

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

Artillery

Item number: 13/35/18

Title: Headquarters, 7th Australian Field
Artillery Brigade

April 1918



AWM4-13/35/18

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Australian Imperial Force.

WAR DIARY

OF

7th AUST. FIELD ARTILLERY BRIGADE

FOR

APRIL

1918

Signature of Officer compiling

R. H. Honey

Lieut

Signature of Officer Commanding

[Signature]

Lieut-Col

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118.

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.

APRIL, 1918.

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

7th AUST. FIELD ARTILLERY BRIGADE.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	APRIL			
	1st			
	BRICK WORKS			
	J. 19. b.			
	Sheet 62D			
	1/40,000			
			During the morning Brigade Headquarters was heavily shelled - The C.O., Lieut-Col CHURCHUS D.S.O., the Adjutant, Capt. G.J. Greenshields and the Orderly Officer, Lieut. K.C. Radford were killed in the Office. - The C.O. 8th Aust. F.A. Bde assumed command of both Brigades until a new Headquarters Staff consisting of Lieut-Col T.B.W. JAMES D.S.O., C.O., - Lieut. R.R. SMITH M.C., Adjutant, and Lieut W.R. BATES Orderly Officer were appointed in the afternoon, when the Administrative command reverted to the 7th Aust. F.A. Bde, the Tactical command remaining with 8th Aust. F.A. Bde temporarily.	
			Instructions were received from 3rd Aust. D.A. regarding destruction of Bridges over the ANCRE and SOMME Rivers.	App. No 1.
	2nd.		T/3/480 issued giving location of Brigade Administrative Hqrs at HEILLY At 6 p.m. the 7th Brigade became a Sub-Group of the 8th Aust. F.A. Bde under Lieut-Col. ALLSOP, re-assuming command (tactical) of it's own Batteries. - Tactical Bde. Hqrs were located in Shooting Box at J. 19. c. 8.5. Intelligence Summaries for the period 1-4-18 to 5-4-18 were compiled by 8th Bgde. Group.	
	3rd		The usual harassing fire on enemy roads, billets and movements was maintained during day and night. Visibility was good enabling O.P. Officers to engage several excellent opportunity targets, especially traffic on roads leading into Morlancourt. - Tactical Instructions were issued direct to Batteries by the Group to enable the new Headquarters to become cognisant with the situation.	
	4th		D.A. Instructions Nos. 30 and 31 received concerning the general action of the Artillery with special reference to the course to be adopted in case of enemy bombardment	App. No. 3
	5th		The enemy's artillery fire for the period showed increased activity - The back areas were shelled intermittently especially MERICOURT, HEILLY and the Brickworks. - Enemy aircraft were very active crossing our lines at frequent intervals during the day. - 17 enemy balloons were visible from Brigade O.P. Brigade Hqrs Wagon Lines which had been at Heilly since arriving on the SOMME moved to Franvillers.	

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

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7th ASUT. FIELD ARTILLERY BRIGADE.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	<u>April</u> 6th		18-pdrs fired 450 rounds harassing fire on Roads in E.26.c. & d and on S.O.S. Lines.- Hostile fire was again heavy - 400 rounds fell on the Group Sector. Areas receiving most being the Battery positions in J.16.d. and J.11.b.- One enemy plane crossed our lines and dropped bombs on J.8. and J.14. - This plane was eventually brought down in flames. Visibility fair. 8th Brigade O.O. No.4 issued for a practice barrage East of S.O.S. Lines	App. 4
	7th		Our guns were very busy during the period. - 18-pdrs fired 1400 rounds and Hows.200 rds. mostly on enemy cavalry and concentrations against the Division on our right, South of the Somme in P.30 and Q.2. where the enemy was attacking. - Hostile fire was below normal on our front probably owing to most of the enemy guns being employed to support his attack South of the Somme - considerable aircraft activity on both sides - Visibility fair.	
	8th		Our 18-pdrs fired 230 rounds on Group concentration on SAILLY LAURETTE and vicinity; Hows. expended 130 rounds during the same shoot and on working parties in K.20.b. Hostile fire was normal on Areas J.10.m J.17. and J.16. - Aerial activity slight owing to poor visibility T/16 issued to Batteries in connection with a bombardment to be carried out on morning of 9th T/17 issued - Area shoot on K.31 and Saily Laurette T/22 issued - List of Targets obtained from Aerial Photos obtained-issued to Batteries	App. 5 " 5a " 7
	9th		1040 rounds 18-pdr and 400 4.5 How were expended in harassing fire on points in Battery Sectors as per Intelligence Summary. - Hostile fire considerably above normal approx. 3500 rounds falling on MERICOURT and vicinity of J.14 J.15 J.9. several hundred rounds being fired from captured 18-pdrs - visibility low. Instructions issued to Batteries for Area shoot on K.25, K.31 and J.36 on 10-4-18	App. 5b
	10th		Usual harassing fire was carried out by 18-pdrs and Hows the latter paying special attention to enemy Batteries - hostile fire was normal about 300 rounds falling on areas, J.11, J.16. and J.17. - Enemy aircraft active, visibility fair. T/31 issued to Batteries - Group Area shoot on K.26, K.32 and K.33	App. 5c

