

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

Formation Headquarters

Item number: 1/50/30 Part 10

Title: General Staff, Headquarters 5th
Australian Division

August 1918



AWM4-1/50/30PART10

5 AUSTRALIAN DIVISION.

REPORT ON MEDICAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE OPERATIONS OF 8TH, 9TH & 10TH AUGUST 1918.

1. RECOUNTAL OF PLAN.

The arrangements for evacuating and treating the wounded from the Right Sector of the Aust. Corps front were divided between the Field Ambulances of the 2nd and 5th Australian Divisions. The Medical arrangements were administered in turn by A.D.M.S. 2nd Aust. Division and A.D.M.S. 5th Aust. Division, as command passed.

- (a) Dressing Stations. Ambulance Tent divisions or subdivisions from 2nd and 5th Australian Divisions were located at Main Dressing Stations, Advanced Dressing Station and Divisional Collecting Station. The Advanced Dressing Station was divided into Walking Wounded Dressing Station and Station for stretcher cases, the former being run by Ambulance personnel of the 5th Australian Division, the latter by the 2nd Aust. Division.
- (b) Bearer Personnel. The whole of the bearers of the 2nd Aust. Division were grouped under the command of Lt. Colonel Wilson, C.O. 7th Aust. Field Ambulance, while those of the 5th Aust. Division were under the command of Lt. Colonel Walsh, D.S.O., C.O. 15th Aust. Field Ambulance. Each was responsible for the clearance of the R.A.P.'s of its Division. In the 5th Australian Division 4 bearers were attached to each R.M.O. and the Bearer divisions of the 8th, 14th & 15th Aust. Field Ambulances were attached to their respective Brigades.
- (c) Motor Ambulance Cars. The whole of the Motor Ambulances of the 2nd & 5th Aust. Divisions were pooled under the charge of Captain Fay; M.C., 14th Aust. Field Ambulance, who was responsible for the working of these cars.
- (d) Horse Ambulance Wagons. These were all pooled under the control of Lt. Colonel Crowther, C.O. 5th Aust. Field Ambulance.
- (e) Records. These were to be kept at W.W.D.S. and Main Dressing Stations only. Returns and wires were to be forwarded by Ambulances concerned to A.D.M.S. administering the Sector, copies to other A.D.M.S. and consolidated in A.D.M.S. Office.
- (f) Evacuations. Stretcher cases from Forward Motor Posts to A.D.S. & M.D.S. by Divisional Ambulance cars, thence to C.C.S. VIGNACOURT by M.A.C. Ambulance cars. Walking Wounded. By M.A.C. lorries to Aust. Corps Relay Post, RIVERY (M.Z.b.O.6.) from W.W.D.S.

2. RECOUNTAL OF ACTUAL EVENTS.

On the night of 5/6th August Bearer divisions moved up into touch with their respective Brigades. Tent subdivisions reported as follows :-

- 14th Aust. Field Ambulance to M.D.S. ST.ACHEUL.
- 15th " " " to A.D.S. (W.W.D.S.) at N.28.d.O.3.
- 8th " " " reserve at N.26.c.2.3.

Motor & Horse drawn ambulances vehicles at N.26.d.I.3.

- (a) Dressing Stations. On 8/8/18. 14th Aust. Field Ambulance. The tent divisions of the 14th Aust Field Ambulance was located at M.D.S. ST.ACHEUL where it worked under orders of C.O. 6th Aust. Field Ambulance. On the A.D.S. moving from N.27.C.2.3. to White Chateau at 8 30am on 8/8/18. one tent subdivision moved to N.27.C.2.3. and established a D.C.S. for slightly sick. On change of location of M.D.S. the remaining two tent subdivisions of 14th Aust. Field Ambulance became reserve.

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continued.

2. (a) A special team from 4th Aust. Division for blood transfusion was located at ST. ACHEUL. Gas cases were also dealt with there by personnel from the 3rd Aust. Division. 15th Aust. Field Ambulance. The 15th & 7th Field Ambulances were established on 7/8/18 at N.28.D.O.3. and N.26.D.I.3. respectively as the W.W.D.S. and A.D.S. No difficulty was experienced in evacuations here. At 12 30pm, 8/8/18, after the opening of A.D.S. & W.W.D.S. at White Chateau instructions were issued for the closing of these stations and to be prepared to move forward. At 1 pm the 7th Field Ambulance was ordered to establish an A.D.S. in WARFUSEE P.30.C.9.3. and the 15th Field Ambulance a W.W.D.S. at P.29.C.4.7. The former was established at 4 pm and the latter at 7 pm.

On the morning of the 9th at 7 30am Major Sawers 14th Field Ambulance was detailed to assist Colonel Wilson at the A.D.S. P.30.c., as Colonel Wilson had to take charge of 2nd Division bearers again. At 3 pm the C.O. A.D.S. asked for assistance in personnel. A tent subdivision was detailed by A.D.M.S. 1st Aust. Division from 2nd Aust. Field Ambulance. Evacuations from this station now proceeded smoothly during the 10th and the 15th Field Ambulance was relieved at W.W.D.S. by the 1st Aust. Field Ambulance at 9 am on the 11th.

8th Aust. Field Ambulance and 5th Aust Field Ambulance. These tent divisions remained in reserve at N.26.D.I.3. until 8 40 am 8/8/18., When they were ordered to proceed to White Chateau at VILLERS BRETONNEUX and establish a W.W.D.S. and A.D.S. respectively; these were opened about 10 am 8/8/18. Notification was sent forward and cases diverted to the new station. The A.D.S. at N;26.C.2.3. and W.W.D.S. at N.28.D.O.3. were ordered to close and be ready to move forward as required. Walking wounded were sent in returning lorries to ST. ACHEUL until M.A.C. lorries reported when they were conveyed to Corps Relay Post at RIVERY.

Up till 2 30pm 80 officers, 110 O.R. passed through the Station 48 of whom were P.O.W. At 2 15pm this Station became the M.D.S. but had also to deal with the Walking Wounded until about 8 30 pm.

Evacuation, after becoming the M.D.S. was difficult until midnight 8/9th. and was mainly carried out by Divisional Motor Ambulances. At first evacuations were to C.C.S. VIGNACOURT but as this distance was so great & cars so few, patients were taken to ST. ACHEUL where there was ample accommodation. The first M.A.C. car did not report at White Chateau till 4 15 pm and only 4 cars had reported by 6 30pm. Owing to this, 70 cases remained for about 5 hours, being sheltered and kept warm at M.D.S. During the evening more M.A.C. cars reported & by 10 30pm evacuation was completed and easily maintained during the night.

M.A.C. cars returning to M.D.S. were not properly equipped with stretchers & blankets, the car orderlies stating that C.C.S. could not supply them.

Up till midnight of 8/8/18 there were dressed & evacuated from White Chateau -

W.W.D.S.	8 Officers,	110 O.R.
M.D.S.	25 "	404 "

Of these, 8 Off. & 143 O.R. were P.O.W. 1 Officer & 27 O.R. were evacuated sick.

On 9/8/18 there was a steady flow of cases until 4 pm when a rush of casualties began to come in and continued all night. Owing to the great distance to C.C.S. the cases again piled up but at noon on 10/8/18 all but 20 P.O.W. were evacuated.

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continued.

- 2. (a) The sudden arrival at M.D.S. at 4 pm 9/8/18 of 360 walking wounded Canadians, who came from near WIENCOURT (W12 & 13) & GUILLAUCOURT, taxed the M.D.S. but these were dressed & recorded & sent by empty returning lorries to Corps Relay Post. A good supply of A.T.S., dressings, splints etc. was maintained. The blood transfusion team reported from ST.ACHEUL to M.D.S., White Chateau at 10 am 10/8/18. At 2 pm 10/8/18 Nos. 53 & 55 C.C.S.'s opened at VECQUEMONT to receive the sick & wounded from the Aust. Corps Sector.

3. BEARER DIVISIONS.

The bearers of the 14th Aust. Field Ambulance remained with their Brigade & moved up with it to the support position, they were not required to reinforce the 8th & 15th Field Ambulance bearers. Lt. Colonel Walsh, D.S.O. in command of the bearers of 8th & 15th Field Ambulances cleared the wounded from the 8th & 15th Infantry Brigades. Bearers moved forward at ZERO in subdivisions, 500 yards in rear of rear guard but owing to the fog and dense smoke barrage it was difficult to keep contact. On arrival at the Green Line, contact was made with the 15th Aust. Infy. Brigade Battalions but failed with the 8th Brigade Battalions. A Post was established at P.28.d.9.I. by C.O. forward evacuations about 8 am 8/8/18. and the main road was reported clear for cases up to this point. Casualties were reported slight at this time.

At 8 55 am a spot was selected at P.29.c.4.7. for the A.D.S. ~~box~~ by Colonel Walsh, who also reported that the barrage had lifted from the Green Line and that the first car of wounded had left. The bearers were then established as follows -

- 8th Aust. Field Ambulance P.29. Central
- 15th " " " " P.34.c

At 9 20 am the bearer divisions were ordered to advance cautiously. Headquarters of C.O. evacuations at W.3. Central.

- The 15th Infantry Brigade R.A.P.'s were located as follows :-
- 57th & 60th Battalions W.9.c.5.7.
 - 59th Battalion W.II.c.4.9.
 - 58th " W.3.d.9.6.

The latter post had to be evacuated owing to shelling & was then located in BAYONVILLERS. For the evacuation of this Brigade the following scheme was adopted -

- Sunbeam Loading Post, 2 cars, located at W.3.a. Central.
- Ford Car Loading Post, at W.9.c.2.4. evacuating the 57th & 60th Battalions to A.D.S.

A system of Relay Posts between 59th Battalion R.A.P., W.II.c.4.9. and Loading Post W.3.a. Central.

At this time two squads were placed at each R.A.P. & 8 stretchers & 16 blankets were put at each R.A.P., returning cars bringing up shell dressings, splints etc. Reserve bearers kept at W.3. Central. The 8th Aust. Field Ambulance bearers were very late in coming up forward owing to confusion of location and M.O. in charge having knee trouble was not able to keep up and take charge.

At length 8th Aust. Infy. Brigade Battalions located and suitable posts established 12 30pm.

- Sunbeam Car Loading Post at - Q.29.c.8.4. clearing 32nd Battn. R.A.P. located at Q.36.B.2.6. and 30th Battalion R.A.P. at Q.30.c.2.4.
- Sunbeam Car Post at W.5.c.2.5. evacuating 29th Battalion R.A.P. to A.D.S.

Ford Car Post at W.6.a.4.4. evacuating 31st Battalion R.A.P. to W.3.a.

Reserve bearers 8th Aust. Field Ambulance bearer division located at Q.28.c.4.4.

On the morning of 9/8/18 the 29th Battalion & 15th Brigade attacked at 11 am:

continued;

3. BEARER DIVISIONS.

The 29th Battalion R.A.P. moved up to W.I2.a. and the first cases were evacuated by car to HARBONNIERES, but one car was hit by shell fire so scheme was changed.

Sunbeam Loading Post was formed at W.10.a.6.9. and Ford Loading Post at W.II.b.8.7., this latter Post clearing 31st Battalion R.A.P. at W.6.a.4.4. and 29th Battalion R.A.P. at W.I2.a.

The route was across country over tracks to avoid the town which was being heavily shelled.

Bearer Relay Posts were formed between R.A.P.'s & Ford Post.

The Loading Post at W.10.a.6.9. became the main evacuating centre and casualties started pouring in. Six ambulance cars and 9 horse ambulance wagons were working from W.10.a.6.9. to A.D.S. WARFUSEE-ABANCOURT & 4 Ford cars betweed Loading Post W.II.d.8.7. & Sunbeam Post at W.10.a.6.9.

The 57th & 60th Battalions advanced and R.A.P.'s were established in W.I7.c. Bearer relays working between these R.A.P.'s to Loading Post at W.I0.a.6.9. Later 1 Ford car was placed at 57th Battalion R.A.P. W.I7.c.

The Sunbeam Motor Post was the main channel of evacuation for 29th., 31st., 57th., 58th., 59th. & 60th. Battalions as well as all Units of the 1st. & 2nd. Aust. Divisions which then had no definite system in hand. Later on the system was taken over by the 2nd. Aust. Division.

The only post remaining constant throughout the operations was the Post clearing the 30th. Battalion at Q.24.c.8.4.

Capt. BROWN detailed Capt. ROBERTS to relieve Major WELLS wounded in action.

Capt. J.S. WILSON was seriously wounded in HARBONNIERES on the morning of the 9/8/18 at 11.45 and he died later at the A.D.S.

The 14th. Bde. Bearers had no difficulties to overcome; they maintained contact with Brigade units throughout the operation and did not come into action.

4. DEDUCTIONS.

DRESSING STATIONS. The principles worked on were satisfactory especially the conversion of an A.D.S. and W.W.D.S. into an M.D.S with the present Ambulance equipment.

The following points are noted.

(a) A partial breakdown of the evacuations by M.A.C. cars took place probably due to the long trip to C.C.S.

(b) Medical Stores had to be brought to a long distance though these were always adequate.

(c) The exchange of Stretchers and Blankets at C.C.S. was unsatisfactory and, if the casualties had been more numerous might easily have led to a depletion at A.D.S.

BEARERS. C.O. Forward Evacuations states:-

(a) That the task of controlling evacuations of Three Brigades in action is almost impossible unless experienced Bearer Captains are in charge of Bearer Divisions and suitable and quick transport is at hand for C.O. Forward Evacuations. All communication was difficult owing to the distances to be travelled and messages were considerably delayed.

(b) The wait of the Bearers at the GREEN LINE as ordered was a mistake under the conditions. On the 8/8/18, as the Infantry was so rapid that it was a great strain on the Bearers to catch up and make contact with the R.A.P.'s. Once in contact and Loading Posts formed the evacuations proceeded satisfactorily without confusion even though the R.A.P.'s advanced.

MOTOR & HORSE AMBULANCE VEHICLES. The pooling of these under an experienced worked splendidly. Ford Ambulance Cars again proved of greatest value.

