

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

Artillery

Item number: 13/33/9

Title: Headquarters, 5th Australian Field
Artillery Brigade

August 1916



AWM4-13/33/9

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Australian Imperial Force.

WAR DIARY

OF

5th Field Artillery Brigade

FOR

August 1916

Signature of Officer compiling

W. H. Smith
Adjutant
5th F.A. Brigade.

Signature of Officer Commanding

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118. 75

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.

or
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
POZIERES.	1.8.16		2.20 p.m. Brigade salvoes were fired for checking the line, height of bursts, etc. The 105th. How. Battery fired 150 rounds on R.34.d.5.8. to R.34.a.9.0. 18-pounder Batteries fired at usual slow rate lifting to second line at 1.45 p.m.	
	2.8.16		9 p.m. Two 18-pounders and one How. Battery fired in co-operation with an attack by the 6th. Infantry Brigade, after continuing at a slow rate.	
	3.8.16		Continuing bombardment as usual. Morning very hazy, observation most difficult. 8.45 p.m. to 9 p.m. Barrage again placed around strong point and the Infantry made another attempt to take it. Our 18-pounders continued slow barrage on O.G.1 and O.G.2 throughout the day - rate 100 round per Brigade per hour. 10 p.m. 18-pounders commenced intense bombardment of O.G.1 and O.G.2. Enemy retaliated with Gas and Lachrymatory shells. 11.30 p.m. Enemy heavily bombarded POZIERES.	
	4.8.16		Enemy fire slackened during early morning. Our 18-pounders searched areas from enemy front line toward MARTINPUICH and COURCELETTE. Special bombardment carried out. Between 3.20 and 3.30 a.m. all fire ceased. 3.30 to 3.33 a.m. Intense fire by 18-pounders on O.G.1. Rate 4 rounds per gun per min. 3.33 to 3.36 a.m. O.G.2 at same rate. 3.36 to 3.39 a.m. O.G.1. 3.39 to 3.50 a.m. Ordinary barrage resumed. 18-pounders continued slow barrage throughout the day.	
	5.8.16		8 a.m. Difficulty experienced with buffer springs on account of the continuous firing. Enemy's fire heavy throughout the day. Our Infantry held O.G.2 until forced out by enemy fire when they retired to O.G.1. O.G.2 almost obliterated. Our Infantry re-occupied O.G.2 during the evening. No counter attack eventuated (ref. Map Sheets 57d. 62d. 1/40,000).	
	6.8.16		6 a.m. Enemy shelling front line, SAUSAGE VALLEY, and Batteries' Wagon Lines with 4.2 5.9 and Lachrymatory shells. POZIERES continues to be shelled by the enemy. Telephonic	

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POZIERES.	6.8.16		<p>communications difficult on account of enemy shell fire.</p> <p>8.40 a.m. Enemy reported bringing up supplies to MOUQUET FARM.</p> <p>9.43 a.m. O.G.2 shelled.</p> <p>10 a.m. to noon. MAMETZ VALLEY and Communication trenches were shelled.</p> <p>12.25 p.m. Enemy reported massing as if preparing for counter attack on O.G.2.</p> <p>During the afternoon the enemy artillery and aircraft were very active.</p> <p>9 p.m. to 4 a.m. Normal night barrage carried out. Batteries to search back 600 yards beyond barrage zones in 100 yards lifts and dropping by 100 yards at intermediate fifties. Salvo to be fired at each range. Each Battery to carry out barrage one per hour. Rates of fire - 1 round per 18-pounder Battery per minute till midnight and from then till 4 a.m. at 100 rounds per Brigade per hour.</p> <p>Zone covered by Batteries between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. was R.34.b.0.0. to R.35.a.0.4.</p>	
	7.8.16		<p>2 a.m. O.G.1 and O.G.2 heavily shelled by the enemy.</p> <p>6.15 a.m. Reported enemy attack on O.G.2. Brigade immediately opened on Barrage zone and continued till 6.40 a.m. when all was reported quiet.</p> <p>11 a.m. Opened slow barrage on allotted zone.</p> <p>3.15 p.m. One 18-pounder Battery switched onto two Battery Positions at R.29.a.2.9. and R.29.a.9.9. and fired 80 rounds.</p> <p>7 p.m. Barrage continues.</p> <p>All night enemy shelled TARA HILL, POZIERES and vicinity with heavy shells.</p>	
	8.8.16		<p>Considerable aerial activity during morning. Slow barrage maintained on enemy's communications. Batteries checked zones for operation eventuating 9th. instant.</p> <p>5.50 p.m. Our Heavy Artillery and Trench Mortars shelled enemy's trenches in vicinity of MOUQUET FARM.</p> <p>9.20 p.m. Under cover of our fire the 4th. Division attached towards MOUQUET FARM. Some trenches captured and prisoners taken. (For particulars of operation see 2nd. D.A.H.Q. War Diary August 1916, Order No. 52, pages 27, 31 and 26.)</p>	
	9.8.16		<p>5th. F.A. Brigade LAHORE Artillery relieved Brigade at 3 p.m. Brigade withdrew to Wagon Lines.</p>	

