

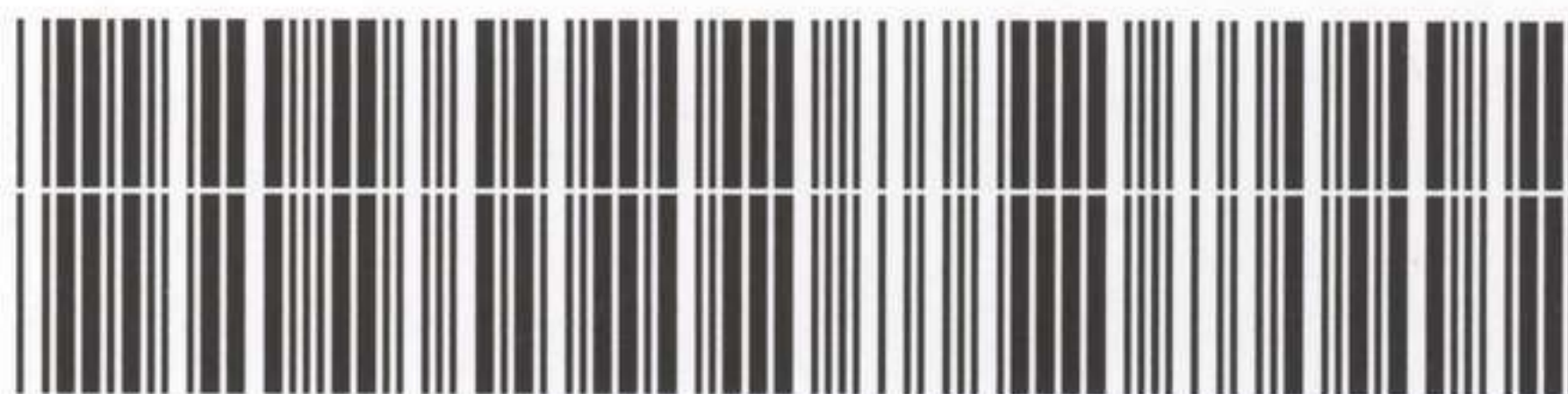
AWM4
Australian Imperial Force unit war diaries,
1914-18 War

Infantry

Item number: 23/73/26

Title: 56th Infantry Battalion

March 1918



AWM4-23/73/26

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264

Australian Imperial Force.

WAR DIARY

OF

56th Battalion A.I.F.

FOR

March 1918

Signature of Officer compiling

Williamson Capt.

Signature of Officer Commanding

W. D. Doherty Lt Col.

WAR DIARY

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
NEW BDE. DUGOUTS MARCH WYTSCHAETE 1.	Friday		<p>A dull cold day. Showery in the afternoon. Conditions for aircraft were bad and artillery on both sides was quiet.</p> <p>During the morning the C.O. and Assistant Adjutant visited all Companies and inspected dugouts and shelters. The accommodation throughout is good and the men are quite comfortable. Practically the whole of the Battalion are now employed on tactical and administrative working parties. Work mainly consists of construction of strong points in the Reserve Line, maintenance and improvement of communications, cable burying etc. This work is being pushed on rapidly under the supervision of the Engineers and the organization of this area for attack and defence is now on a good footing.</p> <p>During the afternoon 70 men from "D" Company were bathed at WULVERGHEM where they obtained a clean change of underclothing.</p> <p>Up to 9.45 p.m. the night was quiet. At that hour the enemy placed a heavy barrage on the front line and immediately afterwards our S.O.S. signal went up just on the left of the 53rd Battalion Sector. This Battalion stood to arms at once.</p> <p>At 10 p.m. the "local raid" signal was sent up from approximately the same place and our artillery at once concentrated on that sector. Inquiries were made from Brigade and the 55th, 54th and 53rd Battalions but no definite information could be obtained. The 53rd Battalion however informed us that their front was O.K. but that apparently the adjoining Battalion on their left was being raided. At 10.30 p.m. both the enemy's and our barrages eased down and the Battalion stood down.</p> <p>No definite information was received until 1.10 a.m. when the 53rd Battalion advised us that the Battalion on their left and one of their own posts had been raided. The result of the raid on the left Battalion was uncertain, but the 53rd Battalion had repulsed the raiders, inflicted a number of casualties, captured one Bosche and also a light machine gun. We were elated to hear this good news and the C.O. rang up and congratulated the 53rd Battalion on their success.</p> <p>At 3 a.m. the Assistant Adjutant received instructions from the Brigade Major to proceed at once to the Advanced Dressing Station and arrange for the interrogation of the Bosche prisoner who was being dressed there. As the man had rather a nasty wound arrangements were made to have him delayed at the Main Dressing Station until 10 a.m. It is to be hoped he is a "talkative" person.</p> <p>The day was extremely cold and at intervals light snow fell. During last month we were very fortunate in having good weather and we hope the conditions at present will not continue for long.</p>	
	Saturday	2.1.10 a.m.		
		3. a.m.		

