

AWM4
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Formation Headquarters

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Title: General Staff, Headquarters 5th
Australian Division

March 1917



AWM4-1/50/13PART5

5TH. AUSTRALIAN DIVISION.

WEEKLY SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS.

From 8 a.m. 23rd. Feby. to 8 a.m. 2nd March 1916.

(1) GENERAL.

Since last week's report the situation on this front has considerably changed. Through considerable pressure the enemy has been forced to evacuate his front line system between Gueuedecourt and Gommecourt, and has fallen back to the Gommecourt-Loupard-Le Transloy line.

For the present the enemy appear to be using Le Transloy as a pivot for the withdrawal of their troops from the front line north of this Divisional Sector.

Through the activity of our Patrols and bombing parties we have advanced our front line, on our left flank, about 1000 yards and now occupy Pork, Milky Way, Bread, Barley and Sunray Trenches and have brought up our left to join the right flank of the Division on our left.

The enemy is now definitely clear of the Lark Hill spur.

Strong points have been established at various parts of the line.

Besides these our Patrols have pushed forward strong posts about 400 yards in front of Barley Trench.

On the right, with the exception of a few outposts, our line is unchanged.

The enemy has lost his advanced line of defence and has now been pushed back to his main line of defence, with a few Patrols thrown out in front of it.

A Minor Operation carried out this morning identified the 8th. Bavarian Regiment of the 14th. Bavarian Division, which relieved the 4th. Ersatz Division on the nights 26th-27th Feby.

The order of Battle on the Divisional front, from North West to South East is now 4th, 8th and 25th Bavarian Regiments

(2)

(2). OPERATIONS. (1). A Minor operation was carried out by our Centre Brigade at 4 a.m. this morning, ^{2nd March.} on Sunray Trench, from our block at N.22.c.9.6.

After a two minutes intense bombardment by Stokes Mortars a party bombed along Sunray Trench for about 250 yards to about N.22.d.3.6.

There was some resistance to our advance along the Trench and the mud was in places very deep, and ~~after~~ ⁱⁿ gaining our objective a good bomb fight took place.

The operation resulted in our successfully gaining our objective and capturing 14 prisoners (two of whom were wounded) and one Machine Gun.

Later on the enemy heavily shelled our front line and counter attacked from Atom Trench on a front of about 400 yards, but was successfully driven off by Rifle and Machine Gun fire inflicting heavy casualties.

A low estimate is given of 50 of the enemy killed.

Our casualties were slight, most of them being caused during the counter attack.

An important feature of the operation was the new identification on our front.

(2) The enemy has not attempted any operations on our front during the week.

(3). PATROLS

(1) It has been an active week for our Patrols.

They have maintained full control of No Man's Land.

Patrols have advanced to our present position and have been continually thrown out to reconnoitre enemy positions to feel the strength of the enemy defence.

The main object of our patrolling has been to reconnoitre and keep up with the enemy retirement and occupy Trenches.

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PATROLS (continued)

also to make strong outposts at points of advantage.

Besides these strong fighting Patrols have been sent out, in order to advance our line and bomb out any small posts and strong points held by the enemy.

Through this active Patrolling we have successfully made most of the advance to the present line held by this Division.

(2) Enemy Patrols. Enemy Patrols on this Divisional Front have been noticeably inactive.

Two small enemy Patrols were seen by our Right Brigade Patrols.

On the night of the 1st. inst. a small Patrol^{of four} of six was sent out to construct an advance post and the party lost its way on completion of the work and came under Machine Gun fire close to the German line (Till Trench).

The party took cover in shell holes and some 40 Germans then came forward and surrounded the party.

The Germans then proceeded with their Prisoners and after about half an hour came under rifle fire.

The fire came from an Australian Trench (Pork Trench)

The Australian Prisoners shouted out to them and then threw their bombs (which had been left to them) into the German escort. The Germans scattered and were afterwards rounded up by Australians of a Battalion of the Division on our left.

(4) MACHINE GUNS. (1) During the week we have employed a good deal of indirect Machine Gun fire on enemy tracks and communications and have successfully engaged hostile parties observed in enemy lines and many casualties have been inflicted on the enemy.