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VAL-DE-MAISON.	10.8.16		9 a.m. Brigade trekked to VAL-DE-MAISON in accordance with Order R/3 on type pages 34 and 35 of 2nd. D.A.H.Q. War Diary for August 1916. (Maps LENS 1/100,000)	
ST. LEDGER.	11.8.16		9.30 a.m. Brigade after bivouacing for the night at VAL-DE-MAISON continued the march to ST. LEDGER, (Maps LENS 1/100,000) arriving at 3 p.m.	
	12.8.16		All Batteries and Brigade H.Q. are camped in a field together, tents and bivouacs are the only accomodation for other ranks. Officers were billeted in the town. 11 a.m. Church Parade was held at 12th. Battery Wagon Lines.	
	13.8.16		Time was fully occupied by overhauling and cleaning equipment and harness and to affecting necessary repairs. Gun drill, driving drill, fuze setting, laying and a little manoeuvring by Batteries was carried out. The latter was difficult on account of the scarcity of uncultivated fields.	
	15.8.16			
	16.8.16		Any spare time after parades (of which there was little) was fully occupied by sports cricket etc. and at 5.15 p.m. while a game was in progress, urgent instructions were received (vide Order 56 on the page 40 of 2nd. D.A.H.Q. War Diary for August 1916.), to trek to VADENCOURT WOOD at 7 p.m. (LENS 11. 1/100,000) The march was more or less a forced one, marching till 3 a.m.	
BRICKFIELDS, ALBERT.	17.8.16		When we arrived at VADENCOURT WOOD a halt was made on the roadside for 3 hours, the march was continued at 6.30 a.m. arriving at the Brickfields, ALBERT at 11 a.m. The C.O. and Battery Commanders went forward to reconnoitre. The positions selected were in MASH VALLEY in vicinity of LA BOISELLE and OVILLERS-LA-BOISELLE and Brigade is to go into the line under the Tactical Control of the Divisional LAHORE Artillery.	
LA-BOISELLE and MASH-VALLEY.	18.8.16		Batteries were brought into positions at 10 a.m. and registrations carried out after much difficulty as a telephone line could not be maintained to the front line on account of severe enemy shell fire. The zone allotted the Brigade was R.34.b.40.90 to R.34.b.60.33. 9 p.m. An Operation was commenced in support of an attack made by 1st. Aust. Inf. Brigade. Our Barrage continued throughout the night at the rate of 35 rounds per Brigade per hour.	