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NEW BDE. DUGOUTS MAR. WYTSCHAETE 21.			<p>Aircraft work was again impossible and consequently artillery fire during the day was below normal.</p> <p>During the morning Lieut-Colonel F.D.W. Oatley (late 54th Bn) arrived and took over the command of the Battalion from Lieut-Colonel A.J.G. Simpson who departed to the United Kingdom on duty.</p> <p>In the afternoon a further batch of 130 men from "C" Company were bathed at LINDENHOEK where they received a clean change of underclothing.</p> <p>Brigade order no. 126 was received regarding raids to be carried out tomorrow night.</p> <p>The 55th Battalion are to raid WHIZ FARM and the 53rd Battalion are to carry out a "Chinese" attack towards the TWINS. The 15th Brigade on our right and the 3rd Division on their right again are co-operating, the former carrying out two raids, whilst the latter, it is understood are raiding in force in the vicinity of WARWETON. It is to be hoped that the 55th Battalion will be as successful against WHIZ FARM as were the 54th Battalion last month when they succeeded in obtaining seven prisoners without sustaining any casualties.</p> <p>Dull weather conditions still prevail, although it is not quite so cold as yesterday. Instructions were received last night that all Working parties would be cancelled today. This was much appreciated by all ranks and we take it that our work for the week must have been very satisfactory.</p> <p>The C.O. visited all Companies during the morning, and met most of the officers.</p> <p>The health of the men is good. They are now living in fairly comfortable quarters and getting plenty of exercise and good food.</p> <p>In the afternoon 156 men from "B" Company and Headquarters were bathed at LINDENHOEK.</p> <p>Zero hour for the operation tonight is 11.45 p.m. precautions are being taken in case of enemy retaliation, but it is hardly likely that he will shell this area.</p> <p>A good view of our artillery barrage was obtained from these Headquarters and it is certainly reassuring to see the intense barrage that can be put down by the guns protecting us here. Up to midnight no information had been received as to the result of the operation.</p> <p>A dull cold day again. Light rain fell during the day and it was very misty.</p> <p>Last night's operations were very successful. The 55th Battalion raiding party did very well. They procured one prisoner and a machine gun and inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy in a hard to hard fight in No Man's Land.</p> <p>The 15th Brigade captured two of the enemy and we hear that the 3rd Division got 15.</p> <p>No doubt the enemy suffered a good number of casualties in our preparatory barrage which was very intense and included gas shells. This is a fitting reply to their raid on our front.</p>	
	March Sunday 3.	4.15 p.m.		
	March Monday 4.			

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NEW BDE. DUGOUTS WYTSCHAETE	MARCH 4th		<p>front on the night of 1st and 2nd inst.</p> <p>In the afternoon the Adjutant visited Brigade Headquarters and obtained permission to inspect the Brigade War Diary. Much useful information was obtained.</p> <p>The Brigade Major discussed the question of Musketry and instructed that as many as possible be put through Range Practices in this area as soon as the Range under construction near Brigade Headquarters was completed.</p> <p>On account of the number of Working parties provided by the Battalion, difficulty will be experienced in putting all men through a Musketry Course, but there is no doubt that it is most essential and every endeavour will be made to, at least, put all backward men through a thorough course.</p> <p>In trench warfare, especially where men are frequently employed on carrying and working parties there is a tendency to regard the rifle more as an encumbrance than a weapon and undoubtedly the best method to dispel this idea is "Range work" at every possible opportunity.</p> <p>During the afternoon Brigade advised that the 3rd Division would repeat their raid tonight Zero hour being 12.15 p.m. Apparently they are determined to keep the Bosche on the "jump."</p> <p>It started to rain heavily at 7.30 p.m. and continued until nearly midnight.</p> <p>Fortunately for the 3rd Division the weather cleared after midnight and at Zero hour it was quite fine.</p> <p>At 2 a.m. the enemy opened a fairly heavy barrage along our front and several of our S.O.S. signals went up well on our left. Brigade advised however that everything on our Sector was O.K. and no action was taken by us. No doubt the Bosche had a fit of "nerves".</p> <p>For the first time this month the day broke clear and we had the sun all day, although there was rather a cold wind blowing.</p> <p>Our Aeroplanes were soon busy and patrols were out all day. As a consequence Artillery fire on both sides increased somewhat.</p> <p>It is to be hoped that this fine weather will continue.</p> <p>In the morning the Brigade Commander paid a visit and interviewed three candidates for commissions, from the Brigade. Our candidate, Sgt. W. Graham compared very favourably with the remainder. He is a long service man and should make a good Officer.</p> <p>The C.O. and Assistant Adjutant visited all Companies. It was found that our Salvage Dump was not as tidy as it might be and did not have a guard posted over it. This was rectified at once.</p>	
	March Tuesday 5th	2. a.m.		

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Army Form C. 2118.