Besides this Machine Guns have been pushed forward to advanced posts and strong points gained in the advance.

(2) Enemy Machine Guns have been more active since our last report, especially from selected positions made by the enemy to cover his retirement.

These positions are mainly small outposts and are used mostly to hamper progress of our Patrols, which, up to the present, has not been successful.

Enemy has used very little indirect fire on our front.

(5) TRENCH MORTARS. (1) Our Trench Mortars have been fairly active mainly being used for knocking out strong points.

One or two small organised shoots have been arranged on enemy works, one particularly in conjunction with the minor operation of the centre Brigade this morning.

(2) Enemy Trench Mortars have shown an increased activity during the week. Medium Minenwerfers and Pineapples being used.

(6) ARTILLERY (1) Our Artillery activity has been slightly above the average. There has been a greater amount of visible movement, and consequently more of the ammunition expended has been directed at genuine targets than is usually the case. Improved visibility has also reduced the amount of blind shooting usually necessary of late.

Targets engaged include Railway Trains, wheeled Transport (at night), Troops in the open, (including an Infantry Battalion reported by our observers as moving in O.19 b., and engaged with the aid of the 23rd. H.A.G.) Minenwerfer and "pineapple" gun positions etc.

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ARTILLERY (continued)

The left Group began its movement to forward positions near FLERS and GUEUDECOURT on the night 23/24th. Feby. and completed the movement of its three 18-Pdr. and two Howitzer Batteries at 8.45 pm on the 26th. Feby. The move was attended with considerable difficulty, and several guns were temporarily bogged. It was mainly carried out at night, but was helped by the mist prevailing on the morning of the 24th. Feby.

On the morning of the 28th. the Right Group, assisted by the 114th. Battery, took part in a minor operation, carried out by the 20th. Division on our Right.

(1) ENEMY ARTILLERY. The enemy's Artillery was quiet at the beginning of the week, but at the latter end has shown increased activity.

The number of Batteries does not appear to have been greatly, if at all, reduced, and the shelling of the front line has been very consistent.

The front line about MONSOON Trench, LES BOEUFs, FLERS and GUEUDECOURT, GUN VALLEY and DELVILLE WOOD have been his favorite targets, and the usual combination of guns is still in use, & 7.7 c.m., 4.2" guns and Howitzers and 5.9" guns and Howitzers.

A few 8" shells were reported to have fallen in T.7.d. on the evening of the 27th. Feby., but no other report has been made.

It seems possible that these were 5.9's and that the 8" have been removed.

None of the usual shelling from the direction of Bapaume has been reported during the week.

(7) CASUALTIES.

KILLED.	3 Officers	14 Other ranks
WOUNDED	7 "	96 " "
MISSING	Nil.	

sgd J. J. Hobbs

Major-General.
Commanding 5th. Australian Division.

5th AUSTRALIAN DIVISION.RIGHT DIVISIONAL SECTORREPORT "A" 9th MARCH, 1917.(Reference Special Map, 1 / 10,000 attached)
-----FRONT LINE SYSTEM.I. WIRE ENTANGLEMENTS:

- (a) Front Line. FINCH TRENCH. 400 yds. of double apron wire has been erected along the front of FINCH TRENCH.
CAMERON TRENCH. 110 yds. barbed concertina from its junction with SUNRAY TRENCH.
- (b) Support Line.
Nil.
- (c) Reserve Line.
ROSE RESERVE. Completely wired.
THISTLE RESERVE. Completely wired.