RECORDS. The system of sending wires and returns to each A.D.M.S. is confusing. When command passed to A.D.M.S. 5th. Aust. Division it was arranged that all wires and returns should be sent to this office only. They were then consolidated and a copy of the consolidated A.F.W. 3185 sent to A.D.M.S. concerned. This proved to be quite satisfactory;

*M. J. Downey Col
A.D.M.S. 5th Aust. Div*

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FIFTH AUSTRALIAN DIVISIONAL ARTILLERY

g.g.H Attack on 8th August, 1918.

46/25
12.8.18
8.20 pm

This operation was part of an operation undertaken on a fairly large scale.

The attack on the 1st objective - Green line V.11.e.35.80 - V.5.central - P.36.c.0.0 - Q.19.c.7.0 - was launched by the 2nd Australian Division, supported by a creeping barrage.

On obtaining the Green line objective, the 5th Australian Division passed through the 2nd Australian Division and attacked the 2nd objective - Red line W.1.b.11.95 - W.6.a.00.80 - Q.30.c.45.40 and then pushed on and attacked the 3rd objective - Blue line W.16.d.70.13 - W.17.a.55.20 - W.18.b.70.90 - along old British trench to R.25.c.15.40.

The attack of the 5th Australian Division was supported by Field Artillery moving forward and firing with direct observation. This Artillery worked under direct orders of the Infantry Brigadiers.

Command of the Battle front passed to the G.O.C. 5th Australian Division at Zero plus 4 hours - 8.30 a.m.

The Artillery allotted to the 5th Australian Division was:-

5th Aust. Divl Artillery	-	13th & 14th Aust. F.A. Brigades
2nd Aust. Divl Artillery	-	4th and 5th Aust. F.A. Brigades
		6th (Army) Brigade, Aust. F.A.
		14th Army Brigade, R.F.A.

This Artillery was divided into offensive and defensive Field Artillery:-

Offensive Artillery.

5th Australian Divl Artillery
6th (Army) Brigade, Aust. F.A.

Defensive Artillery

2nd Australian Divl Artillery
14th Army Brigade, R.F.A.
71st Battery, R.G.A.

All this Artillery was employed in the attack of the 2nd Australian Division under the command of the C.R.A. 2nd Australian Division.

Command of this Artillery passed to the C.R.A. 5th Australian Division as follows:-

Offensive Artillery at Zero plus 143 minutes 6.53 a.m.

Defensive Artillery at Zero plus 240 minutes 8.30 a.m.

The attack of the 5th Australian Division was carried out by two Infantry Brigades in line. Inter-brigade boundary
O.13.c.4.8 - cross roads O.13.d.2.7 - O.15.c.35.00 - cross roads
O.22.a.6.5 - O.24.c.95.00 - P.27.c.0.4 - P.36.a.70.35 - O.31.c.5.9 -
light railway Q.32.c.4.4 - W.4.central - crucifix W.5.c.20.35 -
W.12.b.3.5 - X.7.a.05.25.

The 8th Aust. Infantry Brigade attacked on the Left.

The 15th Aust. Infantry Brigade attacked on the Right.

The 14th Aust. Infantry Brigade was in Divl Reserve.

The Offensive Artillery was allotted to Infantry Brigades as follows:-

13th Aust. F.A. Brigade	to	8th Aust. Infantry Brigade
14th Aust. F.A. Brigade	to	15th Aust. Infantry Brigade
6th (Army) Brigade, A.F.A.	to	14th Aust. Infantry Brigade.

There was a pause on the Green line from 6.53 a.m. to 8.30 a.m. to allow the Canadian Corps on the Right, who had further to go and over more difficult country, to come up in line.

The Offensive Artillery was ready to move forward at 6.53 a.m. The Defensive Artillery was ready to move forward at 8.30 a.m. The 13th and 14th Australian Field Artillery Brigades each detailed a special opportunity section who passed forward with the first waves of Infantry with the Tanks.

Defensive Artillery was allotted tasks as under:-

The 14th Army Brigade, R.F.A., to cover the advance of the 8th Aust. Infantry Brigade and defend all ground gained by Artillery fire.

The 4th and 5th Aust. F.A. Brigades to cover the advance of the 15th Aust. Infantry Brigade and defend all ground gained by Artillery fire.

The 71st Battery, R.G.A., was prepared to move forward as soon as the Green line was captured. This Battery was ordered to commence moving forward at 8.15 a.m. to take up a position about P.30. central and cover the whole of the Divisional front

The 2nd Australian Divisional Artillery was ordered forward at 8.37 a.m.

The 14th Army Brigade, R.F.A., moved forward at about 8.45 a.m.

The 6th (Army) Brigade, Aust.F.A., reverted to the command of the C.R.A. 5th Australian Division at 11.27 a.m. and was at once ordered forward to cover the advance of the 8th Aust. Infantry Brigade and defend all ground gained by Artillery fire.

As soon as the Blue line was captured the Artillery under the C.R.A. 5th Australian Division was re-grouped as follows:-

Right Group (covering front of 15th Aust. Infantry Brigade) under command of Lieut-Col. F.P. DERHAM, D.S.O.
14th Aust. F.A. Brigade
4th Aust. F.A. Brigade - Superimposed Sub-Group
5th Aust. F.A. Brigade - Sub-Group.

Left Group (covering front of the 8th Aust. Infantry Brigade) under command of Lieut-Col. H.O. CADDY, D.S.O.
13th Aust. F.A. Brigade
6th (Army) Brigade, Aust.F.A. - Superimposed Sub-Group
14th Army Brigade, R.F.A. - Sub-Group.

The Blue line was reported captured at 12.4 p.m.

The 5th Australian Divisional Artillery had a forward observing Officer at the commencement of the operation. The information which he sent back proved of value. A Despatch Rider was attached to him and the information which he collected was telephoned into D.A.H.Q. Visibility was impossible owing to early morning heavy mist and the spume and dust of the bombardment.

Anti-Tank Guns. The 3-15 pdr Anti-Tank Guns on this front were horsed and manned by personnel of the 2nd Australian Divl Ammunition Column and were sent forward as soon as the Red line was captured. Two were allotted to the front of the 8th Aust. Infantry Brigade and 1 was allotted to the front of the 15th Aust. Infantry Brigade. On arrival in positions to cover the Blue line these Anti-Tank Guns came under control of the respective Artillery Group Commanders.

6" Newtons. 4-6" Newton Mortars were loaded with 30 rounds a Mortar into Supply Tanks before the operation. Two of these Mortars (9th Aust. M.T.M. Bty) were allotted to the front of the 8th Australian Infantry Brigade and two (10th Aust. M.T.M. Bty) to the front of the 15th Australian Infantry Brigade - only one of these Mortars arrived at its destination. Four more Mortars (two for each battery) were loaded in four G.S. Wagons of the 5th Aust. Divl Ammunition Column and sent forward on the night 8th/9th August, 1918, with 50 rounds of ammunition per Mortar.

Pigeons. One pair of Pigeons was supplied to each Brigade of the Defensive Artillery on the evening of 7th/8th August. Pigeons for the Offensive Artillery Brigades were drawn from the allotment of the Infantry Brigades to which they were affiliated.

Ammunition. For this operation a section of a Divl Ammunition Column was affiliated to each Divl Artillery Brigade, Army Brigades used their B.A.C's. As soon as the Green line was captured D.A.C's and B.A.C's commenced to move forward and formed two dumps - one about

P.30.d.4.4 and the other about P.35.d.3.5.

D.A.C. and B.A.C. Wagons then went back to the vacated gun positions, filled up and took the ammunition to the aforementioned dumps. First Line Wagons filled up from these dumps. Mechanical transport brought up ammunition to a Corps dump which was established about 0.17.c.30.70 on the FOUILLOY-VILLERS BRETONNEUX road. The D.A.C's and B.A.C's filled up from this dump when the previously occupied gun positions were cleared.

DEDUCTIONS. The Battle went according to plan. The enemy was not prepared and was apparently caught by surprise. Secrecy of plans is of utmost importance. Communication was most difficult. The mobile reserve of wire for all Artillery units is not sufficient. Visual signalling requires much development. One D.R. should be allotted to the C.R.A. for each Brigade of Artillery under his command. It is essential that Field Artillery intended for mobile warfare should be taken out of the line and be trained in field movements with their Infantry - adequate ground for carrying out these manoeuvres is essential. A Liaison Officer from the Heavy Artillery should be with each Infantry Brigadier conducting the attack. These Liaison Officers should be in direct communication with the Heavy Artillery Brigades covering the fronts over which the Infantry Brigades concerned are operating. In order to maintain an advance, experience shows that Divisional Artillery Headquarters should be moved forward at the earliest opportunity; at any rate representatives of the "G" Staff and Divl Artillery Staff should move forward and establish a forward report centre, thus lessening the distance to Artillery Brigade Headquarters and the length of the necessary communications. In the event of a large advance, the fact that D.A.C. and B.A.C. personnel will not be available for manning dumps must not be lost sight of. - This personnel will be required for their normal role in open warfare that is - in taking up ammunition to the First Line Wagons. Ammunition must be fed forward and not fetched from the rear.

11-8-18

*Alfred...
CRA 6th Div. War*

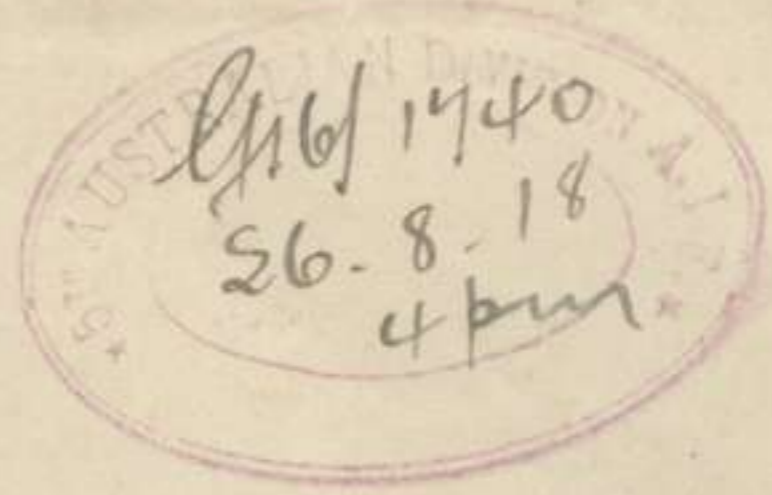
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Headquarters,
5th Aust. Division.

Reference:- Your G.9 of 10th inst.

Subject:- Report upon communications on 8th inst.

Herewith I am forwarding a report upon communications during the operations on the 8th inst.

I regret the delay in forwarding same which is due to awaiting reports from each of the Sections.

5TH
AUSTRALIAN
DIVL. SIGNAL COY.
DSE. 25/269
No. 26/8/18.
Date.....

[Handwritten signatures]

[Handwritten signature: M. Stanley] Major.
O.C. Signals, 5th Aust. Division.



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5TH AUSTRALIAN DIVISIONAL SIGNAL CO.

Report upon Signal Communications in the attack on the morning of 8th August 1918.

REFERENCE: Sheet 62D.

The following report is submitted upon Signal communications during an attack in which the 5th Australian Division was engaged on the morning of 8th August 1918.

The operation comprised an advance by the 2nd Australian Division from the line through P.21.a and c, P.27.a. and c, P.32.b. and c, and V.1.b. to a line (known as the green line) through Q.25.a, P.30.d, P.36.b.a, and c, V.5.b and c, to Railway line in V.11.a.5.8., an advance of some 3000 yards.

At zero plus four hours, the 5th Australian Division passed through the 2nd Australian Division on the latter line by a "leap frog" action, and advanced some 5000 yards to their first objective (known as the red line) roughly running between Q.30.c.central and W.16.c.2.9. A further advance of about 1500 yards was then made to the second objective (known as the blue line) which ran roughly down the grid line from R.25.c.0.4 to X.7.c.0.4 thence to the Railway line in W.16.d.7.2.

The operation was supported by similar action on either flank.

FIRST PHASE. Advanced Divisional Headquarters were established in the railway cutting at O.25.c.5.3 with rear Headquarters at the Chateau at BLANGY TRONVILLE. Telegraph and telephone communication was established between Corps at BERTANGLES and Advanced Divisional Headquarters, also between Advanced and Rear Divisional Headquarters. Two pairs were used between Corps and Advanced Division, both of which were superimposed during the afternoon of the 8th inst.

Prior to zero hour, the Infantry Brigades were located as follows:-

- 15th and 8th Brigades (right and left in line respectively) O.24.c.2.3
- 14th Brigade (Divisional Reserve) ... O.13.a.2.3

Two pairs of cable were used on a buried route to each of the 8th and 15th Infantry Brigades, one being superimposed in each case.

To the 14th Infantry Brigade (in reserve) one pair was used on a buried route to Rear Headquarters. From Rear Headquarters a pair was used on a bury to GN test point (N.18.d.6.2) thence a ground line to Brigade Headquarters. None of the Battalions of this Brigade were connected to this position by telephone. Two of the Battalions were situated close to Brigade Headquarters, and two about 5 kilos away. Communication between Brigade and Battalions was effected by means of motor cyclists, mounted orderlies and cyclists.

The 15th and 8th Infantry Brigades each laid two pairs of ground lines (D.III twisted cable) from DE test point in P.25.b.5.8 which was the most advanced point on the buried cable system and from which point two pairs had been provided on the buried route for each Brigade back to their original Advanced Headquarters. Prior to zero the ground lines referred to were laid by each Brigade Section as far forward in their Brigade Areas as the front line. At zero plus four hours these lines were carried forward to respective Brigade Forward Stations which were established as follows:-

- 15th Infantry Brigade in V.4.b.5.7
- 8th Infantry Brigade in P.30.c.7.7

In the laying of these lines and extension of same to subsequent Brigade Forward Stations, each Brigade made use of a limbered G.S. waggon for transport of the stock of cable which was necessarily large and would have required big carrying parties.