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
NEW BDE. DUGOUTS MARCH WYTSCHAETE 5th			<p>In the afternoon the C.O. and R.M.O. paid a visit to our Details Camp at BELGIAN BARN, KEMMEL. Everything was found in order there.</p> <p>A beautiful cloudless day with a gentle breeze blowing.</p> <p>During the morning the C.O. inspected the Transport Lines at NORFOLK CAMP and the Q.M. Stores at KEMMEL and found them in a satisfactory condition.</p> <p>The Staff Captain and Brigade Bombing Officer paid a visit and made general inquiries.</p> <p>Today we had our first opportunity for Range work. The Range at Brigade Headquarters is now complete and 50 men were put through grouping practice. The shooting was good, only a very small percentage failing.</p> <p>In the afternoon the Brigade Major called and went through our last month's War Diary with the Adjutant. He suggested various methods of improving it, especially as regards the boiling down of some of the appendices such as Intelligence and Works Reports. They were certainly very bulky in our last month's diary.</p> <p>Weather calm and mild. There was a fairly thick mist in the morning, but this cleared up in the afternoon.</p> <p>The C.O. held a conference of Company Commanders at Battalion Headquarters in the morning. Amongst other matters discussed, the C.O. laid great stress on the necessity for that "tightening" of discipline whilst in this area. It was pointed out that on account of the numerous working parties which had to be provided, it was difficult for Company Commanders to see much of their men and that this in itself tended to make men slack, both in the matter of saluting and dress. He insisted that every effort must be made to check anything in the way of slackness, and instructed that daily inspections of men's equipment, rifles and clothing be made. The question of economy in equipment and clothing was also discussed and Company Commanders were instructed to make frequent inspections of men's boots and clothing and to send as many as possible to the Battalion shoemakers and tailors.</p> <p>The organization of the Battalion Raiding Party was gone into. The party consists of 2 officers, 12 men per Company and two Headquarters Intelligence men making a total of 2 officers and 50 other ranks. All these men are volunteers. Arrangements were made to have these men trained as a platoon at every opportunity here and later on sent to the rear to undergo a thorough course of training.</p> <p>Another beautiful day. Conditions were ideal for aerial work and our planes were up all day.</p> <p>In the morning the C.O. and I.O. visited the 53rd Battalion and obtained useful infor-</p>	
	Wednesday 6th			
	Thursday 7th			
	Friday 8th			

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NEW BDE. DUGOUTS WYTSCHAETE 8th	MARCH		information regarding various Strong Points under construction in their sector. The 53rd Bn. have so far suffered very few casualties, but apparently hostile shelling has increased, no doubt on account of our patrol activity and raids. Major Andersen, M.C. formerly of this battalion and now attached to Brigade Headquarters as Brigade Major trainee paid a visit and made general inquiries. The 15th Brigade had a dummy raid tonight. The weather still continues good. The C.O. and Senior Major attended a lecture on "Barrages and Counter Battery Work". The lecture was very interesting and instructive. It is reassuring to learn of the number of hostile batteries put out of action by our heavies and there is no doubt also that we certainly have more guns on this sector than the Bosche. Sixty (60) men from "D" Co. attended the Range today and "grouped." The shooting was only fair.	
Saturday	9th		A fine day with a light mist during the morning. All working parties, with the exception of our salvaging party, were cancelled today. The C.O. and Senior Major paid a visit to Companies and found everything in order. Major Murray M.C. 2nd in Command of 53rd Battalion paid a visit and dined with us. Advantage was taken of the warm afternoon to sun as many blankets as possible. All ranks greatly appreciated the holiday.	
Sunday	10th		Weather still fine. Ø Our aeroplanes were conspicuous today. Bosche planes very rarely penetrate far over our lines. Occasionally one manages to get over but very rarely has the opportunity of staying long enough to do any decent reconnaissance. A Feden disinfector was placed at the disposal of the Battalion this afternoon. 200 mens' extra blankets stored at Q.M. Stores were disinfected and 400 more will be put through tomorrow.	
Monday	11th		Several small parties were sent to LINDENHOEK for baths and a clean change. Another fine day. Our artillery were active all day especially in the afternoon and our Heavies paid particular attention to COMINES. This town must be a very unhealthy place for the Bosche. During the afternoon an enemy observation balloon drifted over our lines. One of our planes set it on fire and brought it down at KEMMEL. It was quite a new balloon and we hear that the car had a dummy man in it. 60 men were put through musketry. The majority of them shot well.	
Tuesday	12th			