II. FIRE TRENCHES and STRONG POINTS:

- (a) Front Line. General maintenance work has been kept up, trenches deepened, duckboards raised and improvement to shelters for garrison.
7 Posts have been fitted with "A" frames and duckboards laid in SUNRAY TRENCH.
CAMERON TRENCH has been constructed from N.28.a.9 $\frac{1}{2}$.9. to SUNRAY TRENCH at N.22.d.1.7. This trench has been deepened and duckboarded.
A small sap with "T" head has been dug from CAMERON TRENCH at N.22.d.1 $\frac{1}{2}$.4. to N.22.d.3.5 $\frac{1}{2}$.
BARLEY TRENCH when taken was found to be knee-deep in mud and dug-outs had entrances filled in. A good deal of mud has been cleared out and duckboards laid. Most of the dug-outs have been cleaned up.
PORK TRENCH was also found to be in a bad condition. Work of clearing out is being carried on and duckboards being laid.
- (b) Support Line.
Most of the work done in this line has been maintenance work and duckboards raised and trenches cleared of mud.
- (c) Reserve Line.
A further 200 yds. of this trench have been revetted with sandbags to 6 feet high, "A" frames fitted and duckboards laid. 10 splinter-proof shelters, each holding 10 men have been completed. This line is in good order.

III. COMMUNICATION TRENCHES:

- (a) Completed. ESSEX ALLEY from SPRING TRENCH N.29.c.0.2. to N.29.c.2.2. revetted and duckboarded, 6 feet deep.
EGYPT ALLEY N.34.b.8.3. to N.35.b.1.2. revetted and duckboarded 6 feet deep.
ENDLESS ALLEY. 100 yds. trench deepened to depth of 6 ft. revetted and duckboarded.
ETERNAL ALLEY. 400 yds have been duckboarded and revetted wire and angle uprights with angle iron anchor pegs.
ENERGY ALLEY. Cleared and drained for 160 yds. 2 drains each 20 ft. cut and sump dug.
EDWIN ALLEY. Completed from N.22.c.7.4. to SUNRAY at N.22.c.8.7.
- (b) In Hand.
Communication trench from N.22.c.4.5. to SUNRAY TRENCH at N.22.c.4.8.
Communication trench from N.22.c.25.40. to N.22.c.o.6.

IV. OVERLAND ROUTES:

- (a) Completed. 800 yds. of duckboard track laid from T.3.d.0.9. to N.33.d.9 $\frac{1}{2}$.2.

General maintenance work, re-wiring of existing duck-board tracks has been carried out.

(b) In Hand.

From N.33.d.9 $\frac{1}{2}$.2 to N.34.c.5.6.

V. MINED DUG-OUTS:

FRONT SYSTEM.

(a) Completed.

Location

(ble)
Accommodation availa-

N.34.d.5.7.
N.34.b.85.90.
N.34.b.80.25.
N.34.a.30.85.

40 men
M.G. crew.
M.G. crew.
320 men.

(b) In Hand.

Location

No. of entrances

Accommodation new available.

N.28.c.1.6.
N.34.b.9.9.
N.28.b.2.7.
N.28.a.7 $\frac{1}{2}$.9.

4
2
2
2

250 men.
Company Headquarters
Company Headquarters
Company Headquarters

VI. MACHINE GUN EMPLACEMENTS:

(a) Completed.

Open.

N.35.c.50.75.
N.34.b.90.25.
N.34.b.85.75.
N.28.d.25.70.

N.28.b.0.8.
N.22.c.7.1.
N.22.c.3.4.
N.22.c.4.7.

N.22.c.9.7.
N.22.c.45.75.
N.28.b.15.00.

VII. TRENCH MORTAR EMPLACEMENTS:

(a) Completed.

Medium Trench Mortars.

Light Trench Mortars.

N.22.d.1.2.
N.22.d.1.2 $\frac{1}{2}$.
N.22.c.7.6.

N.22.d.1.4.
N.22.c.7.5.

III. BURIED CABLE:

(a) Completed.

9,100 yards.

(b) Incomplete and Proposed.

MULLER'S SON to Front Line - 300 yards.
ROSE TRENCH to Right Battalion - 880 yards.
Right Battalion to Front Line - 1,000 yards.

X. MISCELLANEOUS:

A well shaft has been sunk 30 feet from the bottom of MILLER'S DAUGHTER Dug-out and good water found.
A well has been sunk at MILLER'S SON and a good supply of water obtained.
Well at GUEUDE COURT N.26.b.7.1. has been cleaned and the top is being repaired.
These wells are being developed.

(Sd) J. J. Hobbs

Major-General,
Commanding,
5th AUSTRALIAN DIVISION.