SECOND PHASE. After the advance of the 5th Aust. Divisional Infantry through the 2nd Australian Division on the green line, the ground lines were extended to new Brigade Forward Stations. That of the 15th Infantry Brigade ran through a temporary station in W.8.a.5.5 to a new Brigade Forward Station at W.15.a.1.9 to which point the Advanced Brigade Headquarters moved and remained for the night of 8th/9th inst.

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The next morning the cables were extended to a new position at W.24.b.8.5 from which point the Brigadier conversed with the Divisional Commander at Q.25.c., a distance of some 18000 yards mainly over ground lines.

The 8th Infantry Brigade Forward Station moved forward and established first in Q.27.c.3.3 and again forward to Q.35.b.5.2 when the Advanced Brigade Headquarters moved to the position previously established in Q.27.c.3.3.

Lateral lines were laid connecting these advanced Brigade positions with the Left Brigade of the Canadians on our right, and the Right Brigade of the 4th Australian Division on our left.

After the advance, the Headquarters of the 14th Infantry Brigade moved from O.13.a.2.3 into P.29.d and "teed" on to one of the pairs previously laid by the 8th Brigade forward Station, which gave them communication to Division. Later, a Brigade Forward Station was established at Q.32.c.5.1 and connected to the Advanced Exchange of the 2nd Australian Division in BAYONVILLERS.

During the advance, the whole of No.1 Section of the 5th Aust. Divisional Signal Co. was employed in constructing a 5 pair poled cable route from the head of the buried cable system in P.25.b. forward. On the morning of the 9th inst., this route was constructed as far as BAYONVILLERS, and the 2nd Aust. Divisional Signal Co. established a Divisional Forward Exchange at the point where it terminated in Q.32.c.7.1. This route replaced the ground lines previously laid by the Brigade Sections and provided communication from the several advanced Brigade Headquarters to Divisional Headquarters.

On the afternoon of the 9th inst. these lines were handed over to the 1st and 2nd Australian Divisions who advanced through the 5th Aust. Division.

WIRELESS. Prior to zero Wireless Sets were distributed as follows:-

- 1 Trench Set at Advanced Divisional Headquarters (O.25.c.5.3)
- 1 Wilson Set, acting as Divisional directing station at O.24.c.4.7.

The Set at Advanced Divisional Headquarters was in communication with Corps and the Divisional directing station. The Divisional directing station was in communication with Corps, Advanced Divisional Headquarters, and Right and Left flank Divisions and Brigades.

On the 5th Aust. Division passing through the 2nd Aust. Division Trench Sets were established as follows:-

- 15th Inf. Brigade Advanced Headquarters V.4.b.7.9
- 15th " " Forward station W.8.d.9.3
- 8th " " Advanced Headquarters P.30.c.8.8
- 8th " " Forward station Q.25.d.9.2

Communication was established between the Forward stations and Advanced Headquarters and the directing station. On the Brigades again moving forward, Trench Sets were established as follows:-

- 15th Brigade Advanced Headquarters at W.8.d.9.5
- 15th " Forward Station W.23.d.6.8
- 8th " Advanced Headquarters O.27.c.5.2
- 8th " Forward Station Q.35.a.9.5
- 14th " Headquarters P.29.d.

Communication was established between the directing station and the three Brigades, and between the 8th and 15th Brigades and their respective Forward Stations. The Forward Stations were also in communication with the directing station.

VISUAL. During the earlier part of the day visual signalling was unworkable on account of a heavy fog. Later in the day the atmosphere cleared. A central visual station was established in P.25.b. and arrangements were made for the use of this means of communication as the Brigades advanced, but it was never necessary to make use of same. Provision was made for visual communication in Brigade Areas, but this means was seldom used as telephone lines gave little trouble.

PIGEONS. 20 pairs of birds were received from Corps and distributed as follows:-

8 pairs to 8th Infantry Brigade
9 " " 15th " "
3 " " Divisional Artillery.

The 15th Brigade issued 3 pairs to each of the two Battalions in line and 3 to No.1 Sub-section attached to the 13th A.F.A. Brigade. The 8th Brigade issued 2 pairs to each of its four Battalions.

The birds were not used for service messages.

AIR CONTACT. A Divisional dropping ground was established at O.25.c.3.3. Three messages were received at the Divisional dropping ground, and four at the 14th Brigade at P.29.d.

DESPATCHES. Motor cyclists carried despatches between Division and Brigades. Between Brigades and Battalions, mounted orderlies and cyclists were used, and runners forward of Battalions.

MESSAGE CARRYING ROCKETS. These were issued to all Infantry Units but reports do not indicate that they were used.

GENERAL. 5th Aust. Divisional Artillery Headquarters were situated at O.25.a.9.9. Telephone communication was maintained between Headquarters and the Brigades. Batteries were continually moving during the day and it was difficult to keep in communication by cable. Visual was used when lines did not exist and when visual was not possible on account of the nature of the country, mounted orderlies were used.

W. Stanley
Major.
O.C. Signals, 5th Aust. Division.

23rd August 1918.

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APPENDIX

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John H. [Signature]

2nd TANK BATTALION.

REPORT ON OPERATIONS

of

8th August, 1918,

by

Lieut.-Col., E.D. BRYCE D.S.O., Commanding.

TANK ASSEMBLY.

On the night of August 4th all Fighting Tanks of 2nd Battalion, together with one Reserve Tank, left QUERRIEU Wood for FOUILLOY, which was the position of Assembly.

All Tanks arrived, with the exception of one which developed engine trouble at DAOURS. Unfortunately the engine of this Tank and another Tank had to be changed at the last moment. Captain ASHWELL, Battalion Engineer, worked untiringly on those two tanks and was able to complete the work in time, with the help of Salvage personnel lent by Major GARR.

One Tank belonging to "C" Company unfortunately received a direct hit during the two days' wait at FOUILLOY, so the Reserve Tank had to be utilized at the last moment to take its place.

PLAN OF ATTACK.

"B" and "C" Companies, 2nd Battalion, co-operating with the 2nd Australian Division - "B" Company with 5th Brigade, and "C" Company with 7th Brigade. These Companies to lead the infantry in the attack on the GREEN Line and after its capture, to rally, - "B" Company in the CERISY Valley to the North of WARFUSEE-ABANCOURT, and "C" Company to the South of that Village. There to be re-organized, and to advance with the Infantry in the attack on the RED Line, with the exception of three tanks from each Company specially detailed to attack BAYONVILLERS and remain there until all resistance was crushed. Survivors of both these Companies to assist in attack on HARBONNIERES after capture of RED Line.

"A" Company, 2nd Battalion and "A" Company, 13th Battalion (Attached) co-operating with 5th Australian Division - "A" Company, 2nd Battalion with 15th Brigade, and "A" Company, 13th Battalion with 8th Brigade.

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These two Companies to be led up to the Rally Points of "E" and "C" Companies to arrive there by Z + 3 hours - "A" Company, 15th Battalion to the North of WARFUSEE-ABANCOURT, and "A" Company, 2nd Battalion to the South. Both Companies to keep well deployed about 200 yards in advance of the Infantry, to the RED Line, and not to enter BAYONVILLERS. After capture of RED Line, both Companies to assist in capture of HARBONNIERES, the ultimate objective of all four Companies.

The 15th Battalion, with Mark V Star Tanks, were to capture the BLUE Line with their Infantry, and a Company of 8th Battalion was detailed to remain in close support to assist in case of counter-attacks.

All 2nd Battalion Tanks were to withdraw to P.30 in the CERISY Valley to refill and prepare for further action on being released by Infantry, and "A" Company, 15th Battalion was to return to its own Battalion.

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS.

In the case of the Tanks for the first phase of the attack it was imperative :-

- (1) That they should not be heard.
- (2) That they should reach the Infantry Taped Line at Zero hour precisely, so that they should be able to deploy in front of the Infantry before the barrage lifted at Z + 3 minutes.

The whole success of the attack appeared to depend on these conditions being fulfilled, and specially detailed arrangements had therefore to be made.

Air protection was afforded between 9.30 p.m. and mid-night, and again one hour before Zero to cover the sound of their approach. Tanks could therefore only move during those hours.

The difficulty of the operation was accentuated owing to the fact that the troops for the RED Line attack were assembled close behind the attacking troops for the GREEN Line. Thus, there were several waves of infantry for the Tanks to pass through, and it was therefore impossible to deploy the Tanks before they reached the Infantry taped line.

The following arrangements were made :-

Each Company selected a Company Deployment Position, at which point they filled up. From there routes were taped by Company Reconnaissance Officers to Section Starting Points, which had been selected, about 1,000 yards behind the Infantry taped line. From these Starting Points, Section Commanders, with the help of guides lent by the Infantry, taped the last 1,000 yards to the Infantry taped line.

Another important point which had to be taken into account was that the Tanks from Section Starting Points

would/

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would be on the forward slope and therefore, owing to the risk of their being heard, and owing to the number of infantry they had to pass through would have to go slowly for the last 1,000 yards, and could not be timed to do it in one rush. Section Commanders therefore tied pieces of tape laterally at each 100 yards from the taped line in order to be able to time their approach accurately. This answered satisfactorily; and I should here mention that in most cases Section Commanders actually led their Tanks right past the infantry taped line.

REPORT CENTRE.

It was arranged that Major LASKEY, Second-in-Command, with Lieut. POWELL, Assistant Adjutant, should remain during Y.Z. night at the 5th Australian Division H.Q. on the VILLERS-BRETONNEUX Road.

At Zero hour, Major LASKEY was to go forward to the Headquarters of the 5th and 7th Australian Infantry Brigades farther up the road, to be in touch with the first phase of the attack, and afterwards move back to the 5th Division H.Q., where he would obtain all information regarding the second phase.

I arranged to spend the night with my Reconnaissance Officer and Orderlies at the Headquarters of 8th and 15th Brigades, which were further forward to the North of VILLERS-BRETONNEUX.

Company Assistant Reconnaissance Officers were to report to me that all Tanks were in position by mid-night. An Assistant R.O. was then to be left with each Infantry Brigade as Tank Liaison Officer. These arrangements proved satisfactory.

MOVE TO STARTING POINTS.

All Tanks of "B" and "C" Companies reached their Section Starting Points by mid-night with the exception of the Tank with the new engine belonging to "B" Company, which developed Autovac trouble. This Tank went up later and was used in the attack on the 9th inst.

The two Companies for the attack on the RED Line did not leave their Assembly positions at FOUILLOY until shortly before Zero hour, when they were led up in good time.

SUPPLY ARRANGEMENTS.

A Section with sledge tanks belonging to another Supply Company was attached for this operation to Major WATSON, who was in charge of the Brigade Supply arrangements. This Section was allotted to 2nd Battalion and only arrived at POULAINVILLE on the night of the 5th. Its tanks, unfortunately, proved

very/

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very unreliable, and by the time they reached QUERRIEU Wood four of them had developed mechanical trouble and could not be repaired in time. Major WATSON then borrowed two of our baggage tanks, which were sent straight on to FOUILLOY and duly arrived. Two sledge tanks belonging to the Supply Section were unable to get through DAOURS with their sledges. Eventually one of these Tanks was sent on without its sledge, but being a female one, was not of much use. I theroforo instructed Capt. HARCOURT D.S.O., of 2nd Battalion, to load and take up 3 G.S. Waggon with the baggage tanks.

One G.S. waggon had a direct hit on the way up but three tanks and two G.S. waggons reached the rallying point at P.30 at between 8.30 and 9 a.m.

The first dump at FOUILLOY was made for us by 5th Tank Brigade.

THE ATTACK.

1st Phase. - (GREEN Line).

With the exception of the Tank with the new engine which went on later, all Tanks of 2nd Battalion went into action at the right time, in front of the Infantry. One Tank belonging to "A" Company, 13th Battalion developed engine trouble at the last moment and did not start.

Accompanied by the Battalion Reconnaissance Officer, Captain DILLON, the Regimental Sergeant-Major and three Orderlies, I proceeded forward at about 5 a.m.

Owing to the very thick mist it was impossible to see more than a few yards ahead, and it was only by the use of a compass, and later by following a Tank track, that we were able to keep direction. Some of the infantry whom we overtook appeared to have lost both direction and connection on their flanks.

We soon struck the main road to WARFUSEE-ABANCOURT, and shortly afterwards found Lt. CORNISH'S Tank which had struck a land mine and had a track blown off.

On reaching the outskirts of WARFUSEE-ABANCOURT hostile shelling became rather severe, and Captain DILLON was wounded in both legs while crossing the road with me. While his wounds were being attended to by my Medical Orderly 6 German Officers came out of a dug-out and surrendered - among them a Battalion Second-in-Command. I asked him whether they had been expecting an attack, and he replied that they had been told from behind that British Tanks were in front, ready to attack, but had heard nothing more definite than that. I then made him get some other prisoners and carry Captain DILLON back.

Owing to these delays we did not reach the rallying point to the North of the Village in the CERISY Valley until about 7.15 a.m.

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I found Major PAPE already there with his 11 Tanks for the RED Line attack, but only one Tank of "B" Company, Major SCRUTTON, had then rallied. Shortly after, other Tanks began to come in, among them one Tank (Lt. COE) with numerous prisoners and two machine guns on board.

Of the 11 Tanks of "B" Company which started two had struck land mines, two had received direct hits, one (Lt. CRAIG's) while towing back a light field gun which it had captured, and seven rallied.

Of the other two Companies on the other side of the Village all 12 Tanks of "A" Company (Major DIAMOND) started at the right time for the attack on the RED Line, and all 12 Tanks of "C" Company (Major CROUCH) rallied after the first attack and went on with the infantry in the second attack.

2nd Phase.

Three Tanks of "B" Company, and three Tanks of "C" Company were detailed for the attack on BAYONVILLERS. All three Tanks of "B" Company received direct hits in front of BAYONVILLERS (Lieuts. COE and WRIGHT being killed); but all three Tanks of "C" Company and one additional Tank belonging to the same Company went into BAYONVILLERS, and patrolled the Village until all resistance had been crushed.