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NEW BDE. DUGOUTS WYTSCHAETE	MARCH 12th		Several small parties bathed at LINDENHOEK and 400 blankets at Q.M. Stores were disinfected today.	
	Wednesday 13th		A copy of Summary of Work completed and in course of completion to 12th March is attached Fine weather still continues, although a slight mist prevented good observation. Lieut-Colonel F.D.W. Gately left to attend a demonstration at 2nd Army Musketry School. The idea is that Commanding Officers should visit schools periodically in order to keep in touch with latest methods and to see how students from their battalions are progressing. This is undoubtedly a good scheme. Captain H. Roberts of "C" Coy. took over command temporarily. The Staff Captain held a conference of Adjutants in the afternoon. The adjutant attended. The principal matters discussed were methods of ration and water supplies to front line troops in the event of hostile operations on a large scale. The pack Transport Train is being re-formed and instructions were issued to form our battalional Sections at once. These will consist of 9 mules and drivers from each battalion. Special routes and tracks apart from main roads have been reconnoitred by the Staff Captain and Transport Officers will familiarise themselves with them as soon as possible. It has been decided that as soon as a large hostile attack is imminent, 2 1/2 extra days' rations and supply of water will be installed in all Strong Points and that all troops going forward afterwards will carry an extra water bottle and 2 days extra rations. These extra rations and the extra water bottles are being drawn and quartermasters must be ready to obtain their supplies at a moments notice. Subsidiary ammunition dumps are being formed and two 200 gallon water tanks are being issued to line battalions in order to hold a reserve supply of water. All these precautions are certainly necessary for there is no doubt that in the event of a hostile attack, great difficulty would be experienced in getting supplies up to the front line. Our Medical Officer, Captain J.E. McGlashan, left today to attend a Medical Officers Course at EMBLINGHAM. Captain G.O. Robertson from the 15th Field Ambulance relieved him. Brigade advised that all our daily working parties would be cancelled tomorrow in order enable us to provide a special large party tomorrow night. At 12 midnight the enemy heavily bombarded our front line positions. Companies were immediately advised to be prepared to stand to arms as soon as definite information could be obtained. Brigade and the 53rd Battalion, however, advised that all was O.K.	See No. 1
	Thursday 14th		At 12.45 a.m. the bombardment died down. At 3.30 a.m. the 15th Brigade on our right carried out two raids. Our Brigade	

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NEW BDE DUGOUTS WYTSCHAETE	March 14th Thursday		<p>Our Brigade operated, the 53rd Battalion carrying out a Chinese Attack. Retaliation on this Sector was feeble.</p> <p>During the early morning light rain fell, the remainder of the day was dull and fast misty. Hostile artillery was very active, especially on the right of the Bde. Sector. Although there does not appear to be any likelihood of a hostile attack against our Sector, the enemy is doubtless becoming more aggressive artillery fire especially having increased during the past week. Statements of prisoners captured lately point to the fact that the enemy intends to carry out minor operations against this portion of the front in conjunction with their bigger offensives elsewhere. So far he has come off second best as regards raids for we learn today that in a raid by him against the 1st Aust. Div. last night, we captured 14 prisoners and inflicted heavy casualties. None of our men are missing.</p> <p>The 15th Brigade in their raids this morning were very successful, each raiding party capturing 3 Germans.</p> <p>Tonight we supplied a special party of 330 men to install gas projectors along our front.</p> <p>At 12.30 p.m. the enemy threw about 250 gas shells in the area occupied by our "A" and "B" Companies. The concentration was certainly great in this area but good gas discipline prevented any casualties.</p> <p>The morning was fine but very cold.</p> <p>280 blankets at Q.M. Stores were disinfected at DRANOUTRE during the morning.</p> <p>100 men were bathed at LINDENHOEK in the afternoon.</p> <p>The 8th Brigade relieved the 15th Brigade on the right of the Brigade Sector tonight. Fortunately the night was very quiet.</p> <p>The weather was beautiful all day and our aeroplanes were particularly active spotting for our Heavy Batteries.</p> <p>In the morning the Divisional and Brigade Commanders paid a visit. The Divisional Commander made general inquiries regarding the men's health, clothing and equipment. He was assured that the men were very fit and in good spirits.</p> <p>Later on Mr. Gilmeur, War Correspondent from Corps called. He was shown round our area by the Assistant Adjutant and introduced to most of the officers.</p> <p>100 men bathed at LINDENHOEK and received a change of underclothing.</p> <p>For the first time since we have been in this sector he shelled KEMMEL. About 10 shells were thrown over, but as far as is known little damage was done.</p> <p>At 6.30 p.m. Lieut-Col. F.D.W. Oatley returned from his visit to the 4th Army Musketry</p>	
	15th Friday			
	16th Saturday			