5TH. AUSTRALIAN DIVISION.

WEEKLY SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS.(1) GENERAL.

Since last week's report we have taken over further frontage from the 2nd. Australian Division.

Our line now extends South-west to H.32.a.0.0.

The line held by our Right and Centre Brigades is unchanged.

Constant touch has been maintained with the enemy.

Strong Patrols have reconnoitred the enemy line of Heaven, Atom and Till Trenches every night, but have found the enemy line well wired and held by the normal strong Garrison, and have not effected a lodgment.

Our Left Brigade front has been advanced and now runs by a series of posts from H.2.central, H.2.b.4.7, H.32.d.2.7, H.32.a.0.0.

Posts have been established at H.2.b.4.3 and H. 8.b.80.85.

The order of battle opposite the Divisional front from North-west to South-east is unchanged.

(2) OPERATIONS.

(i). No minor or major operations have been carried out since the last report.

(ii). The enemy has not attempted any operations on our front during the week.

(3) PATROLS.

(i) Our Patrols have been extremely active.

Both reconnoitring and fighting Patrols have been continually out at night, in order to effect a lodgment in enemy positions, but without success, owing to enemy holding his line with the normal garrison.

On two occasions small enemy Patrols have been encountered by our Right Brigade, near their own Trenches and bomb fights have taken place in which our Patrols have successfully inflicted casualties on the Germans and driven them back to their lines.

On other occasions rifle shots have been exchanged with enemy Patrols.

Our Left Brigade Patrols have been successful in advancing our line and cases have occurred where Patrols have encountered strong opposition in gaining positions now held.

Throughout the week our Patrols have constantly come under hostile Machine Gun and rifle fire.

(ii). Enemy Patrols. Enemy Patrols have again been inactive throughout the week.

Very small hostile Patrols were observed near their own lines by our Right Brigade and were driven off, also one opposite our Centre Brigade, which was dispersed before its object could be ascertained.

(4) MACHINE GUNS.

(i). During the week our Machine Guns have engaged selected targets, also effectively dispersed hostile parties dispersed.

Particular attention has been given to enemy communications, roads and tracks by indirect fire in order to harass and inflict casualties.

Our Machine Guns have maintained their usual activity.

Besides this Machine Guns have been pushed forward to advanced posts and strong points, gained by our Left Brigade.

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MACHINE GUNS. (continued)

(ii). Hostile Machine Guns have shown a slight decrease in activity.

A little indirect fire has been used on the roads and on Millers Son and Millers Daughter. Also occasional bursts of sweeping fire have been used on our front line.

A good deal of enemy activity has been devoted to covering approaches to his Trenches by our Patrols.

(v) TRENCH MORTARS.

(i) Our Trench Mortars have been used frequently during the week mainly for knocking out strong points.

On the night 15/16th Medium Trench Mortars carried out a shoot on Atom and Boomerang Trenches with good results.

(ii). Enemy Trench Mortars have been again very active throughout the week.

Light Trench Mortars have been constantly used on SUNRAY TRENCH, but have done no damage.

(6) ARTILLERY.

(i) Our Divisional Artillery has been active during the week, carrying out several organised bombardments and an irregular bombardment on enemy front line trenches and communications.

A small amount of Counter-battery work has also been carried out.

No zone calls affecting any of the groups have been reported.

The organised bombardments were carried out, as per Corps Orders, on the 9th, 11th and 12th inst., being 20 minutes in each case, commencing 3.12 p.m., 12 noon, and 4.25 p.m. respectively.

Artillery and Infantry observers both agree that the shooting was accurate and the effect good.

A feature of these operations was the comparative insignificance of the retaliation put up by the enemy.

Sunray Trench and the vicinity, Flers and Batteries of our left group were the principal sufferers.

Needle Dump was added to the list after the second day and was constantly shelled for two days..

A bombardment of the enemy front line, combined with wire-cutting in squares M.23.c., M.22.b. and M.16, was undertaken on the 14th, in co-operation with the Corps Heavy Artillery, in preparation for Patrol operations on the night 14/15th inst.

The Patrols report in all cases that they found the wire well cut.