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	19.8.16		Barrage continues at rate of 20 rounds per Brigade Per hour. Zero Lines were again checked.as it was possible to maintain communication.	
	20.8.16		Barrage continues. Communications were established with Front Line and good registrations were carried out. The Batteries' corrections were practically nil. Several Brigade Salvoes were fired, concentrated on centre of Brigade zone. The enemy is very quiet.	
	21.8.16		Barrage Zones and Registrations checked. Lieut. L.R. BLAKE made a survey of our front line trenches, which at this time were was invaluable information as nobody could say definitely what ground was held by us. (Lieut. L.R. BLAKE was slightly wounded on this occassion and was afterwards awarded the Military Cross for his excellent work.) An operation in support of the 1st. Aust. Inf. Brigade was carried out.	
	22.8.16		Barrage continues. Enemy is retaliating with intermittent heavy shelling.	
	23.8.16		9 a.m. 2nd. D.A.H.Q. came into the line and then Brigade came under the Tactical Control of our own C.R.A. Brig. General G.J. JOHNSON, C.B., V.D. New zone allotted R.35.d.30.50 - R.35.a.60.10. Our barrage continued throughout the day at 20 rounds per Brigade per hour. (Maps, 57d and 62d - 1/40,000) One Gun of 13th. Battery was hit and enemy shellfire in and around Battery Positions caused several casualties.	
	24.8.16		A continuous barrage, more or less, is being maintained at a slow rate. 8 a.m. Enemy not very active. 4.10 p.m. An attack on our left South of THIEPVAL was commenced by 25th. and 48th. Divs. 5.45 p.m. An attack on enemy front line on our right was commenced by the 15th. Corps. We maintained out ordinary night barrage on enemy's front line and searched their communications. 10.30 p.m. Enemy shelled our positions with a few gas and lachrymatory shells.	
	25.8.16		Registration by aeroplane was successfully carried out on enemy front line on new zone. Barrage continues. Very quiet in early morning. Noon. Great aerial activity was displayed and there were many combats. Our barrage continues at slow rate on enemy front line.	

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LA-BOISELLE.	25.8.16		7 p.m. Enemy placed heavy barrage on POZIERES and our front line. Many green rockets fired by the enemy in vicinity of MOUQUET FARM. The rate of our barrage was increased in this area.	
	26.8.16		4 a.m. Several rockets of various colours were sent up by the enemy. 4.45 a.m. 6th. Aust. Inf. Brigade attacked in vicinity of MOUQUET FARM and were supported by our artillery. (see 2nd. D.A.H.Q. Order No.1 typed page 51, of 2nd.D.A.H.Q. War Diary for August 1916). The objective not altogether being reached necessitated a strong barrage being maintained during the day, which at times quickened to very fast rate as men were seen massing at points. The barrage however greatly assisted in preventing a counter attack. 4.30 p.m. Fired slackened to ordinary duty rate. 9 p.m. Our night barrage increased to 60 round per Brigade per hour, with Howitzers doing 10 rounds per hour on Cross roads R.28.c.30.90 and R.28.d.50.70. 12.30 p.m. one of our aeroplanes crashed. 6 p.m. Enemy carrying out relief and received attention from our guns.	
	27.8.16		Hazy and wet. Observation difficult. Barrage continued at slow rate. 105th. How. Battery fired 300 rounds on point R.28.d.50.70 and trenches running N.E. and W. of this point, it was also registered by aeroplane observation. 7.15 p.m. Rate of fire reduced 10 rounds per hour. 10.15 p.m. Normal barrage resumed from R.35.d.30.50 to R.35.a.60.10. at 30 rounds per hour and are now covering 7th. A.I. Brigade since they relieved the 5th. A.I. Brigade.	
	28.8.16		A comparatively quiet day. Barrage as usual with a six rounds hard bombardment of the Brigade zone allotted on the 26th. for the attack. as per Rate did not increase at night.	
	29.8.16		Barrage continues. Howitzer bombarded trenches radiating from R.28.d.40.70 between 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. 200 rounds being fired. 11 p.m. Attack by 4th. Aust. Inf. Brigade commenced, supported by our artillery; at conclusion of which normal barrage resumed. Raining intermittently during day, heavy at night.	
	30.8.16		Very wet throughout day and night. Barrage continues at usual rate.	
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