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NEW BDE. DUGOUTS MARCH WYTSCHAETE	16th Saturday		<p>School. It proved to be a very interesting and instructive visit. The main feature of this course is to teach officers and Senior N.C.O's to be come efficient instructors in the latest methods of teaching Musketry. It has been acknowledged that the old method is extremely tiring and boring to the men and every effort is being made to overcome this. The spirit of killing with the bullet is fostered by using Besche figures and faces instead of the ordinary targets. Men are never kept for long on one subject and as soon as a pupil is proficient in any one particular position, he is not expected to perform it over and over again merely because others in the squad are not proficient. Great attention is now being paid to muscle exercises and belt drill in order to increase rate of fire and enable men to fire rapidly for a considerable time without tiring. The standard of Musketry should be improved greatly under the new methods.</p>	
	17th Sunday		<p>The weather still continues good. The enemy had many more observation balloons up than usual all day. His aeroplanes also were rather more active, although he rarely succeeded in crossing our lines. One large squadron of 10 planes came over our lines a short distance in the morning but was driven off by A.A. fire. Apparently his balloons detected movement in WYTSCHAETE for he shelled it with a High Velocity 5.9 gun in the morning. Ten rounds were fired but no damage was done. He also shelled KEMMEL. Whether he is becoming suspicious of this Sector held by the Aust. Corps on account of our frequent raids and anticipates an attack or whether his artillery is adopting an offensive policy along the whole front in conjunction with his alleged "big offensive" it is hard to say.</p> <p>As usual all working parties were cancelled today.</p> <p>The C.O. paid a visit to all Companies and found everything in a satisfactory condition.</p> <p>At 10 p.m. he again shelled vicinity of ONRAET WOOD with gas. Two of our platoons at PICCADILLY FARM were subjected to a severe concentration for over two hours, but thanks to strict gas discipline being observed no casualties were incurred. There are a good number of batteries in this locality and no doubt he is after them.</p>	
	18th Monday		<p>The morning was quite clear and observation was good up to 9.30 a.m. From then on a slight ground mist prevented good observation although the day was quite fine.</p> <p>As yesterday quite a number of enemy balloons were up, but aeroplanes on both sides were not quite so active.</p> <p>KEMMEL was again shelled during the day.</p> <p>In the morning the C.O. inspected the U.M. Stores and Transport Lines. It was decided to put on an extra man to assist the tailors, in cleaning and pressing tunics and breeches.</p> <p>The Transport was in a satisfactory condition. All vehicles with the exception of the</p>	

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NEW BDE. DUGOUTS WYTSCHAETE	March 18th Monday		<p>the Cookers have been painted and are looking well. The Cookers will be completed as soon as sufficient black paint is available. The Brigade Section of the Transport pack Transport Troop held its first parade and the C.O. inspected the section supplied by this Battalion, consisting of 1 Sgt, 9 Drivers and 9 Mules. The pack Saddlery was in a good condition and the majority of the men chosen were in the pack Troop last year.</p> <p>In the afternoon 60 men were put through Application practice on the Musketry Range. The shooting showed a considerable improvement.</p> <p>In the evening the C.O. and Adjutant paid a visit to 55th Battalion Headquarters.</p>	
	19th Tuesday		<p>The enemy once again bombarded the neighbourhood of ONRAET WOOD with gas shells from 4 a.m. to 5 a.m. No casualties have been incurred so far. For the past week the wind has been favorable to the Bosche. It is to be hoped that it will change in our favor shortly and enable us to retaliate. At the present time a great number of Gas Projectors are installed in the Brigade Sector and they will be discharged at the first favourable opportunity.</p> <p>It started to rain in the early morning and continued all day.</p> <p>A warning order was sent to all Companies to make preparations for the relief of the 53rd Battalion, which will probably take place within the next few days.</p> <p>Tonight the 53rd Battalion were to have raided the TWINS but the operation has been cancelled as the wind has changed in our favor and the gas projectors referred to above will be discharged.</p> <p>At 10.30 p.m. in co-operation with the Artillery and Machine Gun Co. the gas attack was launched. The gas used penetrates the german masks, and as there is a likelihood of a hostile relief tonight, many casualties are expected.</p>	
	20th Wednesday		<p>A dull cold day with light rain falling occasionally. The ground is very slippery and there is a good deal of water lying about.</p> <p>At 8.15 a.m. Brigade Order No. 129 was received. We are to relieve the 53rd Battalion on the night 21/22nd inst. In the morning the C.O. and Adjutant visited the 53rd Battalion H.Q. and arrangements were made for the relief. The dispositions are practically the same as when we were last in the sector.</p> <p>Several new Listening Posts have been established in front of the outpost line and a number of new Strong Points in the reserve line have been completed and occupied.</p> <p>Hostile artillery activity has increased a good deal since our last tour and for the past week he has bombarded the sector every night with gas shells. The 53rd Battalion, however, have had comparatively few casualties.</p> <p>In the afternoon the C.O. held a conference of Company Commanders and Specialist Officers</p>	