(ii). Enemy Artillery. This has been mainly confined to retaliatory work, apparently by few guns, and in many cases single guns.

The counter work against the Batteries of our left group and the shelling of Flers, however, until two days ago was carried out by a 5.9" Battery, firing salvos of three, and a 4-gun 10.5 cm. Battery.

During the last two days enemy activity has declined considerably and shelling by more than one gun has not been much reported and has then apparently come mainly from 77 mm's.

(7) CASUALTIES.

Killed	3	Officers	45	Other ranks
Wounded	2	"	174	"
Missing	1	"		"

(Sgd.) J. J. Hobbs.

Major-General.
Commanding 5th Australian Division.

APPENDIX 1.

5TH. AUSTRALIAN DIVISION

RETURN of Captured Trophies and War Material for week ending 8 a.m. Friday ^{16th} ~~16th~~ March 1917

N I L.

Major-General
Commanding 5th. Australian Division.

APPENDIX. E
OF N. 14.

Ig 27.9.13

Headquarters,
1st ANZAC Corps.

Summary of Operations for week ending
8 a.m. 23rd March 1917. is sent herewith.

23/3/17. Major General,
Commanding 5th AUSTRALIAN DIVISION.

5TH. AUSTRALIAN DIVISION.WEEKLY SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS .1. GENERAL.

Since last week's report our line has been advanced approximately 11,000 yards as the result of pressure on enemy's rearguard. Our outpost line now runs VELU, BEAUMETZ, I.6 central, I.4.b.3.3. Constant touch has been kept with the enemy, and our mounted troops have reconnoitred country as far forward as a line running approximately J.33.central, J.21.central, J.15.a. J.7.d. and c.3.0. central. The enemy's rearguard is holding the general line HERMIES - DOIGNIES. Enfilade rifle and machine gun fire has been directed on our right flank repeatedly during our advance. The enemy rearguard appears to have only field guns and field howitzers, about 2 batteries in all.

2. OPERATIONS.

(1) At 4.30 a.m. on the 17th instant our patrols entered enemy trenches in the Le TRANSLOY line meeting with a certain amount of opposition, and cleared them of the enemy.

These patrols were reinforced and pushed forward and by 7 a.m. BAPAUME, BEAULENCOURT and Le TRANSLOY were occupied by our troops. A little opposition was met with in BAPAUME and a small street fight took place in clearing the town.

Further patrolling resulted in our troops occupying VILLERS au FLOS, RIENCOURT and BANCOURT. An outpost line was then established from VILLERS au FLOS through RIENCOURT and North East of BAPAUME.

On the 18th March the Advance Guard consisting of the 15th Brigade Headquarters, 59th and 60th Battalions, 15th Machine Gun Company (less 2 Sections) "C" Squadron 13th Light Horse Regiment, 4th Battery A.F.A., 2 Sections 14th Field Company, 2 Sections 14th Field Ambulance, and half a section of the 5th D.A.C. commenced operations. Our Light Horse patrols passed through the outpost line at 6.30 a.m. and came into touch with hostile infantry posts in FREMICOURT at 7.30 a.m. Closing round the town, the Light Horse captured 2 Germans and wounded one of the 96th Regiment.

At 12.30 p.m. enemy post of 70 rifles and 1 machine gun was located at DELSAUX FARM I.28.a.3.5.

The vanguard, 59th Battalion, deployed moved against this position which was captured at 3.45 p.m.

One officer and three men of the enemy garrison were killed. On the body of the officer was found an Operation Order detailing the plans for the retirement. At 4 p.m. our Right Flank occupied HAPLINCOURT without opposition and at the same time drove the enemy out of BEUGNY.

At 6 p.m. our line ran from HAPLINCOURT to BEUGNY and the 59th Battalion with two Vickers guns were established on that line.

19th March. At 7 a.m. our Light Horse patrols were fired on from O.5.c.7.8. (40 rifles and 1 machine gun.) VELU (12 cavalry), LE BUGGUIERE (30 rifles and one machine gun), I.17.d.5.7. (30 rifles and 1 machine gun), O.3.d.6.6. (80 cavalry) and were unable to make progress.