During the attack on the ~~RED~~^{GREEN} Line the Australians were held up by fire from MARCELCAVE, an objective of the Canadian Corps on their right flank. They approached a Tank Commander of "C" Company (Lieut. PERCY-EADE) and asked him to take his Tank into MARCELCAVE; which he did. After dealing with all opposition, he obtained a receipt for the Village from the two Australian Company Commanders who had followed him with their Infantry into the Village.

To resume the story of the attack as seen by myself :-

Major PAPE's eleven Tanks left the rallying point shortly after 8 a.m., deployed on the green line and started at 8.20 a.m. followed by the Infantry, who kept about 200 yards behind. Six Tanks of Major SCRUTTON followed close up to the Infantry and we followed behind.

A little further on we met and were accompanied by Captain BLACK of "A" Company, 13th Battalion, who was following his Section of Tanks.

Shortly after Captain BLACK had left us to follow his Tanks, which had crossed the main road, we came up to the leading Infantry, who were held up by machine gun fire which was coming from the side of the road, and had evidently been missed by the leading Tanks which were some distance ahead. I then sent an Orderly to fetch a Tank of "B" Company (Lieut. ROTHERY) which was with infantry on our left. When this Tank came up we directed it to the spot; but as soon as they saw the Tank going in their direction eight of the enemy came out and surrendered.

Further on, the Infantry were again held up by machine gun fire and the Tank went forward to deal with it, but unfortunately, before it reached the spot, my Medical Orderly was hit in the chest by a bullet. After getting

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his wound bound up, I sent him back in charge of an Australian Stretcher-bearer and put his kit on a Tank of 8th Battalion which came up shortly after.

From a Section Commander on this Tank I found out that we were keeping too far to the North, so we then crossed the road and proceeded towards HARBONNIERES as rapidly as possible.

We roached a point about a quarter of a mile from the village shortly before 10 a.m., and there had to lie down for a short time just behind the Infantry, as both our own and hostile shells were bursting all around us.

By keeping too far to the North I had missed seeing what happened near BAYONVILLERS, but later learnt that nine Tanks of "A" Company, 13th Battalion, four Tanks of "E" Company, 2nd Battalion, and four Tanks of "A" Company, 2nd Battalion were knocked out by direct hits around BAYONVILLERS, - one Tank receiving six direct hits. Lt. ROTHERY's Tank was knocked out at about 9.35 a.m.

The shelling having decreased, we then went towards HARBONNIERES, and found Lt. BOTTERILL's Tank stationary in a sunken road about a quarter of a mile from the village. This was about 10.15 a.m., and he was presumably waiting according to Time Table for our fire to lift from the Village, though for some time previous there had been very little shelling of HARBONNIERES itself. After telling Lt. BOTTERILL to push on to the Village we went forward and again waited for a few minutes at a point about 200 yards to the North of the Village, near the Railway line.

At that time there appeared to be no one in HARBONNIERES, though we had seen infantry making for the lower end and they might have been in that part of the Village. The troops near us were engaged in locating positions to dig in and apparently it was not intended that they should enter the village.

After a few minutes, seeing two Australians approach, we went across, and I instructed an Orderly, Pte. DEASON, to place the flags in the top window of what seemed to be the most prominent house. He entered the house at about the same time (approximately 10.30 a.m.) as the two Australians, who had bombs ready; but that house proved to be empty.

After the Australian flag and our Battalion flag had been fixed outside the window, we sat down outside to have some food, but were immediately fired on by a machine gun from a house higher up. My Sergeant-Major and Orderlies started to stalk the machine gun post with their revolvers, but before they could do anything two tanks belonging to "A" Company, 13th Battalion entered the village higher up, and no more firing was heard.

In the meantime detachments of cavalry had gone past, and at about this time I saw some Mark V Star Tanks which had stopped about a quarter of a mile below the Village. One (or more) of these Tanks was firing with its 6-Pdr. guns right across us at a train near the top of the Village, at least 1,500 yards from where they were. The train caught fire, so I presume they hit it.

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A little later Lt. BOTTERILL, went past with his Tank. He told me that Major SCRUTTON had met him below the Village and had sent him on to assist the Cavalry near the BLUE Line.

The Mark V. Star Tanks passed us going towards the BLUE Line at 11.10 a.m.

Shortly after, Major SCRUTTON, Capt. RAMSDEN and Lt. CLARKE joined us from the lower end of the Village, and two Tanks with Capt. TEW of "A" Company came out from the top of the Village and rallied near us. From these Tanks I obtained two pigeons, which I sent off with messages. Lt. DEARBERG, "C" Company, with his Tank, also rallied near us, and both Major CROUCH, "C" Company, and Major DIAMOND, "A" Company also joined us with some of their Officers.

Other Tanks rallied in the MORCOURT Valley as previously arranged.

Sometime later, an Australian N.C.O. came up and asked for the assistance of a Tank on the BLUE Line, on the right flank near the Railway, where machine guns were holding them up. This should have been the duty of the Mark V Star Tanks, of which there were several around, but I presume those detailed for that part of the BLUE Line had been knocked out. I sent Lt. DEARBERG's Tank with the Australian, and afterwards learnt that he had dealt with one machine gun post and then had had Autovac trouble which prevented him from doing more.

Lt. BOTTERILL, after dealing with machine guns which were holding up the cavalry drove off a local counter-attack in front of our infantry on the BLUE Line and did some execution.

As we were very exhausted, we rested near HARBONNIERES until about 1.15 p.m. when we walked through the Village. At 1.30 p.m. two armoured cars came through and at about 1.45 p.m. an official photographer took photographs of the flags. At 2 p.m. I decided to take back the Tanks to P.30 to refill, as they had very little petrol left, and the survivors of Major BENNEWITH's Company, 8th Battalion were waiting as previously arranged, to assist the infantry.

Before leaving, I asked Major DIAMOND whether he had obtained his release from the Infantry of 15th Australian Brigade, and he told me that according to arrangements previously made with the Infantry Battalion Commanders, his Tanks were automatically released when the Mark V Star Tanks passed us at 11.10 a.m.

On reaching our Refilling Point in the CERISY Valley, I met General COURAGE, who told me to accompany him and leave Major LASKEY in Command.

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ENEMY LIGHT FIELD GUNS.

Twenty three Tanks out of 46 were put out of action by enemy light field guns on the first day, and 10 Tanks out of 16 on the second day.

I make the following suggestions to overcome the danger to Tanks from these guns:-

1. No halt within the enemy field gun area.

NOTE: The guns which caused the damage near BAYONVILLERS had obviously been pulled out of their emplacements during the delay on the GREEN Line, for the purpose of dealing with Tanks.

2. Creeping barrage - to consist of from 25% to 50% smoke shells. Heavy artillery to concentrate on counter battery work.

NOTE: The heavy mist during the first phase of the attack exemplifies the advantage of a similar density of smoke. While the mist lasted no Tanks were knocked out. The difficulty experienced by the Infantry in keeping direction was more than counter-balanced by the demoralization caused to the enemy by the sudden appearance of Tanks almost on top of them. Tanks with properly swung compasses can keep direction and thus guide the infantry who follow their tracks.

3. One aeroplane with bombs specially detailed to follow each section of Tanks and to bomb enemy guns immediately they open fire on the Tanks, or sooner, if they can see them.

NOTE: I do not think aeroplanes with roving commissions would be of much use and therefore suggest detailing an aeroplane to protect certain tanks along a certain route.

The moral effect of being bombed in daylight should prevent enemy gunners from properly serving their guns.

LAND MINES.

Two Tanks were put out of action by land mines in the first phase of the attack.

SPECIAL POINTS.

There are many suggestions from Tank Commanders as a result of experience gained in these actions, but the points about which they are all unanimous are :-

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1. That strips should be used instead of belts for the Hotchkiss guns.
2. That it is of the greatest importance that each Tank should have a compass properly swung.
3. That the unditching Beam should be fastened more securely.

PERFORMANCES OF TANKS.

There are very numerous instances of machine guns being dealt with or run over by Tanks, and also of field guns being captured, but as they are recorded in the Battle History Sheets there is no need to mention them in this report.

I should however, like to mention the case of one Tank commanded by a N.C.O. on the 9th instant.

This Tank received at different times seven direct hits, wounding several of the crew. In spite of the fact that the epicyclic gear had been damaged and that the Tank could only move in circles, this N.C.O. continued in action, and finally brought the Tank back to the rallying point, after doing very good work, which included the capture of a railway gun.

INFANTRY SCOUTS.

An Infantry Scout was taken in each Tank for the purpose of assisting the co-operation with infantry and to point out places of resistance holding up the infantry. In many instances they also proved invaluable in helping to guide the Tanks, and in some cases they voluntarily took the place of gunners who had become casualties.

CO-OPERATION WITH INFANTRY.

The co-operation with the Infantry was very good throughout. This was of course due, to a very large extent, to the previous training at VAUX; but also to the admirable qualities and extraordinary coolness of the Australian Infantry in action. It has been and will always be a pleasure to co-operate with them.

CASUALTIES IN PERSONNEL.

	<u>Killed.</u>	<u>Wounded.</u>	<u>Injured.</u>
Officers.	4	9	-

Other Ranks.	17	67	6
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I append a separate report from Major LASKEY on the Operations of August 9th., and a report from Major DIAMOND on the operations of August 11th.

Recommendations for individual acts of bravery accompany this report.

2nd Tank Battalion.
15th August, 1918.
A.

E. B. Bryce
Lieut.-Colonel,
Commanding.

ACCOUNT OF ACTION OF 2nd TANK BATTALION

----- from -----

AFTERNOON 8th AUGUST to EVENING OF 9th AUGUST, 1918

by

MAJOR F.S. LASKEY M.C.

REPORT OF EVENTS - EVENING OF 8TH AUGUST.

After the action of the 8th August, all Tanks of 2nd Tank Battalion able to move or to be towed rallied at P.30.a.5.3., north of WARFUSEE. I received orders that afternoon from Lt.-Col. BRYCE D.S.O. to establish Battalion H.Q. at this point and to take Command until his return.

Number of Tanks rallied were :-

"A" Coy.	-	-	-	4
"B" Coy.	-	-	-	1
"C" Coy.	-	-	-	8
Tank acting with 17th Battn.				1

The above were all fit for action. Several Tanks had also been towed back to this point.

During the evening a report was received from the R.O. of "C" Company that Captain HAMLET, with three Cars of "C" Company, had been ordered to rally at W.8.d. and await supplies there, with a view to going into action again South east of HARBONNIERES that evening.

I organised Tanks at P.30.a. as follows :-

"C" Coy.	-	2 Sections	-	8 Tanks & Crews.
"A" Coy.	-	1 Section	-	3 Tanks & Crews.
"B" Coy.	-	1 Section	-	1 "B" Coy. Tank: 1 "A" Coy. Tank: 1 Tank which had been acting with 17th Battn. Crews to be found by "B" Coy.

Major CROUCH D.S.O. in Command of the composite Company.

Tanks were refilled from the Dump already established at the Rallying Point by Captain HARCOURT D.S.O., and prepared for running.

At about 4 p.m. I received orders from General COURAGE personally that all Tanks fit to fight were to be moved that evening to road North of Railway in V.12.a. & b., or to any position further East towards HARBONNIERES where Tanks could be screened from observation in daylight.

I sent two officers out at once to reconnoitre and ascertain if there were any such alternative position, and to find the best route to it; or otherwise, to the position mentioned. They returned at about 7 p.m. and reported that no alternative position could be found.

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At 5 p.m. I was given a message by 2nd Lieut. MORRISON, Liaison Officer with 15th Australian Infantry Brigade, asking that Tank co-operation be obtained to deal with enemy still holding out on the BLUE Line, North of the Railway. Lieut. MORRISON stated that Major BENNEWITH, 8th Tank Battalion had been asked to do this, but had been unable to do so owing to his being short of petrol. Owing to distance of all cars of 2nd Battalion, except Capt. HAMLET's Section, from HARBONNIERES, and exhaustion of Crews, also the lateness of the hour, I did not see any possibility of Tanks at WARFUSEE being employed, and telephoned to the Brigade Major, 5th Tank Brigade, suggesting that supplies be sent to Major BENNEWITH by 8th Battalion, or to Capt. HAMLET. At this time I had no transport available at WARFUSEE, and the whole of the supplies brought up there had been used for filling up the 2nd Battalion Tanks there.

Later, I received a message that Lieut.-Col. BINGHAM D.S.O. was making arrangements with 5th Australian Division.

Lieut.-Col. BINGHAM came to 2nd Battalion H.Q. at 7 p.m. and said that the hour being so late and the scheme for co-operation so nebulous, nothing could be done that night.

About this time the telephone to Brigade H.Q. went 'disc', leaving Wireless as the only way of getting through, apart from D.R's. This was a great handicap.

Major CROUCH left with the Tanks for the new position at 9 p.m.; all arrived safely, but rather late, owing to difficulty in finding the way. Captain HAMLET's position was found to be at W.7.Central. His Tanks were all empty.

A Dump was being formed by 5th Tank Brigade near WARFUSEE and another near BAYONVILLERS. These were expected to be ready by midnight. In order to be able to send supplies from these Dumps to Major CROUCH I sent a message by Wireless via 5th Brigade H.Q. asking for the six limbers at FOUILLOY to be sent up to WARFUSEE. They arrived about 6 a.m. on the 9th, and at 8 a.m. I sent three of them, loaded, to Major CROUCH. These supplies filled all his Tanks and Captain HAMLET's.

EVENTS - 9th AUGUST.

The night 8th/9th AUGUST passed ^{quietly} quickly.

At 6.30 a.m. 9th August I received SECRET A.C.46, Australian Corps Battle Instruction - Series B - No. 2 - "Operations 9th August, 1918," attached hereto.

I had not received Battle Instructions No. 1, which were distributed to Divisions only. I acknowledged by Wireless, stating this - (The 'phone was still 'disc'). I went over to 8th Battalion H.Q. in the Quarry at LAMOTTE and found that they had received instructions from the Australian Divisions with which they were to operate to the North of 2nd Tank Battalion's front. These instructions included a map showing objectives and phases of the operation for the whole Australian Corps front. This I copied on to my map. The instructions were almost entirely inapplicable to the role to be carried out by 2nd Battalion.