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NEW BDE. DUGOUTS WYTSCHAETE	March 20th Wednesday		<p>Companies will take over sectors as follows:-</p> <table><tr><td>"D" Co.</td><td>Captain N.R. Plomley, M.C.</td><td>FRONT LINE</td></tr><tr><td>"A" Co.</td><td>Captain E.L. Dalkeith.</td><td>RAVINE</td></tr><tr><td>"B" Co.</td><td>Lieut. C.T. Bentley</td><td>ROSE WOOD.</td></tr><tr><td>"C" Co.</td><td>Captain H.A. Roberts</td><td>DENYS WOOD.</td></tr></table> <p>"D" Co. will send one Officer and one N.C.O. to spend tonight with front line Company of 53rd Battalion. The remaining Companies will send officers and N.C.O's tomorrow to take over in daylight.</p> <p>The following Officers will move up tomorrow afternoon:-</p> <table><tr><td>R.M.O.</td><td>Captain G.O. Robertson.</td></tr><tr><td>I.O.</td><td>Lieut. A.A. Grimsley.</td></tr><tr><td>Scout Officer</td><td>2/Lieut. H.R. Williams.</td></tr><tr><td>Works Officer</td><td>Lieut. J. McF. Harvey.</td></tr><tr><td>Gum Boot Officer</td><td>Lieut. J.C. Watt, M.C., D.C.M.</td></tr><tr><td>Sig. Officer</td><td>Lieut. L.V. Bartlett.</td></tr><tr><td>L.G. Officer</td><td>Lieut. J. Bull.</td></tr></table> <p>The 53rd Battalion is providing guides at Estaminet Corner at 7.30 p.m. All officers were impressed with the importance of strict gas discipline, whilst in the line. The Boche now takes every opportunity of using gas shells and he selects suitable places such as the RAVINE and the Woods in rear in which to concentrate.</p> <p>At present, on account of a number of detached working parties the Battalion is about 30 short of the required trench strength i.e., 560 other ranks and the 53rd Battalion will leave 30 men at DENYS WOOD until we are able to make up our strength by the relief of working parties.</p> <p>At 5.30 p.m. Battalion Order No. 6 relating to the Relief was issued. Copy attached.</p> <p>The night was quiet.</p>	"D" Co.	Captain N.R. Plomley, M.C.	FRONT LINE	"A" Co.	Captain E.L. Dalkeith.	RAVINE	"B" Co.	Lieut. C.T. Bentley	ROSE WOOD.	"C" Co.	Captain H.A. Roberts	DENYS WOOD.	R.M.O.	Captain G.O. Robertson.	I.O.	Lieut. A.A. Grimsley.	Scout Officer	2/Lieut. H.R. Williams.	Works Officer	Lieut. J. McF. Harvey.	Gum Boot Officer	Lieut. J.C. Watt, M.C., D.C.M.	Sig. Officer	Lieut. L.V. Bartlett.	L.G. Officer	Lieut. J. Bull.	See No. 2
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Sig. Officer	Lieut. L.V. Bartlett.																													
L.G. Officer	Lieut. J. Bull.																													
	21st Thursday		<p>At 6 a.m. the enemy placed a heavy barrage on the Divisional front. It continued for 15 minutes when several S.O.S. signals were sent up. The Battalion stood to arms at once and all Companies were ready to move off, fully equipped and with extra ammunition and grenades within 12 minutes. Brigade advised at 7.45 a.m. that all was clear on our front and we stood down.</p> <p>Although the day is clear a heavy ground mist prevails and observation is very difficult. Later on in the morning it was learned that a hostile party of 60 strong attempted to raid a post of the 55th Battalion. The result was disastrous, however, for they got no further</p>																											

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Date. Summaries are contained in F. S. Regs., Part II.
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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
NEWBEE DHEWXX ONRAET FARM	March 21st Thursday		<p>than our wire. Heavy casualties were inflicted on them and one wounded prisoner was left in our hands. At the same time another party of about 80 made a raid on the 8th brigade front. Here again they failed and were forced to retire, leaving many casualties behind. Possibly after this display the Besche will think hard before sending more of his raiders across.</p> <p>During the whole day the enemy shelled the vicinity of these Battalion Headquarters and the Advanced Dressing Station intermittently with 4.2 shells. This is the first time, since we have been here that he has paid any attention to this quarter. No doubt he is taking advantage of the thick ground mist, knowing how difficult it will be to locate his batteries. He is still shelling KEMMEL.</p> <p>This afternoon the Battalion butcher, Pte. Reeges, W. was killed at our Q.M. Stores in KEMMEL. This is most unfortunate as he was a splendid butcher and an "old hand."</p> <p>The Transport Lines at NORFOLK CAMP are also receiving attention and shells are falling dangerously close.</p> <p>All arrangements for the relief are complete. The ground is drying rapidly and as the night promises to be quiet a quick relief is expected.</p> <p>Battalion Headquarters moved to ONRAET FARM at 7 p.m. "D" company passed ESTAMINET CORNER at 7.30 p.m. and the relief was complete at 9.40 p.m. Everything worked smoothly and there were no casualties.</p> <p>Tonight we learn that the much discussed German Offensive began early this morning and that BULLECOURT and LAGNICOURT the scenes of very heavy fighting by the Australian Corps last year are in the hands of the enemy, but that otherwise everything is quite satisfactory. No doubt his raids on our Sector this morning were "minor operations" in conjunction with his big effort.</p> <p>At 12.30 a.m. about 50 Gas Shells fell in ONRAET WOOD just to the right of these Headquarters. A fairly strong wind was blowing at the time however and the gas soon cleared. Apart from this the night was very quiet.</p> <p>The Scout Officer, 2/Lieut. H.R. Williams, Scout N.C.O., Sgt. Verdon and 4 other Ranks patrolled No Mans Land for four hours with a view to acquainting themselves with the terrain. The ground is still very sloppy especially in the ROOSEBEEK VALLEY, but is drying rapidly.</p> <p>The day broke clear and warm.</p> <p>The 12th Battalion, A.I.F. is on our left and the 54th Battalion on the right.</p> <p>After lunch Lieut-Colonel H.E. Cohen, C.M.G., D.S.O. of the artillery called. He has taken over command of the HOLLEBEEK Group Artillery which is protecting this Sector. The</p>	
	22nd Friday			