At 1.45 p.m. the 60th Battalion came into close touch with all these points and progress commenced at 2.30 p.m. On the right the first named locality was very troublesome owing to the fact that fire from there enfiladed our line moving towards VELU. A half company was directed on this point and under cover of artillery fire drove out the enemy. At 2.30 p.m. VELU was shelled by our 18-pdrs. and at 4.35 p.m. our patrols entered the village.

At 4.15 p.m. our infantry working round LE BUCQUIERE drove out the enemy and occupied the village. The left flank did not make progress owing to enfilade fire effect of the hostile cavalry in I.3.d. At 5 p.m. we held the general line I.6.central - J.26.c.0.0. - I.24.b.0.0. - I.9.a.0.0. and occupied this line as an outpost line in addition to a garrison in HAPLINCOURT. 20th March. At 8 a.m. Light Horse patrols encountered heavy rifle fire from the direction of MORCHIES and BEAUMETZ. At 8.30 a.m. Light Horse occupied BERTINCOURT.

At 11 a.m. our infantry advanced on MORCHIES and BEAUMETZ. There was little opposition in the direction of MORCHIES but the enemy was seen to be reinforcing three posts in front of BEAUMETZ and it was estimated that he had 100 infantry with 2 machine guns in action there.

At 12 noon patrols between VELU WOOD and BERTINCOURT were shelled with shrapnel and at the same time the ridge 200 yards East of BEUGNY was also shelled by enemy field guns.

At 1 p.m. the 59th Battalion occupied MORCHIES and good progress had been made towards BEAUMETZ. MORCHIES was the final objective of the left flank and was at once consolidated and connected with the Division on our left at MARICOURT WOOD.

At 2.25 p.m. under heavy rifle and machine gun fire our infantry commenced to work around BEAUMETZ. The enemy were very active and our progress slow.

At 3.30 p.m. our advanced guard battery fired on BEAUMETZ with good effect, and the enemy commenced to withdraw from the village.

At 4.30 p.m. the 60th Battalion had practically surrounded BEAUMETZ when warning was received that a hostile counter attack was developing from the direction of HERMIES and was threatening our right company in reserve. As BEAUMETZ was still occupied by the enemy and his counter attack was strong, our attack was temporarily abandoned and our troops fell back to our side of the village.

At 6 p.m. our line ran from O.1 Central to J.26.a.0.0. J.19.a.0.0. - C.6.Central - C.4. Central.

21st March. At 7 a.m. our Light Horse patrols supported by infantry patrols found BEAUMETZ unoccupied and at once consolidated in the village which was incorporated within our outpost line. At night our patrols found no enemy within 600 yards of our line. One German was wounded and one killed; both belonged to the 94th Regiment.

22nd March. Our Light Horse and Infantry Patrols drew fire from the same points as noted the previous day

(ii) Enemy attempted a counter attack against our front near BEAUMETZ on the 20th instant.

At 4.30 a.m. on the 23rd the enemy commenced a bombardment on BEAUMETZ and the vicinity, and at 5 a.m. he attacked.

At 5.30 a.m. our garrison in BEAUMETZ was driven out.

It is estimated that the enemy attacked with no less than 200 men.

At 7.30 a.m. our troops attacked and re-occupied BEAUMETZ and it is estimated that the Germans left about 100 dead and 9 wounded prisoners behind.

- 10
4. MACHINE GUNS. (i) Our machine guns have been fairly active, and being especially used in strengthening our outpost lines.
(ii) Enemy machine guns have not been very effective. It is estimated that only four guns have been operating on our front. At times they have been a little troublesome in delaying our advance.
6. ARTILLERY. (i) As regards actual artillery activity our main operations during the week have been in the nature of wire cutting and general bombardments during the 15th and 16th. This was undertaken to facilitate the entry of infantry patrols into the enemy front system. During the advance, the battery with the advanced guard effectively supported our infantry when advancing on their objectives.
(ii) Enemy artillery action during the period under review has presumably consisted chiefly in getting his batteries away. The shelling to which we were subjected during the few days before the advance began may be described as energetic though small in quantity; batteries had obviously been reduced to a section, or even a single gun in many cases.
7. CASUALTIES.
- | | | |
|---------|------------|----------------|
| Killed | 2 officers | 27 other ranks |
| Wounded | - | 98 " " |
| Missing | - | 3 " " |

23rd March, 1917.