I returned to 2nd Battalion H.Q., sent the Battle Instructions No. 2 to Major CROUCH, with a letter asking him to go over it with his officers and prepare all cars for action. I then sent a Wireless message asking for the location of H.Q., 1st Australian Division, with which

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2nd Battalion was to operate. Before the reply was received the G.S.O.2 of the Division arrived in a Car and took me to the Divisional H.Q. in VILLERS-BRETONNEUX. Here I met the Brigadier General Commanding and the Brigade Major, 5th Tank Brigade. The time was now 9.15 a.m.

I received 1st Australian Division Battle Instructions No. 2 (attached hereto) and verbal instructions for the operation, with a supply of maps, and left immediately for WARFUSEE in General COURAGE's car. At WARFUSEE I changed into my own car and went to Major CROUCH, taking the instructions and maps which I had received.

On arrival at the Tankodrome, I found that Major CROUCH had gone to the 2nd Australian Infantry Brigade Report Centre. To save time I assembled the officers and explained the whole scheme to them with the map, issued the maps and instructed them to mark up on them the objectives etc. from the marked map provided. I left them doing this and went to meet Major CROUCH. I met him coming back to the Tanks - he said there was nobody at the Report Centre up to then, 10.30 a.m. I went back to the Tanks with him and we went over the orders together.

At 11 a.m. we went back to W.S.d.9.0., the 2nd Australian Infantry Brigade Report Centre. Here, the back axle of the car broke through it going into a hole. The G.O.C., 2nd Australian Infantry Brigade arrived shortly after this, and on ascertaining that the infantry for the attack were close to BAYONVILLERS, I asked Major CROUCH to go back to the Tanks and move them up at once to about W.S.d. Central, to avoid loss of time.

I found out the starting line and was informed that the infantry would be ready to advance at one o'clock. There would be no artillery co-operation. I went back towards the Tanks at 12 noon. I met them coming up and gave Major CROUCH all instructions - Starting line etc., and asked him to get the Tanks into position between HARBONNIERES and the Railway, and to be certain to be there by 1 p.m.

At 1 p.m. exactly, Tanks arrived in position on the starting line given, deployed across the whole front, one Tank of each Section in support, and Captain HAMLET's Section also in support.

As the Tanks moved over the low ridge between HARBONNIERES and GUILLAUCOURT they were seen by the enemy, and fire was opened on them at a slow rate, by H.A. The Tanks moved on to the low ground in W.17. where they were not under direct observation. The fire was continued, but no Tanks were hit.

At 1.30 the infantry of the 1st Australian Division advanced from the HARBONNIERES-GUILLAUCOURT road, and moved up to the Tanks which were waiting for them. Tanks and infantry then advanced and passed

through /

4.

through the 15th Australian Infantry Brigade who had advanced to support the left flank of the Canadian Corps. The 15th Australian Infantry Brigade then withdrew to the BLUE Line.

Resistance from hostile infantry and machine gunners in front of the BLUE Line was weak, a large number surrendering at once. Many had already been killed by a Whippet Tank, which had subsequently received a direct hit at this point. The hostile shelling was fairly heavy all the time. On approaching ROSIERES Station and the factory by it (X.26.d.4.5) resistance became stronger and shelling more intense. Three Tanks received direct hits there. At about this time a message dropped by an aeroplane reached me to the effect that "German reinforcements were arriving in LIHONS by the CHAULNES road, apparently infantry and field guns." I at once sent this back to the 2nd Brigade Report Centre (W.8.d.9.0) in order that these might be dealt with by our artillery. Before this was done a German Field Battery came into action on the high ground in X.29.a. where they commanded the whole of the country to the west. These at once opened fire on the Tanks, knocking out about 5 on a line running from about X.28.a.8.5 to F.4.a.8.7.- close to an abandoned German Field Hospital. The Tanks were unable to advance in face of this fire, and the infantry were held up by it, and by heavy machine gun fire from the border of the woods west of LIHONS, for fully one and a half hours, and suffered severely. Two field guns that tried to come into action against this battery from X.19.d.9.1. were obliged to withdraw after firing only about two rounds each, as they came at once under heavy and accurate fire from the German guns.

At about 5.30 p.m. the German battery was engaged by artillery fire and very soon withdrew, leaving one gun behind, presumably disabled and immovable.

The infantry could still only make very slow progress owing to hostile machine gun fire, having lost the Tanks support at this point, all Tanks near here having been put out of action by the German battery. The infantry gradually made progress and reached the RED Line. The Tanks then withdrew, in accordance with previous instructions, to the South West side of HARBONNIERES. Here, all Tanks were handed over to Major DIAMOND M.C., who had brought up fresh crews to man them. Reports of losses of Tanks and personnel were sent in from here to O.C., 2nd Tank Battalion at WARFUSEE.

Before leaving the Tanks put out of action, it had been ascertained that all personnel wounded had been or were being sent back.

All personnel that had been in action were then sent back by Motor Lorry to ETAMPES, going on the way to the Tankodrome near WIENCOURT, where a hot meal was ready for them.

5.

I should like to bring to notice the conspicuous ability and gallantry shown by Major CROUCH in this action. His previous arrangements and his handling of his Tanks while they were under his control were admirable, and he followed his Tanks into action under heavy fire and kept in touch with them throughout. He is sending a report with recommendations for distinguished conduct of those in action under his Command.

Before concluding, I should like to express the opinion that the decision not to employ our artillery at the start of the operation was unfortunate. Had the artillery been used to keep under fire, and to smoke commanding positions from which hostile batteries could overlook the field of operations (of which the most obvious was the high ground running North West from LIHONS) it would not have been possible for the enemy's guns to remain for a period of over two hours in action, unmolested. Had such areas been searched by Heavy Guns, with H.E. and smoke, the fire of such batteries would have been much impeded, or silenced. As soon as the battery that caused all the damage was seriously engaged, it withdrew.

H. Jackson

Major,
2nd Tank Battalion.

10th August, 1918.

BATTLE INSTRUCTIONS, SERIES "B", No. 2.
OPERATIONS ON 9th AUGUST, 1918.

1. The Fourth Army has attained all its objectives to-day except at one or two minor points.

2. The attack will be resumed on 9th instant. The final objective of the Australian Corps is the general line LIHONS - FRAMERVILLE - MERICOURT.

The role of the Australian Corps is to form a strong defensive flank to the advance of the Canadian Corps. The various bounds of the attack are shown on the map forwarded with Battle Instructions, Series "B", No. 1 issued to-day.

3. It is not anticipated that the attack will be launched before 10 a.m. Zero will be notified as soon as it is ascertained. Troops will be prepared to move to a starting line at very short notice from 7 a.m.

4. The controlling factor in the advance will be the rate of advance of the Canadian Corps which is to push on in the direction of ROYE and CHAULNES.

5. The first phase of the attack by the Australian Corps will be carried out by 1st Australian Division on the right with the 5th Australian Division on its left. The 4th Australian Division will not advance.

6. Tanks are allotted for the operation as follows :-

1st Australian Division. 2nd Tank Battalion - 14 Tanks.
Tanks near WIENCOURT Headquarters P.30.a.

***** ***** ***** *****

7. The boundaries between divisions are as follows :-

(a) between the right and centre divisions - a line from our front line at about Sq. W.12.d.6.0 eastwards along the grid line through Sq. X.7.c.0.0.

8. The attack on the objective of the first phase will be carried out by the troops of 1st Australian Division passing through 5th Australian Division in the right sector at zero hour. 5th Australian Division will make arrangements to co-operate with this attack north of the new inter-divisional boundary given above and will attack the green line (vide Battle Instructions, Series "B", No. 1).

After the capture of the greenline the 2nd Australian Division will pass through the 5th Australian Division in the centre sector and will attack the second objective (Phase "B") in conjunction with 1st Australian Division.

In order to ensure that the attacks are simultaneous, close liaison is necessary between 1st, 2nd and 5th Australian Divisions and 2nd Canadian Division.

9. ARTILLERY. **** **** ****

10. ACKNOWLEDGE by wire.

(Sd) T.A. BLAMEY, Brigadier-General,
General Staff, Australian Corps

DISTRIBUTION:

26 - 2nd Tank Battalion.

Maps distributed with Battle Instructions, Series "B" No. 1.
(to Divisions only).

COPY.

SECRET.

FIRST AUSTRALIAN DIVISION.

9th August, 1918.

BATTLE INSTRUCTIONS No. 2.

1. The attack will be resumed on 9th inst. Zero hour will be 11 a.m. The final Objective of the Corps are shown on attached Map.
The 1st. Aust. Div. will be the right attacking Division.
The boundaries of the Division are shown on attached Map.
2. The attack will be carried out as follows :-
 - (a) Phase A. by 2nd. Aust. Inf. Bde.
The 8th Aust. Inf. Bde. will be on the left.
The X Brigade 2nd Canadian Division on the right.
 - (b) Phase B. By 2nd Aust. Inf. Bde. on right.
The 3rd Aust. Inf. Bde. on left.
 - i. The inter-Brigade boundary will be the grid line running East and West through X.20 Central and X.21. Central. and will be adjusted by direct arrangements between Brigadiers.
 - ii. The 2nd. Aust. Division, having passed through the 5th Aust. Division will be on the left.
 - iii. X Brigade 2nd. Canadian Division will be on the right.
3. The RED Line will be consolidated pending further orders.
4. ARTILLERY. *** *** *** ***
5. Tanks. 14 Tanks of the 2nd Tank Battalion are available, and will be placed at the disposal of the G.O.C. 2nd. Aust. Inf. Bde. for Phase A.
For Phase B these Tanks will be distributed between the 2nd and 3rd Aust. Inf. Bdes. by direct arrangements with Tank Battalion Commander.
6. *** *** ***
7. A report centre for both attacking Brigades will be established at Square W.9.c.O.O. (GILLAUCOURT Station).
8. As the Operations are to conform to that of the 2nd. Canadian Division the closest liaison will be maintained between the 2nd Aust. Inf. Bde. and the left Brigade of the 2nd. Canadian Divn.
9. ACKNOWLEDGE.

(Sgd) A.M. ROSS,
Lieut.-Colonel,
General Staff.
1st Australian Division.

DISTRIBUTION:

2nd Tank Bn.

To H.Q. 15th A.I. Bde.

APPENDIX

Report on work performed by 58th Battalion in
Operation on 9th August 1918

At 10 a.m. I received orders from the Brigade Major 15th A.I. Brigade to attack in conjunction with the 60th Battalion on a frontage between VAUXVILLERS and the main AMIENS Railway. The attack commenced at once. The attack was launched at 10.30 a.m. "A", "B" and "C" Companies being in the front line and "D" Coy. in support. It was necessary to use three companies in the front line as the frontage was very great viz. 1500 yds. "A" and "C" companies first met opposition from the proximity of the station in W.12.D.8-2. These nests were rushed from the flanks and 6 heavy and 4 light Machine Guns captured, 20 prisoners were taken and the rest approximately 10 killed. Brisk fighting took place until long line of dugouts in X.19.A. and wood in rear of same was captured. 18 Officers and over 200 other ranks were captured in the dugouts which were fitted up with all sorts of military gear and equipment including a wireless set, full electric lighting set, cases of new telephones etc. and 25th 15 additional Machine Guns, 1 Anti-aircraft gun and 1 heavy and 2 medium minenwerfers. The prisoners captured were mainly 26th R.I.R. At this stage the 29th Battalion reported that they were held up by Machine Gun fire from Cemetery in VAUXVILLERS and could not advance. Major Bennibeth of the 2nd Tank Battalion joined me at my Headquarters W.12.A.4-6 and he sent forward his last tank to assist the 29th and my left company to get forward. It arrived about 200 yards from the Cemetery and was knocked out by an Anti-tank gun in VAUXVILLERS. The artillery support up to this point was practically negligible. Capt. LOUGHAN with left company experienced heavy M.G. fire from Railway in X.13.B. these were rushed and the crews killed. 11 Machine Guns were captured. The capture of the last named posts put an end to the local opposition and the whole line went forward capturing 3 more medium minenwerfers at X.13.D. Central. The objective GREEN LINE was reached in X.14.D. at 1.15 p.m. but on right the opposition was heavier and the GREEN LINE was not reached until 1.55 p.m. As the 2nd Brigade lost direction in their attack by bearing too much to the right and as none of their troops passed through my battalion I ordered my battalion to cover the flank of the 8th Battalion and prevent their flanks being exposed this necessitated the Battalion advancing to the trench system in X.14.D. and X.20. b and d; another battery of 3 heavy minenwerfers were captured in front of the hospital. The ground occupied by my battalion was taken over by the 7th and 8th Battalions at 4 p.m.

Splendid targets for our artillery were offering at the commencement of the attack as the Bosche limbered up his guns and used them with his teams hooked in. Later he formed up presumably for a counter-attack but broke away again. Our artillery support throughout the attack was weak.

The following is a list of captured minenwerfers and machine guns:

- 1 77 anti-tank gun.
- 4 Heavy Minenwerfers.
- 5 Medium " "
- 32 Heavy machine guns.
- 4 Light " "
- and 1 Anti-aircraft machine gun.

At the hospital in X.20.b.6-4 piles of field dressings stained with blood were found.

The following officers were wounded.

- Lieut. CARBUTT
- Lieut. THUSCOTT

and 17 Other Ranks killed.
and 50 Other Ranks wounded.

20 officers
and 350 Other Ranks were taken prisoner.

Sd/ Chas V. WATSON Lieut. Col.
C.O. 58th Battalion

9-9-18

23

D.S.O.
S.S.O.1

Dear General. Holts.

Within you will find
a copy of Col Watson's ~~written~~
Report on the Operations
of the Bn on the 9th Inst. in
which he considerably modifies
his verbal report to me in which
he stated or at least I understood
him to state that his Bn
'mopped up' Vauclera.

This it now appears was
not correct.

I read this at the earliest
moment in justice to the 29th Bn
who properly correctly claimed
to have "mopped up" this village.