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	APRIL. 11th		In addition to usual harassing fire, 18-pdrs expended 180 rounds and 4.5" Hows 60 rounds on Group concentration as per appendix 5c - Enemy fire was below normal - with fair visibility there was much aerial activity on both sides. T/35 issued to Batteries - Area shoots on K.13 and K.19	App. 5d
	12th		1000 rounds 18-pdr were expended on Roads and movement. - 4.5 Hows engaged traffic on Road In K.10.c., obtaining two direct hits on Wagons. - Enemy artillery was quiet - Aircraft were active on both sides. 3rd Aust. Div. Standing received T/3/486 issued to Batteries - Practice Barrage on S.O.S. Lines	App 10. App 11
	13th		Our 18-pdrs were very active during the day and night, firing 1500 rounds harassing fire on enemy trenches and M.G.'s - 4.5 Hows expended 500 rounds including an N.F. Call on hostile Battery in K.14.d.5.8. - Hostile fire was below normal. - Enemy aeroplanes flew low over the SOMME Valley in two occasions. - Visibility low. T/3/488 issued to Batteries - Two minor operations on enemy posts in K.13.	App 12
	14th		In addition to the usual harassing fire, 18-pdrs expended 640 rounds and Hows 220 rounds on Area shoots and enemy posts as per App. No.12. - Hostile fire was normal except for an Area shoot of 200 rounds on J.16, 17. and 18 - Visibility low and no aircraft activity. T/3/489 issued to Batteries - Instructions re use of S.O.S. signal. 7th Bde C.O. No.9 issued - Bombardment to cover a minor operation by our Infantry	App. 14 App 15
	15th		Our harassing fire showed a big increase. 1500 rounds 18-pdr and 4.5 How were expended including 680 rounds during a minor operation by the infantry as per C.O. No.9 - Enemy fire showed a slight increase especially in the direction of Albert. - Aircraft nil and visibility low T/3/496 issued to Batteries - Test of S.O.S. Lines. 7th F.A.Bde C.O. No.10 issued - Area shoot on K.25, 26., 31 and 32.	App 16 App 17
	16th		Our artillery fired 1000 rounds harassing fire, paying special attention to re-entrant in K.25 in addition to 500 rounds as per C.O. No.10 - Hostile fire was normal mainly in Maret Wood	

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	APRIL.			
	16th (ctd)		and vicinity. - Visibility bad. 7th F.A.Bde O.O. No.11 issued - Practice Barrage On S.O.S. Lines	App 17
	17th		18-pdrs expended 220 rounds on S.O.S. Lines as per O.O. No.11, 550 rounds in Counter Preparation as well as the usual harassing fire - 4.5 Hows fired 300 rounds on above targets including an M.F. Call on K.21.b.2.6. - Hostile fire was normal about 500 rounds falling in Marett Wood, Sailly Laurette and Squares J.16. and J.17. - Enemy aircraft were active during the afternoon. One enemy plane flew low over our O.P. which was afterwards shelled - An enemy propaganda balloon ascended from K.13.d. 7th Bde O.O. No.12 issued - Area shoots on K.13 and 19 T/3/509	App 21
	18th		Our harassing fire was again increased in volume, 18-pdrs expending 1800 on K.13, 19, 26 32 and K.20. - 4.5 Hows fired 700 rounds on the same targets - enemy artillery was quiet, light shelling being reported on J.9, J.10, and Marett Wood - Visibility low and there was no aircraft activity. 7th Bde O.O. No.13 issued - Area Shoots on K.7. K.13 and K22 squares.	App 22
	19th		Apart from the usual harassing fire, 18-pdrs fired 150 rounds on enemy post at P.14.b.1.1. and 50 rounds on P.15.d.8.7. with aeroplane observation - The Hows expended 300 rounds gas on enemy roads, billets and assembly areas. - enemy artillery was very lively, some 700 rds of all calibres falling on areas J.22m J.4 J.9., and J.12. - Our aeroplanes were very active and 4 M.F. Calls were answered during the afternoon. T/3/523 issued to Batteries - List of points and areas most used by the enemy 27th Battery ran one gun forward to a position, J.22.b.2.3. to engage enemy in the open near wood at P.14.b.0.5.	App 24
	20th		The usual amount of harassing fire was carried out by both 18-pdrs and Hows, principally at night. 150 rounds of 4.5 Gas shell were fired into re-entrant at K.26.c. and on a hostile Battery in K.15.c.2.2. - Hostile fire showed a slight increase especially on areas J.16, 18 and J.24 - Considerable movement of trains was noticed in enemy back areas. T/3/529 issued to Batteries - ordering Counter Preparation during the morning D. D. & L., London, E.C. (A10266) Wt W5300/P713 750,000 2/18 Sch. 82 Forms/C2118/16	APP 25