Major-General,
Commanding,
5th AUSTRALIAN DIVISION.

APPENDIX 1.

5TH. AUSTRALIAN DIVISION.

RETURN of CAPTURED TROPHIES and WAR MATERIAL for Week ending 8 a.m. FRIDAY 23rd MARCH, 1917.

- NIL. -

Major-General,
Commanding,
5TH. AUSTRALIAN DIVISION.

APPENDIX. *E*

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Headquarters,

First ANZAC Corps.

Summary of Operations for week ending
6 a.m. 30th instant, is sent herewith.

W. H. Murray

Major General,

30/3/17.

Commanding 5th Australian Division.

5th AUSTRALIAN DIVISION.

SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS

For week ending 8 a.m. 30th March/17.

1. GENERAL. The enemy has been driven back to the last position before his main line, HERMIES, DOIGNIES, LOUVERVAL, which is being held by a series of strong posts. These have been dug in and wired. His artillery has been withdrawn to the main line immediately in front of our line although there are still a few guns on either flank of the Divisional Front within his main line. It is considered that the posts would not be able to withstand a determined attack. Enemy counter attacks especially on BRAUMETZ have been pushed with determination. Our outpost line now runs VREU, BRAUMETZ (inclusive) J.8.d.6.6 J.2.a.8.8, C.24.d.7.6.
2. OPERATIONS. (1) 23rd March. At 4.30 a.m. the enemy opened a vigorous bombardment against BRAUMETZ. At 4.45 a.m., the enemy made the attack in three columns on both flanks of the village. The right party consisted of 300 and the left, 120. Both parties were made up of specially trained "Sturmtruppen" and were brought up particularly from the vicinity of CAMBRAI with orders to capture BRAUMETZ at any cost. The right party got through our chain of posts and reached the rear of the village and gained a small footing. The left party were driven off with bombs, machine and Lewis guns, and in some cases, the bayonet. This party on being driven off inclined towards the village where it was met by our counter attack on the right party which was delivered at 5.30 a.m. After a good deal of hard fighting the enemy were forced through our outpost line where at 6.30 a.m. he came under heavy machine and Lewis gun fire, inflicting a considerable number of casualties on him. At 7.30 a.m. the village had been re-taken and at 8 a.m. our line was re-established in its original position. The enemy left in or near our lines 59 dead and 11 severely wounded, nine of whom died later, of the 95th and 96th R.I.R. Our casualties were 12 killed and 38 wounded. 24th March. At 3 a.m. the enemy opened a heavy bombardment on BRAUMETZ, LE BUCQUIERE and the front line in that vicinity also on certain battery positions. One 8-inch gun, 2 4.2 batteries, and 2 77 mm. batteries appeared to take part. At about 4 a.m. a hostile party of 50 belonging to No. 1 Storming Battalion brought up specially for the purpose attacked the north-east corner of BRAUMETZ and drove our posts back about 200 yards. One of our companies attacked the enemy and drove them back to the last house where the enemy made a temporary stand. At 2 p.m. this house was shelled by 4.5" Howitzers and destroyed. Only 2 wounded Germans were found there. At 4.30 a.m. a large party of Germans estimated 300 strong were observed coming down the Sunken Road at J.14.a.4.8 in column. Our Vickers guns opened at short range and caused heavy losses. The survivors scattered and as they showed themselves on the hillside, came under our heavy Lewis gun and rifle fire. The remnants took refuge in shell holes.

Our 18-pdrs also put a creeping shrapnel barrage over the area of refuge.

72 dead were counted, and one wounded and five unwounded prisoners were captured.

Our losses were four killed, 21 wounded.

At 3.45 p.m. our Advance Guard moved from LEBUCQUIERE - VALLU against the line J.20.central, J.20.d.3.2, J.31.a.1.7.

"A" Squadron 13th Light Horse covered the right flank of the advance, and 1 battery of 18-pdrs cooperated.