I am glad the matter has been
cleared up.

11/8/18

H. J. S. [Signature]

PA
[Signature]

APPENDIX
APPENDIX
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233
REPORT OF OPERATIONS
of
17th. (Armoured Car) Tank Battalion.
8th. August 1918.

Ref. Map 62. D. 1/40,000

DISPOSITION OF TROOPS.

16 Cars of the 17th. Armoured Car Battalion Tank Corps were attached to the Australian Corps, 12 Cars being allotted to the 5th. Australian Division and 4 retained in Corps Reserve. 3 Tanks from the 5th. Tank Brigade were attached for towing purposes, it having been found by experiment the previous day, that Armoured Cars could be towed successfully by Tanks over trenches and shelled ground.

PLAN OF ACTION.

The Plan of Action was based on the situation at the Battle of GAMBRAI at about Zero + 5, by which time the Tank attack had penetrated to the zone of intact roads used by the enemy's transport.

Armoured Cars were divided into three Groups. The 12 Cars allotted to the 5th. Australian Division were to exploit any break through which might occur, doing as much damage as possible to enemy's personnel, organization, transport etc.

6 Cars of "A" Coy. to operate to the North of the VILLERS BRETONNEUX Road. 6 Cars of "B" Coy. to operate to South of the same road. 4 Cars (1 Section from each Coy.) were to proceed along the Main VILLERS BRETONNEUX Road to carry out a Special long distance reconnaissance under instructions from Corps Hqrs.

Each Car was provided with axes for clearing trees and obstacles, and with 4 slabs of Gun Cotton in case a heavy obstruction was encountered. The towing Tanks each carried 3 Artillery bridges for placing over trenches.

NARRATIVE.

At Zero, the Cars were brought up as far as the roads would permit, and waited while the Australian Pioneers made the roads up to the enemy's lines, where the towing Tanks joined them. The road was passable at Zero + 5½ hours, when the Cars, assisted by towing Tanks, moved on through WARFUSSE Village. The pace was very slow because the gun fire of our heavy Artillery covered the road and had also thrown several large trees and branches across it. The lighter branches were cleared by the Crews with axes and the heavy tree trunks were towed clear by the towing Tanks.

In square Q.27, the Armoured Cars passed our Infantry and ran through the light Artillery barrage, firing at retiring enemy on both sides of the road. They arrived in the valley at Q.29 and Q.35. before the attacking Infantry, and had good targets at troops of all sorts in the valley, the shooting causing numbers to leave their positions.

The Railway Dump at LA FLAQUE was next engaged and then the Cars passed on to the valley in R.29 and R.34, 2 Kilos West of FOUCACOURT, when 6 Cars were lined up in the road shooting down the valley at all sorts of troops. The main road to FOUCACOURT became partially blocked by transport which, taking alarm at the sight of the Armoured Cars, collided and fell across the road.

The Cars then turned off the Main Road, some towards FRAMERVILLE and others through PROYART and on to CHUIGNOLLES. At FRAMERVILLE and on the roads in the vicinity, they killed a number of Officers and personnel and destroyed transport, limbers etc., quite upsetting the enemy's organization there.

/ At

At PROYART, they found enemy troops at dinner in billets and completely cleared the town. In passing on, one of the Cars pursued a lorry full of troops, overhauled it and accounted for most of them. After proceeding to CHUIGNOLLES via Cross Roads in L 34, the Cars returned, and found numbers of stragglers retiring before our Infantry, coming towards PROYART, who walked right up to the Cars. The Cars then patrolled the Area as far forward as square R 50, 6000 yards in front of the final objective, until dusk.

The 4 Cars on the Special Mission were engaged at close range at FOUAGACOURT by a Field Battery, with the result that the leading Car was hit, the second had its wheels badly splintered and the third ran into the side of the road and damaged the chassis.

During the day the Armoured Cars fired 26,880 rounds at targets from 50 yards and upwards.

CASUALTIES.

PERSONNEL.

Killed.	Nil.
Wounded.	Nil.
Wounded very slightly (at duty)	4 Officers 4 Other Ranks.

ARMoured CARS.

1 Car.	Direct hit - Lost in Action, Guns salvaged.
4 Cars.	Six wheels damaged by shell splinters and replaced during Action.
7 Cars.	Mechanical breakdowns.

HOTCHKISS GUNS.

Nil.

MESSAGES.

Messages Sent by Pigeon	-	14.
.. .. D.R.	-	15.

DEDUCTIONS.

The Armoured Cars upset the enemy's defences in front of our attacking Infantry from square Q 27, on a front from FRAMERVILLE to CHUIGNOLLES and dominated the Area with their fire as far forward as R.50, until dusk, when they withdrew losing only one Car damaged by shell fire. They entirely prevented any local counter-attack and sent back many prisoners from Areas not reached by our Infantry. They enabled a definite reconnaissance to be made by Senior Officers of the Area well forward of the line held by our troops; this information being rapidly sent back by Pigeon and D.R. Reports of the situation at FOUAGACOURT, FRAMERVILLE etc, i.e. 3 miles in advance of our final objective were despatched by pigeon at 11.30 am and safely received at Hqrs.

The operations of the Armoured Cars were limited by the unsuitability of the chassis on which the Cars are mounted. No less than 7 out of 16 were at various times out of action from mechanical trouble which would not have occurred with a suitable chassis. Initiative and scope were considerably restricted because the chassis could not be relied upon in doubtful positions.

The outstanding feature of the operations is, that by working Armoured Cars with Tanks, they need not be confined to the roads, nor are they stopped by obstacles. Armoured Cars can be towed so that the wheels follow the Tank tracks over almost any ground or obstacles.

From the experience of recent battles, particularly CAMBRAI and that of August 8th last, it would appear that a successful Tank attack will usually penetrate into the zone of intact roads on which the enemy's transport is working, and as soon as this is attained, an opportunity for the use of Armoured Cars is presented which, if

/ timed

aimed at the right moment, can do enormous amount of damage to the enemy's rear organization and Reserves. To quote an instance of the conditions at the back of the enemy's line, some of my Cars followed an enemy's lorry for a considerable distance without the lorry driver noticing it, the lorry in front preventing suspicion on the part of troops who might have attempted to stop the Armoured Car. Other similar instances can be quoted.

Had the Cars been reliable they could easily have gone as far as the River at PERONNE or any other important point. The Area containing CHUIGNOLLES, PROYART, FRAMERVILLE and LA FLAQUE could have been held by Armoured Cars until the Infantry came up. As it was, so many Cars were temporarily out of action from mechanical trouble and the rest so unreliable that they had to be withdrawn behind the lines at dusk.

SUGGESTIONS.

I would submit for consideration that a Force of Armoured Cars will in future be valuable to exploit any success which the Tanks may attain. No matter how much the Tank develops in speed and handiness, it can never be so speedy and economical as an Armoured Car when intact roads are reached. Under favourable weather conditions, such as those existing at the moment, a suitable Car could pass over many of the tracks across country as well as a light Tank.

The further a Tank attack can penetrate into the enemy's positions, the greater the opportunity for the use of Armoured Cars.

From experience up to the present I would suggest that a Force of 40 Cars would be the best tactical Unit to work; divided into 3 Coys of 12 Cars each, 3 Cars in a Section under an Officer and a Battalion Headquarters Section of 4 Cars. This could be maintained with very little addition to the present organization.

A Headquarters Section would be of use in taking Officers into Areas still held by the enemy's snipers. As an instance, at 4.30 pm on August 8th a Staff Car of 4th Army came up to ascertain the situation near LA FLAQUE. It came under fire and was put out of action at a point where the Armoured Cars were patrolling without molestation.

13th August '18.

E. J. Carter
Lieut-Colonel.
Commanding, 17th (Armoured Car) Tank Battalion.

REPORT OF OPERATIONS
of
17th. (Armoured Car) Tank Battalion.
8th. August 1918.

Ref. Map 62 D. 1/40,000

PLAN OF ACTION.

16 Cars of the 17th. Armoured Car Battalion Tank Corps were attached to the Australian Corps, 12 Cars being allotted to the 5th. Australian Division and 4 retained in Corps Reserve. 3 Tanks from the 5th. Tank Brigade were attached for towing purposes, it being found by experiment the previous day that the Armoured Cars could be towed successfully by Tanks over trenches and shelled ground.

The 12 Cars allotted to the 5th. Division were to exploit any break through which might occur, doing as much damage as possible to the enemy's personnel, transport, communications etc.

The 4 Cars in Corps reserve were allotted a special reconnoitring Mission in advance of the final objective.

NARRATIVE.

At Zero, the Cars were brought up as far as the roads would permit, and waited while the Australian Pioneers made the roads up to the enemy's lines, where the towing Tanks joined them. The road was passable at Zero + 3½ hours, when the Cars, assisted by towing Tanks moved on through WARFUSEE Village. The pace was very slow because the gun fire of our heavy Artillery covered the road and had also thrown several large trees and branches across it. The lighter branches were cleared by the Crews with axes and the heavy tree trunks were towed clear by the Towing Tanks.

In square Q.27. the Armoured Cars passed our Infantry and ran through the light Artillery barrage, firing at retiring enemy on both sides of the road. They arrived in the valley in Q.29 & 30 before the attacking Infantry, and had good targets at troops of all sorts in the valley, the shooting causing numbers to leave their positions.

The Railway Dump at LA FLAQUE was next engaged and then the Cars passed on to the valley in R.29 & 34, two Kilos West of FOUCACOURT, when six Cars were lined up in the road shooting down the valley at all sorts of troops. The main road to FOUCACOURT became blocked by transport which, taking alarm at the sight of Armoured Cars, collided and blocked the road.

The Cars then turned off the main road, some towards FRAMERVILLE and others through PROYART and on to CHUIGNOLLES. At PROYART, they found enemy troops at dinner in billets and completely cleared the town. In passing on, one of the Cars pursued a lorry full of troops, overhauled it and accounted for most of them. After proceeding to CHUIGNOLLES via Cross Roads in L.34, the Cars returned and found numbers of stragglers retiring before our Infantry, coming towards PROYART, who walked right up to the Cars. The Cars then patrolled the Area up to the point where the roads were blocked by fallen transport, until dusk.

During the day the Armoured Cars fired 26,880 rounds at targets from 50 yards and upwards.

/ DEDUCTIONS.

233-

In accordance with
the
plan

are useful to

DEDUCTIONS.

They are useful for
reconnaissance

Chassis unsuitable

Cooperation with
Tanks

① The Armoured Cars upset the enemy's defences in front of our attacking Infantry from square Q.27, on a front from FRAMERVILLE to CHUIGNOLLES and dominated the Area with their fire as far forward as R.30, until dusk, when they withdrew losing only one Car damaged by shell fire. They entirely prevented any local counter-attack and sent back many prisoners from Areas not reached by our Infantry.

It was possible to make a definite reconnaissance of the Area well forward of the line held by our troops. This information being rapidly sent back by Pigeon and D.R.

② The operations of the Armoured Cars were limited by the unsuitability of the chassis on which the Cars are mounted. No less than 7 out of 16 were at various times out of action from mechanical trouble which would not have occurred with a suitable chassis. Initiative and scope were considerably restricted because the chassis could not be relied upon in doubtful positions.

③ The outstanding feature of the operations is, that by working Armoured Cars with Tanks, they need not be confined to the roads, nor are they stopped by obstacles. Armoured Cars can be towed so that the wheels follow the Tank tracks over almost any ground or obstacle.

The enemy can only stop his roads to a limited depth, and when that area has been penetrated, it would be possible to put a force of Armoured Cars on the roads behind his lines which will do a great deal to hinder his operations at a critical period.

In the Field.
11th. August 1918.

E. J. Carter
Commanding, 17th. (Armoured Car) Tank Battalion.
Lieut-Colonel.

... part of the ...

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APPENDIX 393BATTLE HISTORY SHEETNo. 1 SECTION."A" COMPANY.

Ref. Sheets AMIENS 17 1/100,000
FRANCE 62d 1/40,000

I received orders from O.C. "A" Company at 10 a.m. to proceed with my section along the VILLERS BRETONNEUX Road to FOUCACOURT, there to deal with whatever personnel, transport, signals etc., there might be; then to proceed N.W. to CHUIGNES, CHUIGNOLLES, MERICOURT MORCOURT and back to Main road.

On the way I dealt with various parties of the enemy on both sides of the road, those too near the guns being killed or wounded by revolver shots from my drivers, my sergeant or myself.

We arrived 1 kilo W. of FOUCACOURT at 10.30 a.m. Suddenly from the second class road running S to HERLEVILLE there appeared several horsemen followed by four limbers. These were all put out of action - all the men being killed. I then noticed that the road in front was blocked and that the two cars in front of me were returning so I did the same. My rear driver then pointed out four large lorries which had been following us up; the drivers of these we killed and we fired several shots into each radiator. As I passed the last lorry, a large touring car appeared, its two occupants at once jumped out and the car crashed into a telegraph pole. I killed the two men.

Owing to the road block 1 kilo. W of FOUCACOURT I was unable to return as ordered, so came back by the main road.

On returning to Company Headquarters I was given orders to proceed along towards FOUCACOURT and reconnoitre the country to the South with regard to the enemy's forces, trenches, wire, crops, roads, etc. On arriving at the junction of the main road with the PROYART-RAINECOURT Road, I was fired at three times by a gun, whether an anti-tank or field gun I do not know. I turned down to RAINECOURT and HERLEVILLE and found both places fairly strongly held by machine gunners who kept quiet until I passed and then opened heavy fire. A field gun also opened up on me. I then decided to try the route HARBONNIERES-LIHONS-VERMANDOVILLERS and went to HARBONNIERES by the main road. I got as far as W.12.d.5.0. and found the road blocked by a large steam wagon drawn across the road. I then met some men of the 59th Australian Infantry who told me they were held up by M.G. fire from X.13.c.0.6. I attempted to find a track leading to this point but found it impracticable, so sent a pigeon message with all this information.

Enemy infantry could be seen digging in on crest S of my position. I fired on them and also on a car moving S.E. down track at W.18.d.2.0.