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	APRIL. 21st		<p>Our artillery was very active especially during the morning, over 3000 rounds being expended on Counter Preparation; in addition to harassing fire on Morlencourt and enemy trenches. - Enemy artillery fire was above normal especially in areas J.10.c., J.11.a., J.16 and J.17. - The 107th How Battery was shelled intermittently during the night with 4.2 H.E. from the general direction of K.21. - Enemy aircraft were again very active. - 12 enemy planes crossed our lines early in the evening. - A Red Triplane flown by Baron Richtofne was brought down at J.19.b.5.4.</p> <p>7th Bde O.O. No.14 was issued - Change of Battery Sectors - 11th Aust. Inf. Bde front moving Northwards.</p>	App 27
	22nd		<p>Usual harassing fire was carried out by 18-pdrs on movement and traffic etc., - 4.5 Hows registered on a hostile battery at K.31.b.7.7. with aeroplane observation obtaining 40 O.Ks During the night 150 rounds gas were expended on the same battery - During the period enemy artillery fire was confined to light harassing fire and sniping at movement. - At noon, about 100 rounds 77mm gas shell fell in J.10. and J.11. - Enemy planes were very active and crossed our lines on several occasions. A great deal of enemy movement was observed on the Bray-Albert, Bray-Meaulte Road and was engaged by our Heavies.</p> <p>T/3/538 issued to Batteries - Additional instruction on Counter Preparation</p> <p>7th Bde O.O. No.15 issued - Gas Bombardment by 107th Battery</p>	App.28 App 29
	23rd		<p>Batteries continued with their usual harassing fire, no special shoots being carried out. During the morning enemy artillery was active, 100 rounds falling on J.17.d. from direction La Motte - Increased activity in the air was noticed on both sides.</p> <p>7th Bde O.O. No.16 issued - Alteration to F.L. and S.O.S. Lines</p> <p>" " " No.17 " - Counter Preparation during night of 23rd/24th</p> <p>T/3/547 issued to Batteries - Testing of new S.O.S. Lines</p> <p>T/3/548 issued to Bat 107th Bty - Gas Bombardment</p>	App 27a App 30 App 27b App 29a

