

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

Engineers

Item number: 14/24/5

Title: 5th Field Company, Australian
Engineers

August 1916



AWM4-14/24/5

WAR DIARY

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Erase heading not required.)

Army Form C. 2118.

122

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F. S. Regs., Part II. and the Staff Manual respectively. Title Pages will be prepared in manuscript.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	VOLUME X	Remarks and references to Appendices
Albert	1/8/16	5 AM	3+4 Sections moved out to Bontalmaison to relieve 7th Field Company remainder of company moved out at 4.30 P.M. arrived 6.30 P.M.		
Pozieres	2/8/16	10.30 PM	1+2 Sections 1200 Infantry set out and dug Emu Trench. Good work by Lieut Bassett and Corporal Thompson.		
Pozieres	3/8/16	5 AM	1+2 Sections preparing tramline trench for jumping off. 3+4 Sections improving Emu & Walkers Avenues.		
Pozieres	4/8/16	9.15 PM	1+2 Sections to follow over after 4 wave from jumping off trench, between Bapaume Road and Tramwayline. Attack a success		
Bontalmaison	5/8/16	4 AM	1+2 Sections returned no casualties. 3+4 Sections & 200 Infantry went and cleaned up Walters Avenue and communication trench from front line to O.G.I. X.5.A.7.5 to X.5.A.7.6 1/2		Lt Bunnell & Lt Bassett in charge. Good work by Lt Bunnell who by himself reconnected Old G.2 for about 100 south of line. also 10th Lane returned and reported trench deserted & very much knocked about. This information handed to Brigade immediately after it was obtained. This work was carried out just after our Infantry occupied the G Trenches north of tramway
Albert	6/8/16	5.30 PM	Company less no 2 Section moved into Albert and bivouaced at TARA HILL. no 2 section reported in 11.30 next day.		
Albert	8/8/16	10.30 AM	moved off for warloy on our way to rest.		
Warloy	9/8/16	8.30 AM	moved for La Vicogne arrived 4 PM.		
La Vicogne	10/8/16	8 AM	moved for Halloy. Arrived 12.30 AM. Rest Area.		
Halloy	15/8/16	3 PM	Orders to be ready to move on 16th back to line, with 5th Brigade.		
Halloy	16/8/16	1 PM	moved to La Vicogne via Ganaples.		
La Vicogne	16/8/16	4.30 PM	Billetted men at La Vicogne		
La Vicogne	17/8/16	11 AM	moved to Vadencourt via Val de maison arrived at 4.30 PM.		
Vadencourt	18/8/16	9.30 AM	moved to Senlis arrived 1.30 PM		
Senlis	20/8/16	2.30 AM	moved to Tara Hills. Albert arrived 4.45 PM.		
Albert	21/8/16	6 AM	Sappers moved out to work on Corp Line from X.11.C.4.7 to X.10.D.4.8 1/2.		
Pozieres	22/8/16	5 AM	Sections on cleaning up communications trenches 1+2 on Walkers 3+4 on Sunken Road. 100 Infantry working with each party.		
Pozieres	23/8/16	5 AM	Work same as on 22nd inst.		
Pozieres	24+25/8/16	5 AM	Work same as on 22nd inst.		

W.A. Henderson

Major,

C.G. 5th Engrs.

A. I. F.

WAR DIARY

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Erase heading not required.)

Army Form 2118.

122

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F. S. Regs., Part II. and the Staff Manual respectively. Title Pages will be prepared in manuscript.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Pozieres	26/8/16	5AM	Opened up new trench from X.5.A.3.1 to X.5.A.12.5 where it is joined on to old union trench which is to be cleaned out. Sections 3 & 4 on Walker's Trench, Reg Trench & Sunken Road.	(200 Infantry with Sappers)
Pozieres	27/8/16	5AM	Ditto both sections with Infantry	
La Boisselle	27/8/16	3PM	Relieved by the 12th Coy H Division and moved back to Albert into Billets.	
Albert	28/8/16	9PM	Orders to move to Warloy by lower Road through Millencourt.	
Warloy	29/8/16	12 noon	Arrived Warloy men billeted.	
Warloy	30/8/16	10PM	Orders to move to La Vicogne. Company to move at 12.45 PM.	
Warloy	31/8/16	12.45PM	Orders cancelled La Vicogne. Company to move to BEAUVAL. (Parade at Warloy at 10 AM. Gen Birdwood presented decorations. Arrived BEAUVAL 6 PM.	