I then returned to Company Headquarters and stood by until orders were received to return to Battalion Headquarters.

(Sgd) J.T. YEOMAN Lieut.
O.C. No. 1 Section
17th Armoured Car Battalion.

8/8/18.

At Zero plus 15 minutes I left starting point with my 2 cars and moved through VILLERS BRETONNEUX. Owing to mist and bad light one car (2-2) was ditched in a shell hole, the front axle being damaged. This car I left in charge of Sergt. DAY, proceeding with Car 2.1 to point arranged for meeting Towing Tanks.

My car followed behind the barrage to WARFUSEE and was towed through bad places by the Tank.

On reaching outskirts of LAMOTTE we found it necessary to wait for the barrage to move forward. At 9.30 a.m. the barrage lifted and I proceeded along the road towards FOUCACOURT but was delayed by trees on road about 500 yards E of LAMOTTE. We were able to remove these.

From this point onward the road was clear and the surface very good and I was able to get well ahead of our Infantry. The enemy were in position on a line roughly squares 24-30-36 and in considerable strength with several M.G.'s. On seeing Armoured Cars approaching the enemy became panic-stricken and began to retire in great disorder, offering splendid targets to the gunners who did particularly good shooting. Large numbers of troops and transport were caught in a large dump and railhead (Squares 25-26) while trying to get away. This included a whole train.

At cross roads (R.26.d) I turned left in company with car 4.1 and proceeded to PROYART with the enemy still retiring in disorder and providing exceptional targets, especially his lorries and horse transport amongst which great casualties were inflicted.

Large numbers of hostile troops were caught in PROYART and in 15 minutes the whole of the village was cleared.

I then returned to FOUCACOURT Road and pushed forward towards that village. More enemy troops and transport were engaged in Valley (R.29-34). A heavy fire was maintained and road was blocked with smashed lorries and horse transport, making it impossible to get through into FOUCACOURT Village, so I returned to cross roads at Q.20.d and sent back a message by pigeon at 11.23 a.m. Here I received orders to report to Company Headquarters.

At Company Headquarters I received orders to take Car 4/2 (under own) along with my (2/1) and patrol roads through PROYART-CHUIGNOLLES and in a N.E. direction. No enemy were seen until I reached cross roads on PROYART-BRAY Road, where a lorry full of troops also several groups were standing on the road and unaware of the nearness of Armoured Cars, until we were within 200 yards of them. The lorry set off at top speed, my two cars gave chase and soon overhauled and accounted for all on it. The lorry was put out of action by shots fired into the radiator.

I patrolled road in CHUIGNOLLES where numbers of the enemy were seen. These took cover on seeing Armoured Cars. I then returned to PROYART-BRAY Road and proceeded in the direction of BRAY as far as forked roads (L.34.d).

My cars came under heavy M.G. fire from some old trenches to the E of this road, these trenches appeared to be strongly held. Both cars brought all guns to bear on the M.Gs which were on the parapet, distance about 350 yards, and two guns were seen to be hit by our fire.

The BRAY-CHUIGNOLLES Road was also patrolled for a short distance, and numbers of enemy troops engaged, but these soon took cover.

I considered it advisable at this point to return and sent back information. A message was sent by pigeon from Cross Roads Q.30.d at 2.15 p.m.

I returned with my two cars at 2.45 p.m. to Battalion Headquarters. During the whole of the action no shell fire was encountered.

8/8/18.

(Sgd) A.C. WOOD Lieut.
O.C. No. 2 Section.

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APPENDIX

BATTLE HISTORY SHEET

No.3 Section.

On receipt of orders I proceeded from Adv. Bn. Headquarters at 9.15 a.m. to proceed in direction of FOUCACOURT on main road. Caught up our infantry at forked roads Q.27.c at 9.45 a.m. approx.

The Section then proceeded along road engaging enemy infantry with good results at 9.55 a.m.

Considerable numbers of enemy were in R.E. dump at LA FLAQUE and were engaged. A train loaded up and ready to move was engaged and put out of action, by the sections in vicinity.

At R.28.d.5.3 car was hit in radiator by enemy shell, this also damaged steering arm and two front tyres.

Gun was engaged and put out of action temporarily, the gun came into action again and was engaged, but shell from gun put car in ditch; due to steering locking, this occurred at 10.30 a.m. 3/2 was partly disabled owing to shell striking right rear wheel. This car was then returned to Tank Engineer, engaging enemy on return journey.

At 10.20 a.m. enemy retiring in complete disorder to S.W. in direction of RAINECOURT.

On S. side of road telephone or telegraph pole line was standing there were several green and yellow wires on same; these I proceeded to destroy with gun cotton charges at 10.30 a.m. The reason for using charges was the close proximity of enemy.

I then sent pigeon message to Corps at 10.35 a.m. and a covering message at 10.50 a.m.

Car was then towed back to Adv. Company H.Q. engaging enemy on return journey.

10 prisoners were collected at R.27.d.3.3 approx. Car was then towed back to Battalion H.Q.

Our infantry were consolidating on Blue Line when we returned. No tanks were in advance of Blue Line.

8/8/18.

(Sgd) C.A. BLENCOWE Lieut
O.C. No.3 Section.

BATTLE HISTORY SHEET

No. 4 Section.

At about 10.10 a.m I passed the Advanced Infantry troops and Tanks on the main road Q.28.d.3.3. and advanced towards FOUCACOURT. Enemy M.G's were opened and dealt with on both sides of the road in squares R.29.c and d. also a small Trench Mortar. The enemy at our approach retreated down the road in disorder, affording excellent targets. Followed by 1 car of No. 2 Section (Lieut A.C. WOOD) I turned off towards PROYART at R.26.d.9.2 at 10.20 a.m. This road was good and the enemy had been billeted on either side and was completely unprepared.

Severe casualties were inflicted on groups and on parties who were sitting in the houses and whom we fired on through the windows. My Red, White and Blue flag was lowered and the vast majority did not realise we were British until they were fired on. Turning to the Left at the village we returned towards the main road and inflicted great damage on a Park of Horse limbers on the right side of the road, and also on groups of retiring troops. Our troops were not in sight, but the main body of Armoured Cars in the main road had demoralized the enemy.

On reaching the main road R.25.c.0.3 I turned to the Left and proceeded towards FOUCACOURT followed by 1 car of No. 2 section and No. 1 Section.

The enemy was retreating in disorder and great losses inflicted.

Much horse transport was encountered in vicinity R.28.d. and in cutting R.29.d.2.8. and great damage caused by our guns.

The road beyond R.30.a.1.3 was congested with enemy lorries and transport of all description, so after firing several hundred rounds of S.A.A. into the mass we retired, leaving the road badly blocked at 11.40 a.m.

Wires were destroyed at R.27.d.3.3. at 11.50 a.m.

All roads in the forward area were in good condition and there was very little hostile shell fire.

8/8/18.

(Sgd) N.C. WOODS Lieut
O.C. No. 4 Section.

BATTLE HISTORY SHEET.

I proceeded with my two Cars along the VILLERS-BRETONNEUX - FOUCAUCOURT Rd. at 10.10 a.m. I passed groups of our men on the Green Line. I came into contact with M.Gs. and riflemen at Q.29.c. (1/40,000. 62.D.) (No.3 Section was behind me). We kept up a steady fire and the enemy left his position in great disorder. We had very fine targets when I reached the Cross Roads R.27. .1.4. I engaged two trains busily engaged loading timber. I have good reason to believe I set fire to one train. Large columns of smoke were observed. This was subsequently confirmed by the Infantry.

Proceeding further along the road I engaged some limbers, these I dispersed, and gave chase to a field piece (mounted on a lorry). After 700 yards chase, I got within 150 yards and engaged the personnel. My Car 49109 was struck by a shell, damaging its turrets. I then received a direct hit on my Car 49110, bursting the engine and setting it on fire. The Crew evacuated same, and I despatched a pigeon message at 10.30 a.m. to this effect. With one Car I tried to get through via FRAMERVILLE, but found the road blocked up - Limbers, dead horses etc. This I found out to be the work of an Armoured Car. Later (1.10 p.m.) I again tried to get through on the VILLERS BRETONNEUX Road I came across my damaged Car and salvaged my guns. Whilst doing so the field gun opened fire again from Q.29.c.1.4 I retired and reported same. I received instructions to stand by and give any assistance I could to the Infantry. I patrolled the road while consolidation took place on the Blue Line and at 5 p.m. I received orders to return to rallying point.

.8/8/18.

(Sgd) A.J. KENYON. 2/Lieut.
O.C. No. 5 Section.



No. 6 Section.

BATTLE HISTORY SHEET.

Both Cars proceeded via VILLERS BRETONNEUX and WARFUSEE in Company with Nos. 7 and 8 Sections. Owing to our own Artillery barrage on Main Road the Cars were held up E. of LAMOTTE for $\frac{5}{4}$ of an hour.

The Section then went forward and got in touch with the enemy Infantry who were retiring in disorder (Ref. HARBONNIERES 1/40,000) at Q.29.c. Numerous casualties were inflicted on them and fire was kept up all the way into FRAMERVILLE. In this village the enemy were completely taken by surprise and did not seem to realize the cars were not their own. The Main Street through the village is very narrow and a large quantity of horse transport was destroyed by our guns. On passing the cross roads in the village Artillery limbers (without guns) were encountered and three teams destroyed. Owing to the narrowness of the street it was impossible to pass the teams and limbers which blocked the road.

The Section then returned firing on the retreating Infantry until the LAMOTTE-FOUCAUCOURT Road was reached.

Subsequent orders were received to proceed to FOUCAUCOURT in company with Nos. 7 and 8 Sections, but a gun was encountered mounted on a lorry at (Ref. HARBONNIERES 1/40,000) R.28.d.5.3 and the Section was forced to withdraw.

Orders were then received to make a reconnaissance, in company with No.8 Section, of Area between VAUVILLERS and LIHONS.

Section proceeded via HARBONNIERES, but roads were found impassable.

An attempt was then made to get through by tracks to VAUVILLERS, but these were also found impassable for the cars.

The Section then returned to H.Q. $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles W. of VILLERS BRETONNEUX.

No prisoners were taken by this Section.

8/8/18

(Sgd) D.W. HERD. 2/Lieut.
O.C. No. 6 Section.



No. 7 Section.

BATTLE HISTORY SHEET.

The Section proceeded via VILLERS-BRETONNEUX and WARFUSEE-ABANCOURT in touch with Nos. 6 and 8 Sections.

The column was held up on the E. of LAMOTTE for $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour owing to our own Artillery barrage being on the Main Road.

The Section then pushed forward and got in touch with enemy Infantry retiring in disorder (Ref. HARBONNIERES 1/40,000) at Q.29.c. Fire was opened immediately and numerous casualties inflicted. Fire was kept up all along the main road as far as R.28.c. Cross Roads. The road was patrolled as ordered and many enemy stragglers were accounted for. The enemy appeared to be completely taken by surprise and did not seem to realise that the Cars were British. At R.26.d.5.3. we found an enemy motor car on the side of the road and personnel in a ditch. The personnel surrendered and as the car was in good condition it was taken in tow by No.1 Car an under officer of the personnel riding in it. About 10 other enemy ranks surrendered and were handed over to the Australians. The Section then returned to B.H.Q. with information. Orders were received (12.15 pm) from the C.O. to proceed to No. 6 Section and push as far forward as possible on the FOUCAUCOURT Road. More parties of the enemy were encountered and disposed of. At a point about R.26.c.5.3. an enemy soldier rushed out of a dug-out with a paper and surrendered. The paper stated that there were 17 men without arms desirous of being taken prisoners. The men fell in under one who could speak English and marched down to the Australians.

The Section moved forward to R.28.c.1.3 when an enemy 77 m.m gun mounted on a lorry was seen at R.28.d.5.3. The gun opened fire and one shell burst under No.1 car. The Car stopped after running back for a few yards and the Car was abandoned, but I subsequently returned and salvaged it.

No.2 Car carried on patrolling roads in front of the ultimate objective reached by Infantry until 5.20 p.m. when it proceeded to B.H.Q. $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles W. of VILLERS BRETONNEUX.

8/8/18.

(Sgd) W. JAMES. 2/Lieut.
O.C., No.7 Section.

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I received orders to proceed to FRAMERVILLE to find out any useful information I could and do as much damage as possible, then go on to VAUVILLERS, do the same there, and also N.E. side of HARBONNIERES

Leaving lying up point at P.25.v. I proceeded up the Main Road and when in the vicinity of Q.25.d. we came in touch with large numbers of the enemy on both sides of the road, these afforded excellent targets as they got up out of their trenches etc., and ran along the open ground, thus giving us a chance to do our job properly, which we did. This continued along the road including Hospitals etc. till we turned down the road for FRAMERVILLE. Here we again had them absolutely by surprise, we raided all round the village including the German CORPS H.Q. where I hoisted the 5th Australian Corps Flag.

A very large quantity of enemy transport was shattered, Drivers killed and horses in many cases, also bullocks, the remainder dashed up and down the road madly colliding with each other and blocking the road. This could not be avoided, though as many as possible were killed clear of the main road.

After mopping up all we could find I searched every road, track and field to try and get to VAUVILLERS but could not do so, so I returned to the centre of the village again, and was just in time to greet 4 Staff Officers who rode up to the H.Q., these were killed, one being dragged away by the stirrups till the horse fell. By this time a good crowd of the enemy had also come up from their dugouts etc. and we again cleared the village. I then came back on VILLERS BRETONNEUX road going down as far as Q.2 where I met 6 Section, they informed me we were to patrol the roads as far as FONCAVCOURT and the village and see what we could do, I did this, and had proceeded some distance, when the Cars came under short range gun fire, some of the cars having a narrow escape, the leading cars deemed it advisable to return a little, so I went back in reverse to R.27.c. then halted, having a look round presently a German came out of a dugout close by carrying some pigeons. My Driver killed this man and we brought back the pigeons in the Car. I then came on down the main road to the Hospital and had another short stay, also going down some of the tracks etc. to try and get along to VAUVILLERS. Finally I decided to make another raid on FRAMERVILLE and proceeded up the road to about R.25.c. when a German Car came up with the Driver and three Officers. One Armoured Car passed them without apparently firing a shot, but when my Cars came up to them they jumped out of their Car and bolted, and we opened fire on them. I intended bringing the car back with me when returning, but discovered on arrival there it had gone, another section having taken it.

