ORCHARD at O.36. b. 8.1. expending 250 rounds.

Reports from the Infantry who carried out the attack state that the Trench Mortar shooting was very satisfactory and of great assistance especially in the attack on the strong point at P.25. d. 30.25.

At zero hour + 2 an unfortunate accident a premature burst, due to unknown causes, on one mortar resulted in the death of two (2) of the crew wounding a third and the destruction of the mortar. The corporal in charge of the mortars at O.36. a. 95.30 was killed by enemy shell fire.

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All the mortar positions were under very heavy enemy bombardment during the whole of the operation.

During the consolidation a small local counter attack on a strong point at P.25. d. 30.25. caused the S.O.S signal to be fired. The three (3) mortars emplaced at P.25.C. 40.15 laid down a barrage along the line from P.25. d. 70.10. to P.25. d. 70.50. expending 100 rounds.

I desire to make a complaint regarding the terrific flash which is emitted from the mortar with blue cartridges & blue rings in carrying out a constant and rapid rate of fire

The total casualties in this operation were.

Killed	3 other ranks
Wounded	1 " "

Total expenditure of ammunition - 900 rounds.

I wish to express my sincere appreciation of the initiative & gallant conduct displayed by all ranks under the most trying circumstances during the whole of the events connected with this operation

G. Rodger Lieut.

O/C 7<sup>th</sup> A. L. T. M. Bty.

7TH AUSTRALIAN  
LIGHT TRENCH  
MORTAR BATTERY.

No. ....

Date... 5/7/18...

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7<sup>th</sup> Aust Light Trench Mortar BatteryOrder No 21.12<sup>th</sup> July 1918

1. The Nucleus Personnel of this Battery will relieve men at present serving with the Battery in the line tomorrow 13<sup>th</sup> inst.
2. On relief the following men will proceed to Nucleus Camp LA-MOTTE, and report to Capt. F. BRAND, and until further notice come under the orders of 7A. Battalion.

No 378	Sgt.	McEvoy. M.
" 94	Cpl	Haines. N. C. R.
4192.	"	Quinn. D. G.
1121.	Pte	Bassett. J.
2155.	"	Gaffel. R. W.
3770	"	Scandrett. J. J.
6445	"	Haines. R. E.
2700	"	Hawler. A.
1691	"	Kearney. W. J.
6648	"	Tomlinson. A.
15217.	"	Henderson. Q. J.
4742	"	Griffiths. J.
5805	"	Mitchell. G. W.
440	"	Morrison. J.
5883	"	Fulding. G. V.
4236	"	Reedman. E. W.
261	"	Atkin. J.
4432.	"	Glew. W.
5954.	"	Jameson.

3. Cpl Quinn. & 1. other ranks will proceed to Nucleus Camp tonight as billeting party.
4. Those who are at present at Transport lines will march out under senior N.C.O. at 3.P.M. 13<sup>th</sup> inst.
5. Those who are at present in the forward area will, as relieved, proceed by gun crews to Transport lines LA-MOTTE, where they will be billeted for the night, proceeding next morning to Nucleus Camp

G. Hodgson Lieut

OC 7<sup>th</sup> A. L. T. M. Bty.

12/7/18.



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7<sup>th</sup> Aust. Light Trench Mortar BtyOrder No 20.Ref. Maps. 62<sup>d</sup>. SW. & S.E. 1/20,000.July 17<sup>th</sup> 1918.

1. On a date & at an hour to be notified later the 7<sup>th</sup> A.I. Bde will advance its line in order to straighten our front.
2. Objectives are U. b. c. 55. 80 through U. b. central to railway bridge V. i. b. 5. 6. (bridge & mound inclusive) to 5<sup>th</sup> A.I. Bde right flank at road inclusive near P. 32. central.
3. This advance will be made by 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> Btms Inter-Battalion Boundary being the Railway Line, which with the Railway Bridge will be inclusive to 25<sup>th</sup> Btm. The mound in vicinity of V. i. b. 25. 10. is inclusive to 26<sup>th</sup> Btm.
4. 3" Stokes mortars will co-operate as follows.
  - (a) One mortar at U. s. b. 7. 3. will stand by to play harassing fire on enemy defences in U. s. d. & U. b. c. as may be required by OC Company on the spot.
  - (b) One mortar at U. s. b. 7. 3. at zero will fire ten rounds rapid on to enemy post at U. b. d. 0. 8. under cover of which a party from the 26<sup>th</sup> Btm. will rush and capture this post.
  - (c) Two mortars will be emplaced about U. b. b. 60. 90 to fire on enemy trenches in V. i. a. & V. i. b. 10. 90. from zero to zero - 6 minutes.  
On the capture of objectives these two mortars will move up to about V. i. a. 60. 50. & be emplaced to cover SYRIA & JAFFA trenches from the road at V. i. d. 10. 70 to the Railway.
  - (d) One mortar at P. 31. a. 70. 35. will fire on enemy machine gun position at P. 31. d. 10. 55. from zero to zero - 3 minutes & on enemy post at P. 31. d. 70. 60 from zero - 3 minutes to zero - 6 minutes.
  - (e) One mortar will be held in Reserve at O. 35. d. 30. 40.
5. A carrying party of ten men from each of the 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> Btms will accompany the two mortars that

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are going forward, each man carrying 6  
Stokes bombs

These parties will report to Section H.Q.s  
O.35. d. 30.40. at zero + 90 mins.