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9 NRAET FARM	22nd Friday		<p>The Group has decided to bring a gas bombardment into operation at short notice at first favourable opportunity against various targets on the Brigade Sector. Zero hour will be notified.</p> <p>Later on Brigadier General C.J. Hobkirk, D.S.O. called, accompanied by Lieut-Colonel J.C. Stewart, D.S.O. of the 57th Battalion. Lieut-Colonel Stewart takes over command of the Brigade today and Brigadier General Hobkirk leaves to take command of a British Brigade. The General said goodbye to us all and expressed regret at having to leave the Brigade which he has commanded practically the whole time it has been in France and of which he was so proud. From our point of view, we are all extremely sorry to lose him. He was a splendid leader and a courageous soldier and won the respect and admiration of every Officer and soldier in the Brigade. This Battalion wishes him every success with his new command.</p> <p>At 4 p.m. the C.O. and Adjutant made a tour of the Sector, visiting all Companies in turn. They dined at Front Company Headquarters and at 8 p.m. inspected the front line posts. It was quite moonlight and an excellent view of the position was obtained. The posts are all well sited and the wire on the whole is good. The position is certainly a strong one.</p> <p>At 11 p.m. the 8th Brigade, on the right of the 54th Battalion projected gas on to enemy positions. There was no retaliation on this Sector.</p> <p>The Scout Officer, 2/Lieut. H.R. Williams, with 4 other ranks, went out from the left post No. 4.O.II at 8.50 p.m. and returned through the right post No. 1.O.II at 11.15 p.m. They patrolled the front of the GIANTS and the TWINS. No working parties were heard in the vicinity of the GIANTS, but several M.G. were observed firing from the TWINS.</p> <p>At 6 p.m. this evening Company Commanders were issued with copies of the Table of Inter-Company Reliefs as per copy attached.</p> <p>Orders for Guard on Battalion Headquarters was also issued.</p> <p>Another beautiful day.</p> <p>In the morning the Adjutant accompanied by the Orderly Room Sergeant visited the 12th Battalion Headquarters and left a copy of our inter-Company Relief Table with them. Their Headquarters are situated on the Southern Bank of the Canal at O.5.a.1.1. The Sector is rather more shell torn than ours and more thickly wooded. The 10th Battalion will relieve them tomorrow night.</p> <p>During the day RAVINE and DENYS WOOD were shelled lightly at intervals, otherwise enemy artillery was normal.</p> <p>400 pairs of clean socks were sent up by Q.M. last night. These are held at Battalion</p>	See No. 3 See No. 4
	23rd Saturday.			

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
ONRAET FARM	MARCH 23rd Saturday		<p>Headquarters and will be exchanged for wet and dirty pairs as Companies require them.</p> <p>Tonight "B" Company were to have relieved "D" Company in the front line, but the Commanding Officer received an intimation from Brigade that the Battalion would probably be relieved tomorrow night and he instructed that "D" Company remain in the front line until further orders.</p> <p>In the evening the Battalion Canteen was transferred from ONRAET FARM to KEMMEL.</p> <p>At intervals throughout the night, gas shells were thrown into ONRAET WOOD.</p> <p>Two patrols were sent out. One consisting of 4 other ranks under 2/Lieut. H.R. Williams patrolled the ground in front of the GIANTS from 12 midnight to 3 a.m. A working party was heard behind the GIANTS and transport was distinctly heard on roads in rear. Another patrol of 3 other ranks under Sgt. Verdan explored the country in front of the TWINS from 2 a.m. to 5 a.m. A working party was also heard here.</p> <p>The weather continues good and the ground now is quite hard and dry.</p> <p>Brigade Order No. 130 received, advising that the 7th Battalion would relieve us tonight. This news is sudden, but doubtless the move has something to do with the large operations down South.</p> <p>At 8 a.m. the Company Commander of the 7th Battalion went forward and made arrangements with our Companies for guides etc. The 7th Battalion have been in this Sector before and knew it well. Later on in the morning Lieut-Colonel E.E. Herred, D.S.O. commanding 7th Bn. called and obtained full particulars regarding the sector.</p> <p>A message was received that all leave is cancelled and that students are being returned from various schools.</p> <p>Amendment to Brigade Order was received advising that we move into the Support Area.</p> <p>WYTSCHAETER</p> <p>Battalion Operation Order No. 7 was now issued.</p> <p>Instructions were received from Brigade that extra blankets and winter clothing were to be returned to D.A.D.O.S. The Q.M. was instructed to return all extra blankets and the winter clothing of Details today. The winter clothing of the men in the line will be collected when we reach the Support Area.</p> <p>News of the German offensive down South is being received regularly. The enemy has certainly penetrated our lines of defence a good distance by sheer weight of numbers, but the casualties inflicted on him have been tremendous. He is attacking in dense formation and suffering accordingly. It is disappointing to hear that many of the Villages, captured by the Australians this time last year, after hard fighting are now in the hands of the enemy.</p>	
	24th Sunday			See No. 5