Large numbers of prisoners surrendered to us and I brought two good batches down to the Australian's line who took them over.

Nearly every German we saw waited till we were close up till they discovered who we were, they were absolutely dazed. Men running from the Infantry came right up, in some cases as near as 50 yards before they realised what was happening. It was real murder.

Absolutely no Artillery from either side, it is by far the finest fighting day I have yet had.

About 2.30 p.m. I received instructions to proceed to LIHONS and find out any information about enemy preparations or defences.

I was unable to reach this place although I tried every possible route. I arrived in HARBONNIERES quite easy and just through the town when on the main road, a German Steam Wagon was completely blocking it. I then tried the small tracks etc. with a little success, finally I returned about 5.15 p.m. and waited instructions, afterwards returning to lying up point.

8/8/18.

(Sgd) E.J. ROLLINGS Lieut.
O.C. No. 8 Section.

APPENDIX

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REPORT ON ACTION OF THREE TANKS ATTACHED TO
17th ARMoured CAR BATTALION.

The 3 tanks were located at AUBIGNY on Y/Z night. During the night we loaded fascines and bridges on top.

At Zero hour the Tanks left AUBIGNY and proceeded to O.23.d. We arrived there at Z plus 1 hour. There the spare patrol was put in the Tanks and the march resumed towards P.25.d. One of the Tanks had trouble with its petrol feed system and had to be left at O.23.d. I arrived at P.25.d. at Z plus 2 hrs. with 2 Tanks. The last part of the march was slow, owing to the thick smoke screen and mist., necessitating the taking of Compass bearings.

I reported to O.C. "A" Coy at P.25.d, and detailed a Tank under 2/Lt. FRANKENSTEIN to proceed with "A" Coy.

This Tank proceeded with "A" Coy up to about Q.28.d. It was used for towing some Armoured Cars W. of WARFUSEE and also for removing trees which were lying across the road E. of WARFUSEE.

O.C., "A" Coy., states that this Tank was of the greatest use, and that it shortened the time spent in getting the Cars along, by about 2 hours or more.

About Z plus 2½ hours I reported to O.C. "B" Coy. and detailed the remaining Tank under Lieut. JONES to proceed with "B" Coy.

This Tank went with the Armoured Cars as far as Q.28.d. O.C., "B" Coy. states that this Tank although not used for towing, was of the greatest use in removing trees and obstructions, and that the Armoured Cars would probably have been unable to proceed without the help of the Tanks.

Ref. Sheet 62.D. 1/40,000

(Sgd)

E.A. MAUDE Captain.
17th Battalion.

9/13/18
8-2
9-1
10-1
11-1
12-1
13-1
14-1
15-1
16-1
17-1
18-1
19-1
20-1
21-1
22-1
23-1
24-1
25-1
26-1
27-1
28-1
29-1
30-1

No 1 11/8/18

Report of Work of Light Horse

Attached 5 cdis Div on 8/8/18 to 9/8/18

No 2 Troop A 1 Squadron
Lieut Cochran

No 1 Troop B — — —
Lieut Partis

Troops were detailed as follows

No 2 Troop A Squad

3 Sections to 8 Inf Bde

including Hotchkiss gun Section

The Gun Section were detailed to follow the Infantry in their advance and to fire on low flying hostile

aeroplanes this was carried out

YI successfully No reports of having brought any Planes down 1 man wounded

No 2

The 2 Sections were used for forward despatch work from Batt HQ to Bde HQ

2 men were detailed to follow forward Signal HQ in the advance 1 man wounded.

Verbal reports received from Batt Commanders that work was successfully carried out

No 1 Troop B Squadron

3 Sections detailed to 15 Bde

including Hotchkiss Gun Section

The Gun Section were attached to

60 Batt to follow their advance

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No 3

and fire on low flying Hostile Aeroplanes

They were brought into the line with the 60 Batt and used for defence

2 Sections reported to APM for escort of prisoners

3 Section detailed to 14 Inf Bde who were in reserve

No forward work was done by these sections

Lieut Partis	} 5 Div HQ
Lieut Cochran	

1 Section

on 8/8/18 Lieut Cochran with 2 men detailed to report 8 and 15 Inf Bde leaving Div HQ at 9am

No 4

for a situation report of operations returning at 8pm

9/8/18 Lieut Partis 2 men to report 8 Bde for situation report of operations leaving HQ at 9am

Reported 8 Bde 10.30am and received orders to report to 32 Batt in

Supports and 29 Batt HQ for reports on operations, which were

successful reported 5 Div HQ 7pm

Lieut Cochran to report to

15 Bde for situation report

returned ~~at~~ 9pm

With report that all objectives were gained

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4
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No 5

Total Casualties for operations
on the 8 & 9/8/18

4 men Wounded

2 Horses Killed

2 — Wounded

W Partis Lt
66 Light Horse
at 5 Aus Div



OPERATIONS OF THE 1st. CAVALRY BRIGADE EAST
 OF AMIENS.....8th.AUGUST 1918.

At 3.30 am. the Brigade were concentrated just East of LONGEAU and South of the East West road N.31.
 At 4.30 am. the Advanced Guard under command of Lt. Col. G.A.H. ING DSO. consisting of Queens Bays 1 Section "I" Battery RHA. 1 Section 1st. M.G. Sqn. and 1 Troop Field Sqn. RE. moved forward, the main body following half an hour later.
 At 5.30 am. Advanced Guard had reached Q.34.c. and main Body U.3.a. Infantry attack reported progressing satisfactory. AT 7.40 am. Advanced Guard had reached V.1.b. with 2 Sdns. in front, their patrols in touch with Infantry. Main Body followed Advance Guard by track E - VILLERS BRETONNEUX Station along the 1st. Cavalry Brigade Track North and parallel to the CHAULNES Railway Line. At 8³⁰ am. Advanced Guard was disposed roughly as follows - Right Leading Sqn. in close touch with Infantry ~~on~~ Line South of BAYONVILLERS, Left Leading Sqn. North of BAYONVILLERS, remainder of Advanced Guard on a Line to take it South of BAYONVILLERS.
 8.30 am. orders were sent to Advanced Guard to push through Infantry whenever opportunity offered.
 9¹⁵ am. the Brigade was disposed as follows - Right Leading Sqn. in front of Infantry and in mounted action South of HARBONNIERES in W.17.a. Left Leading Squadron passing through leading Infantry about Q.34.d. Lt. Col. ING DSO. and remainder of Advanced Guard supporting his right Squadron. Main Body of Brigade South of BAYONVILLERS W.2.C. central. It was originally intended for the advanced guard to pass North of HARBONNIERES but Lt. Col. ING DSO. decided to move South of this village and support his right Squadron. Consequently there was a considerable gap North

21 HARBONNIERES. From Brigade Report Centre (S.W. of BAYONVILLERS) advancing Infantry, Tanks Whippets, and Cavalry Patrols could be seen North of HARBONNIERES. There appeared to be little organised opposition and at 9.45 am. the 5th. D.Gds. under Lt. Col. TETROT DSO. were ordered forward to exploit a success in the direction of FRAMERVILLE. No definite objective was given but instructions not to go beyond this village. The 5th. D. Guards advanced in double Echelon of Squadrons :-

A
 B C

by W.4. Central, W.5. central and crossing the Red Line at ~~8.45~~ am. Regiment swung round N.E. corner of HARBONNIERES and moved rapidly in direction of VAUVILLERS, heavy Machine Gun fire was opened on "A" and "C" Squadrons from a clump of trees in X.7.c. central. "B" Sqn. under Capt. MITCHELL echeloned on their left rear swung outwards and when he reached W.6.c. central saw 3 railway trains (one broad gauge and 2 Light) at X.1.c. central. The two light trains steamed off towards VAUVILLERS but the broad gauge train was hit at that moment by a bomb from one of our aeroplanes and surrounded by men of this Squadron and Lieut. COCKRILL's patrol of Queens Bays from the left leading Squadron of the Advanced Guard. All the passengers were made prisoners. Captain MITCHELL continued his advance seizing a staff of a hospital in X.8.b. about 10.30 am. and galloping southwards to the E. of VAUVILLERS X.15.c. central. Up to this point he had had little organised resistance till a Staff Officer said by prisoners to have been an Austrian General rallied a few men in wood X.15.c.2.2. The wood was thick and it was impossible to ride down the enemy though several

APPENDIX

ere killed with revolvers. This squadron was not reduced to 20 men and the opposition heartened other stragglers who opened fire from all directions, some with Machine Guns. Just before this check 3 batteries of German Field Guns in column of route had surrendered to Capt. MITCHELL and were actually started for our own lines when the rifle and Machine Gun firing re-commenced. With reduced numbers Capt. MITCHELL was unable to compete with the situation, he however put five guns out of action and brought back a number of personnel. The Squadron withdrew to the hospital in X.8.b. where it got in touch with "A" Squadron (Capt. WINTERBOTTOM) in dismounted action about VAUVILLERS, a patrol sent from the hospital into FRAMEVILLE was fired on by an armoured car flying the tricolour, one man being hit. Lieut. Col. TERROT ordered these two Squadrons to assist his "C" Squadron which had been most heavily engaged in X.7. and had suffered considerable casualties. By this time the 5th. Australian Division had reached and were consolidating on their final objective so the 5th. D. Guards rallied and reformed North of HARBONNIERES. During this time 2 squadrons of the Bays under Lt. Col. ING were fighting South of HARBONNIERES. his narrative is as follows :- About 9.15 am. "A" Sqdn" was fired at from South of HARBONNIERES on coming over the ridge, and 2 troops galloped forward and charged the enemy position W.17.a. killing about 20 and capturing 26 prisoners, 2 M.G.'s. Previous to this 2 T.M.'s and about 30 prisoners were rounded up. The Squadron rallied in Valley South of HARBONNIERES and the Right troop killed 7 men and captured 2 prisoners and 2 M.G.'s and 1 Lewis gun by tunnel under railway at W.18.c.8.d. The Squadron advanced again (about 9.30 am) but came under very heavy M.G. Fire from road running South and South

East from HARBONNIERES and had to retire to valley At this time the right troop (Lt. SOLAINI) captured a wagon and 8 horses, and 9 prisoners and killed about 10 Bosche. The Whippets then advanced and tried to clear the line of the HARBONNIERES - ROSIERES road from each flank, one broke down and two were knocked out. The attempt of a Squadron to advance in conjunction with the Whippets came under heavy fire, Capt. BARNARD, Lieuts. SOLAINI, and TOMLINSON being hit and retired to valley. Lieut. HANNON took charge of the Squadron and held the railway line and also faced south as Bosche were fighting their way back South of the Railway, and killed a lot by Hotchkiss Rifle and Rifle fire. A patrol went forward to the railway bridge. About this time 2 wagons came up the road W.23.a., and were captured, and also about 12 enemy killed and 1 Officer captured. During this time I ordered the supporting squadron forward and they galloped over the crest and into the valley South of HARBONNIERES and took up a dismounted position on track in W.17.d. with our M.G. Section. The section R.H.A. took up position on ridge behind about 16.a. ? (this would be about 9.40 am.) A lorry coming out of HARBONNIERES full of Officers kit, was captured the men escaping. The Australians reached us about three quarters of an hour later, and I withdrew my supporting squadron to their horses with a view to advancing mounted, but at this moment a tank reported that a large body of Bosche was massing for a counter attack on our front, and I personally saw, what appeared to be a Battn. marching up in front of us. As the Australians were not very strong I decided to remain in my position and sent my horses back to cover. A counter attack did not develop but any patrols attempting to advance were heavily fired at by M.G.'s which appeared to be in 24.a.

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and to the North.
We got into touch with 15th. Hussars who came up to crossing W.23.a. about 1.30 pm.

The left sqdn. of the Bays under Capt. Sir C. MAGNAY Bart. passed North of BAYONVILLERS before it was clear of the enemy and crossed the old AMIENS defence Line in R.31. in advance of the infantry, but in conjunction with tanks. His advanced troop under Lieut. GARABINE was heavily fired on by a M.G. suffering some casualties, the Squadron took up dismounted position behind railway line in R.31. engaged enemy M.G.'s and drove off a local counter attack while the 5th. Australian Division was consolidating on their final objective behind.

At about 12 noon the G.O.C. decided to attack from HARBONNIERES southwards to assist the 5th. Cavalry Brigade and other troops South of the CHAUMES railway. Lt. Col. ING DSO. was informed and one squadron 5th. D. Guards and 4 more M.G.'s was sent to support him in W.17. The 11th. Hussars were ordered to advance Southwards round the east end of HARBONNIERES while 4 M.G.'s were placed in the Southern exits of the village to assist their advance. "I" Battery in action in W.16.a. Brigade M.G. and 5th. D. Guards less one squadron South Western edge of HARBONNIERES where Capt. MAGNAY's Squadron subsequently rejoined. Owing to heavy M.G. fire from X.7.a., X.13.a. and W.24.a. it was found impossible to advance. At about 3 pm. orders were received for the 1st. Cavalry Brigade to go into reserve in the Valley North of CAIX. The total prisoners captured by the Brigade 1,100, about 60 horses and some transport. It was impossible to count the guns and M.G.'s as these in all cases were left where they were passed and time did not

permit whaling up names of Regiments on the captured material.

In conclusion I would like to say that the Cavalry operations were only made possible by the gallantry and push of the Australians, all Units of which assisted to their utmost in helping us on our way and enabled us to get back our prisoners and to withdraw on completion of our role. During the whole of the operations the closest liaison was kept between the advanced squadrons and Whippet Tanks under Major RYECROFT. His company ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ whenever called on did all they could to further plans.

A. De Witt

Brig. Genl.

11/8/18.
Field.

Commanding 1st. Cavalry Brigade.

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