When each mortar has 50 rounds at  
objective these parties will return and report to  
Section H.Q.s.

6. Lieut W. L. MILLER. will be in charge of mortars  
going forward.

7. Corporals in charge of mortars will arrange  
to synchronize watches at Section H.Q.s at 5.P.M tomorrow

8. Battery Headq.s will be at O.35. d. 30.40  
(present Section H.Q.s.) during the operation.

G. Rodger Lieut.

O/C 7<sup>th</sup> A.L.T.M. Bty.

16. 7. 18.

115.  
7<sup>th</sup> Aust. Light Trench Mortar Battery.

Report on Operation of 17. 7. 18.

The 7<sup>th</sup> A. I. Bde carried out an operation on 17<sup>th</sup> July 1918 to advance their line east of VILLERS - BRETTONEUX.

This Battery had four mortars taking an active part in the operation and two in Reserve.

They were emplaced as under:-

- (1) U. 5. b. 7. 3.
- (2) U. 6. b. 40. 85.
- (3) O. 36. d. 80. 50.
- (4) P. 31. a. 70. 35.
- (1.) Reserve. U. 5. b. 7. 3.
- (2) " O. 36. d. 30. 40.

Zero hour was 9.45. P.M.

N<sup>o</sup> 1 mortar fired 15 rounds on enemy post at U. 6. c. 90. 90 at zero - 5 minutes under cover of which a party from 26<sup>th</sup> Bde rushed & successfully captured the position.

N<sup>o</sup> 2 mortar fired 30 rounds on enemy trench at V. 1. a. 40. 70. from zero to zero + 6 minutes.

N<sup>o</sup> 3 mortar fired 35 rounds on enemy trench at V. 1. a. 70. 90. from zero to zero + 6 minutes.

N<sup>os</sup> 2 & 3 mortars under Lieut W. L. MILLER then advanced with 60 rounds of ammunition per mortar.

N<sup>o</sup> 2 mortar rapidly reached trench at V. 1. a. 80. 60 and got into position to fire on JAFFA TRENCH in V. 1. d.

N<sup>o</sup> 3 mortar was much slower on account of delay in the advance of the 25<sup>th</sup> Bde, but eventually also got into position about V. 1. a. 70. 60. to fire into JAFFA TRENCH in V. 1. b.

All the ammunition reached the objective safely.

N<sup>o</sup> 4 mortar fired 15 rounds on M. G position at P. 31. d. 10. 55. from zero to zero plus 2 minutes and 25 rounds on enemy post at P. 31. d. 70. 60 from zero + 3<sup>1/2</sup> to zero + 6 minutes.

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 Altogether 120 rounds were fired during the operation.

There were no casualties in the Battery.

I would desire to acknowledge my appreciation of the excellent spirit shown by the carrying parties of ten men from each of the 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> P's who with a heavy load & on very slippery ground kept their formation intact & reached the objective with every round.

Every member of the Battery concerned in the operation worked with the utmost ardour and a self sacrificing spirit both before & during the operation to make it a success & I wish to acknowledge my sincere appreciation of their conduct.

J. J. Rodger Lieut.

In the Field.

O/C Battery.

18/7/18.

7<sup>th</sup> Aust. Light Trench Mortar Bty

Appendix d. 6.

Order No 22.Ref. map. Sheet 62<sup>D</sup> 1-40.000.19<sup>th</sup> July 1918

1. The 6<sup>th</sup> A. I. Bde will relieve the 7<sup>th</sup> A. I. Bde in the right sector of the Divnl front on the night 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> inst.
2. The 6<sup>th</sup> A. L. T. M. B. will relieve the 7<sup>th</sup> A. L. T. M. B. and the latter will on relief move to billets at present occupied by 6<sup>th</sup> A. L. T. M. B. in LA-MOTTE at N. H. d. 47.

F. Brand, Capt.

OC. 7<sup>th</sup> A. L. T. M. B.

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Appendix 7 12

7<sup>th</sup> Aust Light Trench Mortar Battery Appendix

Appendix No 7.

List of casualties for Month of July. 1918

REG NO	RANK & NAME.	DATE,	NATURE OF CASUALTY.
1764.	GNR CABLE J.T.	4 <sup>th</sup> July. 1918	Killed
20968	" LAWSON.	Do	Do.
	" FOWLER. G.V.M.	Do.	Wounded
2289.	CPL. WHILEY. W.T.	Do.	Killed.

3/8/18.

F. Brand, Capt.  
OC Battery.