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	APRIL			
	24th		<p>At 3.50 a.m. the enemy opened a heavy bombardment over the whole of the Corps Front of H.E. and gas shell in conjunction with an attack some hours later South of the Somme and at Villers Brettoneux. Batteries Roads and back areas received particular attention and Brigade Hqrs was heavily shelled with 77mm gas. Numerous casualties were caused early in the morning namely - Lieut. Smith (Adjutant), Lieut. Bates (Orderly Officer), Lieut. Cook (Signal Officer) Capt. Morshead (Chaplain) 3 clerks and 15 Signallers. Their places were taken by Lieut. Watson (Adjutant), Lieut. Money M.C. (Orderly Officer) and 2/Lieut George (Signal Officer). - Late in the afternoon Brigade Headquarters moved to it's rear Office at Heilly. Lieut-Col James D.S.O., was evacuated gassed, and the command of both Brigades passed again to Lieut-Col Allsop temporarily. At midnight, 8th F.A.Bde Hqrs moved to Heilly with the 11th Aust. Inf. Bde.</p> <p>3rd D.A. O.O. No.51 received - Disposition of Artillery groups and Amendments.</p>	App 31
	25th		<p>Major J.M. Irwin appointed to command 7th Aust. F.A. Bde during temporary absence of Lieut-Col James D.S.O. - Tactical command of Batteries remained with 8th Aust. F.A.Bde who compiled Intelligence Summaries etc.</p> <p>3rd D.A. O.O. No.52 received - Relief of 7th Aust. F.A.Bde by 108th Army Bgde, R.F.A. by noon 26th April.</p>	App 32
	26th		<p>At 12 noon the Brigade relief was completed. - The 7th F.A.Bde now came under the Tactical and Administrative command of Major J.M. Irwin and formed a Sub-group of the Left Artillery Group under Lt-Col. Cohen C.M.G., D.S.O. - Headquarters remained in Heilly and Batteries took over the positions of the 108th Army Brigade R.F.A. in J.l.a. and C.20.d.</p> <p>3rd D.A. O.O. No.53 received - Superimposition of Brigade over the whole of the Div. Front</p>	App 33
	27th		<p>Batteries did not move but Tactical Brigade Hqrs moved to J.l.a.l.8. and Administrative Hqrs to Franvillers.</p>	
	29th to 30th		<p>7th Aust. F.A.Bde was now superimposed over the Divisional Front with instructions not to fire except on special orders from D.A. The Batteries were in action, but had no S.O.S. Lines or Battery Sectors. O.P.'s were not manned nor were Intelligence Summaries forwarded D.A. No shooting was done during this period.</p>	

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
			<p>A Map (Sheet 62D 1/40,000) is attached, showing positions of Headquarters and Batteries O.P's and Wagon Lines and also S.O.S. Lines during April.</p> <p>During the early part of the month the situation remained the same as at the latter end of March. The enemy was harassed continually night and day; each Battery firing 300 rounds per diem in addition to any special shoots or gas bombardments ordered by Group. Later, this amount was considerably increased by Counter Preparation Shoots at a time when an enemy attack seemed imminent.</p> <p>Full advantage was taken of the comparative lull in the fighting to improve defensive measures. Alternative routes across the Rivers were built, and Batteries selected 2nd Zone Positions (to cover the Infantry's second Zone of defence) in the neighbourhood of La Houssoye and 3rd Zone Positions near Frechencourt. Early in April the gun limbers were withdrawn from their advanced positions to the Battery Wagon Lines between Heilly and Franvillers, but remained at the latter when the Wagon Lines were moved in April 24th to positions near Frechencourt.</p> <p>Casualties during the period were light among the Batteries, especially in view of the fact that all Battery positions and Roads were subjected to a very heavy gas Bombardment on 24th April when the enemy attacked at Villers Brettoneux. Brigade Hqrs suffered heavily on 1st April, the day Lieut-Col Churchus (D.S.O (C.O.), Capt. Greenshields (Adjutant) and Lieut Radford (Orderly Officer) were killed by a direct hit from a 5.9 shell on the office. They were buried the same afternoon at the Heilly Cemetery, Capt. Morshead officiating. Again on April, 24th, Lieut-Col T.B.W. James D.S.O. (C.O.) Lieut. R.R.Smith M.C. (Adj) Lieut W.R.Bates (Orderly Officer), Lieut J.M.Cook M.M. (Sig. Officer) Capt. Morshead (Chaplain) and 23 other ranks were gassed at the shooting Box.</p> <p>From April 26th onwards the Brigade was in reserve, Batteries being in positions of observation superimposed over the whole of the Div. Front. No shooting was done beyond checking Zero Lines, though on several occasions portions of the front were taken over for a few hours whilst the Gm ups covering them were engaged on special operations. Detachments at the guns were reduced to a minimum, the majority of the personnel remaining at the Wagon Lines. Cricket and Baseball Competitions were arranged by Batteries and American Teams, the latter being from neighbouring American Units of Engineers and Tunnellers.(The chief object was to give the personnel as much rest as possible). The remainder of the time was spent in improving the gun positions and Wagon Lines.</p> <p>Lieut Commanding, 7th Aust. Field Artillery Brigade. Lieut-Col</p>	

WAR DIARY

OF

7th AUST. FIELD ARTILLERY BRIGADE.

FOR

A P R I L

1918

LIST OF APPENDICES.