W. A. Henderson

Major,
C. G. 5th Engrs.
A. I. F.

**** R E M A R K S. ****

Points drawn from Operation at POZIERES in which 5th. Field Company took part between the dates 23rd. July to 8th. August, 1916.

- (a) On night 24th./25th. July. The order to dig a Strong Point within 200 yards of the German line during an attack especially as the Enemy line directly opposite the post was not to be captured (the objective being a portion of the enemies trenches on the left flank) looked on the face of the order an impossible task.

The Sappers work was therefore carried out before Zero Hour and the Infantry moved forward to dig in during the attack and had heavy casualties from the occupied portion of trench, and had to retire without digging in, proving that at so close a distance it was impossible to dig in during an attack.

- (b) On night 1st./2nd. August. The congestion in trenches pointed to the fact that narrow ~~xxx~~ deep trenches are a danger both (1) As regards the difficulty of one man passing another. (2) The danger from being buried by a shell burst near the trench and blowing it in. (3) It also brought to notice that a carefully worked out time table must be prepared so that troops moving up will not all collect at the same time. (4) Two communication trenches to each Battalion Sector necessary and traffic regulated one way in and one out.

- (c) On night 2nd./3rd. August. The method of digging a jumping off trench preparatorily to an attack is not a satisfactory arrangement. Always leads to heavy casualties, both for the digging party and the Infantry the following night. The tape line is by far the better method as this can be laid down the night the attack is to be made and the enemy do not get any information that an attack is intended.

W A Henderson

Lieut.Colonel,
C.R.E., 1st. Australian Division.

122

28th. Relieved by 7th. Field Company. 5th. Company moved back to Billets in ALBERT.

29th. Company Resting.

30th. Company working on roads through LA BOISELLE VILLAGE. Clearing same for traffic.

31st. Company resting. Warned to move up to relieve 7th. Field Company on Tuesday 1st. August. Five men badly wounded by shell in billets.

CONTALMAISON. Aug. 1st. 3 & 4 Sections moved up at 5 a.m. from ALBERT. 1 & 2 Sections moved up at 4 p.m. Instructions to dig two communication trenches to link up with jumping off trench to be dug by 2nd. Pioneers on night 1/2nd. August.

2nd. Laid out WALKERS AVENUE from X.5.c.5.3. to X.5.a.6.3. and COPSE AVENUE from X.5.c.2.8. to TRAM LINE TRENCH. 1 & 2 Sections moved up with 200 attached infantry. Great congestion in trenches. Infantry working parties, ration parties all jammed in trenches. Heavy shelling. Too many troops in the trenches at same time. 3 & 4 Sections and 300 Infantry carried on improving trenches from 8.30 a.m. until 1 p.m.

3rd. Attempt to dig jumping off trench, Shewn on Map as UNION TRENCH abandoned. Heavy casualties in attempting to do it and blown out as soon as dug. TRAM LINE TRENCH to be used. 1 & 2 Sections putting in pegs and cutting foot holds for infantry to get out of trench. 3 & 4 Sections clearing and improving WALKERS & COPSE AVENUES for the attack on night 4/5th. August.

4th. 3 & 4 Sections with 80 Infantry preparing TRAMLINE TRENCH and clearing out shell blows in COPSE and WALKERS AVENUES. 20th. Battalion attacking on 5th. Brigade sector at 11.30 p.m. 1 & 2 Sections going over in the attack.

5th. All objectives taken. 1 & 2 Sections with attached infantry linked up "O.G." 1 & 2 and carried trench forward to line of objectives DOT TRENCH and returned at 7 a.m. Sections 3 & 4 with 200 Infantry improved and completed trench back to WALKERS AVENUE during day and came under very heavy fire. Several casualties amongst Infantry, 2 sappers wounded.

6th. 1. 3 & 4 Sections maintenance work on Communication trenches. Four men wounded.

7th. 2 & 3 Sections on maintenance work. Four Sappers wounded. Orders that the 4th. Division will relieve the 2nd. Division.

8th. Relieved by 4th. Field Company and moved back to WALDOY.

W A Henderson

Lieut. Colonel,
C.R.E., 1st. Australian Division.