The enemy (140 rifles) occupying a position J.20.central were driven out and as they retired in a disorderly manner across the open and up a Sunken Road our shrapnel inflicted heavy loss.

The position was consolidated.

Our casualties were 4 killed and 32 wounded.

At 9 p.m. a fighting patrol occupied the FARM at J.8.c.6.3 without opposition, but five hours later an enemy bombing party attempted to retake the farm, without success.

26th March. At 5.15 a.m. our Advanced Guard advanced from the outpost line and occupied the line J.8.c.7.5, and J.8.a.0.0. then along the road to C.30.a.5 central. Posts were to be established on the road J.2.a.8.8 to D.19.c.1.0.

The main line was reached without loss but the enemy vigorously resisted the pushing out of posts. The task was completed by 7 a.m.

At 11.15 a.m. the 7th Brigade ~~was~~ reported a hostile counterattack on their right flank, and requested cooperation. Two companies were directed on a point 300 yards east of LAGNICOURT.

The counter attack was repulsed.

At 1.15 p.m. at the request of the 7th Brigade, two companies of the 59th Battalion carried out a counter attack against a second body of the enemy advancing over the same ground as the first occasion. This counter attack was successful. Two wounded and six unwounded prisoners of the 15th R.I.R. and 91st R.I.R. and 1 machine gun were captured during the morning. Owing to the heavy nature of the machine gun fire from the right flank of our post at J.2.a.8.8, it was found necessary to abandon this post at 4 a.m. after several casualties had been sustained.

At 10.45 p.m. under cover of a heavy bombardment which practically demolished the post, the enemy recaptured the farm at J.8.c.6.3 but was driven out half an hour later.

27th March. At 8 p.m. an attack on the line J.8.c.6.3, J.2.a.7.7, D.25.d.7.8 and by 10 p.m. the objective was made secure. One machine gun, two portable searchlights, and one Minenwerfer were captured at J.2.a.7.7. Our casualties were slight.

28th March. At 10 p.m. a strong point was established at J.8.d.2.6, thus securing for us an excellent observation post.

29th March. During the morning our outpost line was pushed forward to its present disposition.

MACHINE GUNS.

Our machine guns have had an extremely active and successful week. Not only have they been used in strengthening our outpost line and in other positions of advantage, but have been vigorously used in cooperating in counter attacks, and attacks on the enemy.

Hostile movement and assembling enemy troops have been successfully fired on, and the machine gunners can claim a large number of casualties for the week.

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(ii) Though at times enemy machine guns have become troublesome in delaying our advance and harassing our advance posts on two occasions, their fire on the whole has been ineffective.

4. ARTILLERY. (1) The Advanced Guard Field Artillery successfully cooperated with the infantry both in resisting enemy's attacks and dealing with the enemy when forced to retire. Mobile guns have been freely and very effectively used, often at decisive ranges in engaging fleeting and other targets as they appeared, and without loss either of men or horses.

(ii) Enemy artillery action during the week has consisted mainly of shelling the villages and the outpost line held by our advanced guard, and except in the case of 77 mm. field guns, has come apparently from very long range, or even extreme ranges.

Most of the shelling by 10.5 centimetre appears to be coming from the flanks outside the Divisional area. Organised bombardments have been put into BEAUMETZ and other points prior to the attacks made by the enemy.

7. <u>CASUALTIES.</u>	Killed	3	officers	73	other ranks
	Wounded	10	"	313	"
	Missing	-	"	5	"

Major General,

30/3/17.

Commanding 5th Australian Division.

5th AUSTRALIAN DIVISION.

RETURN OF CAPTURED TROPHIES AND WAR MATERIAL FOR WEEK ENDING 8 a.m. 30th MARCH 1917.

Nature of Trophy or War Material.	Captured by	Date of Capture	How Disposed of	Remarks.
1 Machine Gun	38th Aust. Bn.	26th March 1917	At Divisional Headquarters	
1 Machine Gun 1 Minenwerfer 2 Portable Searchlights	38th Aust. Bn.	27th March 1917	At Divisional Headquarters.	