No.	Subject.
Appendix No	1. 3/rd. Div. S.G./401/2/4 re destruction of Bridges overs Rivers ANCRE and SOMME dated 29-3-18 (one copy)
	2. Location of Bde. Hqrs on 2-4-18 do
	3 3rd D.A. Instructions Nos. 30 & 31 dated 4-4-18
	4 8th Aust F.A.Group O.O. No.4. dated 6-4-18 (in dup)
	- Practice barrage East of S.O.S. Lines.
	5 T/16 dated 8-4-18 (in dup)m- bombardment carried out on 9-4-18
	5a T/17 dated 8-4-18 (one copy) - Area shoot over SAILLY LAURETTE.
	5b 8th Bde Group S/3 dated 9-4-18 (one copy) - Group Area Shoot.
	5c T/31 dated 10-4-18 (in dup) Group Bombardment.
	5d T/35 dated 11-4-18 (in dup) - do
	6 Appreciation from 4th Aust. Div. dated 7-4-18 (in dup)
	7 T/22 dated 8-4-18 - list of targets obtained from aerial photographs.
	8 G.S. Circular No.75a (in dup).- enemy's use of our steel Helmets.
	9 Address by Div. Commander dated 11-4-18 (one copy)
	10 3rd Aust. Div. Standing Orders (one copy)
	10a Amendment to 3rd Div. Standing Orders (in trip)
	11 T/3/486 dated 12-4-18 (in dup) - Practice Barrage
	12 T/3/488 dated 13-3-18 (in dup) - 2 minor operations.
	13 3rd Aust. Div. Cir. Memo dated 13-4-18 (one copy)
	14 T/3/489 dated 14-4-18 (in trip) - Instructions re S.O.S. Signal.
	15 7th Aust. F.A.Bde O.O. No.9 dated 14-4-18 (in trip) - to cover a minor operation by Infantry.
	16 T/3/496 dated 14-4-18 (in dup) - Test of S.O.S. Lines.
	17 7th F.A.Bde O.O. No.10 dated 13-4-18 (in trip) - Area Shoot.
	18 Report by Lt-Col James D.S.O. on the work of the late Capt Greenshields dated 17-4-18 (in trip)
	19 7th F.A.Bde O.O. No.11 dated 16-4-18 (in trip)- Practice Barrage.
	20 Daily Intelligence Summaries in Trip
	21 7th F.A.Bde O.O. No.12 and T/3/509 (in trip) - Area shoots
	22 7th F.A.Bde O.O. No.13 dated 18-4-18 (in trip) do
	23 Copy of tracing showing likely enemy assembly places.
	24 List of Points to be kept under harassing fire by Batteries (in trip)
	25 T/3/539 dated 20-4-18 (in trip) - Counter Preparation.
	26 Report by Lt-Col James D.S.O. (in trip) - Gun taken forward by 27th Battery
	27 7th F.A.Bde O.O. No.14 dated 21-4-18 (in trip) - alteration to S.O.S. Lines and F.L. owing to sideslip by 11th Aust. Inf. Bde.

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No.	Subject.
Appendix No 27a	7th F.A.Bde O.O. No.16 dated 23-4-18 (in trip) - further alterations to F.L. and S.O.S. Lines.
27b	T/3/547 dated 23-4-18 (in trip) - Test of new S.O.S.
28	T/3/538 dated 24-4-18 (one copy) - Instructions re Counter Preparation
29	7th F.A.Bde O.O. No.15 dated 22-4-18 (in trip) - Gas Bombardment by 107th Battery
29a	T/3/548 dated 23-4-18 (in trip) - Gas Bombardment.
30	7th F.A.Bde O.O. No.17 dated 23-4-18 (in trip) - Ordering Counter Preparation.
31	3rd Aust. D.A. O.O. No.51 dated 24-4-18 (one copy) - Disposition of Artillery covering 3rd Div. Front.
31a	3rd Aust. D.A. O.O. No.52 (in dup) and Left Grp. O.O. No.1 (one copy) dated 25-4-18 - relief of 7th Aust F.A.Bde by 108th Army Bde R.F.A.
32	Instructions re Defence and occupation of 2nd Zone positions.
33	3rd Aust. D.A. O.O. No.53 dated 26-4-18 (one copy) - Superimposition of 7th Aust. F.A.Bde over whole of Div. Front.
34	T/3/552 dated 24-4-18 (one copy) - Action to be taken in event of enemy bombardment.
35	Correspondence File.
36	Returns showing strength of Brigade at beginning and end month, casualties incurred during the month and schools attended during the month.



133.

Appendices were not received.

Unit was written to by 1 A.W.A.R.
and reported copies not available.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'M.R.', is located to the right of the typed text.

2 A.W.B.