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
ONRAET FARM	MARCH 24th Sunday		<p>LOUVERVAL which was captured by the Battalion on 2nd April last year and where we best 60 killed and 150 wounded has been retaken by the enemy. Let us hope the tide will soon turn in our favour.</p> <p>Special order of the day issued by Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig was received today reading as follows:-</p> <p>"TO ALL RANKS OF THE BRITISH ARMY IN FRANCE AND FLANDERS.</p> <p>"We are again at a crisis in the War. The enemy has collected on this front every available Division and is aiming at the destruction of the British Army. We have already inflicted on the enemy in the course of the last two days very heavy losses and the French are sending Troops as quickly as possible to our support. I feel that everyone in the Army fully realising how much depends on the exertions and steadfastness of each one of us will do his utmost to prevent the enemy from obtaining his object."</p> <p>We have got a hard time in front of us.</p> <p>A warning Order was sent to Companies advising that the Battalion would move to Burr Barracks, LOCRE, sometime on the following morning. Limbers were ordered from Transport Officer for Lewis Guns and Cooking gear and an advanced party was detailed to report to Burr Barracks at 8 a.m. tomorrow.</p> <p>Lieut-Colonel Herred, D.S.O. with H.Q. Staff arrived at 8 p.m. It was a bright moonlight night and the relief went well. At 10.40 p.m. the relief was complete and our Headquarters moved to New Brigade Dugouts, WYTSCHAETE. There were no casualties incurred during the relief.</p> <p>The following casualties were sustained during our last tour in the line:-</p> <p>3 Other Ranks wounded (including 2 gassed)</p> <p>On arrival at the new Headquarters a message was received from Brigade cancelling the move tomorrow to Burr Barracks and instructing Battalions to stand fast until further orders. Companies were advised.</p> <p>Intelligence Summary for period in line appears in appendix attached.</p> <p>The work done during period in line appears in appendix No. 6.</p> <p>The day cold with light showers falling in the morning. In the afternoon it cleared up.</p> <p>In the morning Administrative Instructions regarding supplies and baggage was received.</p> <p>All sheepskin jackets, leather jerkins, woollen gloves and body belts and spare blankets were collected and sent back to Q.M. for return to D.A.D.O.S. Officers' Valises were reduced to minimum weight and surplus kit stored. Company Commanders inspected Companies. All ammunition on the man was replenished and Lewis Gun magazines fully loaded.</p>	
NEW BDE. DUGOUTS WYTSCHAETE	25th Monday.			<p>See No. 6</p> <p>See No. 7</p>

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Army Form C. 2118.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
NEW BDE DUGOUTS WYTSCHAETE	March 25th Monday		In the evening Brigade Order No. 131 was received and Battalion Order No. 8 issued. We entrain for RENINGHELST by Light Railway from LA POLKA Siding starting at 10 a.m. tomorrow. The Transport will move by road.	See No. 8
	26th Tuesday		A fine day with a fairly cold wind blowing. The entraining was carried out without incident in three trains starting at 10 a.m., 10.30 a.m. and 11 a.m. The Staff Captain met the train and informed the C.O. that as far as was known we would be entraining at HOPOUTRE SIDING tomorrow morning. Companies were met by guides at RENINGHELST and moved independently to camps. Headquarters, "C" and "D" companies and Q.M. stores are in RED HORSEHOE CAMP and the remainder of Battalion and Transport in No. 6 Camp. At 3 p.m. Company and Headquarters parades were held and thorough inspections made of clothing, arms and equipment. Tunics, breeches and boots were issued to those men urgently requiring them. The C.O. inspected all companies. Despite the fact that the Battalion has been at a disadvantage lately on account of being in the line with large parties attached detached the turn out was good. The men are fit and the equipment, clothes and boots are generally in good condition. After the inspection the C.O. and Adjutant reconnoitred the road to HOPOUTRE. It is about 6 miles distance and the road is good. On their return Brigade Order No. 132 was received. We entrain on 28th inst. as follows:- One Company with one Cooker and team on No. 6 train departing at 2.45 a.m. The remainder of Battalion with Transport on No. 7 train departing at 5.45 a.m. The Advanced Advanced parties will travel by No. 1 train departing at 11.45 a.m. on 27th inst. At 8 p.m. the C.O. attended a Conference at Brigade Headquarters. A dull rain day with a very cold wind blowing. During the morning Companies were at the disposal of Company Commanders and in the after- noon a Battalion parade was held. Copy of Training Syllabus attached.	
	27th Wednesday		At 11 a.m. the C.O. held a conference of Company Commanders, Transport Officer and Q.M. and passed on information received from Brigade Commander last night. It was impressed on all the utmost utmost necessity for their commands to be thoroughly equipped and completely equipped. On the journey down, all ranks must be prepared to fight at a moment's notice. Lewis Guns and gear are to be carried by L.G. Sections and an A.A. Gun must be mounted on the train. Iron emergency rations will be drawn this afternoon and all bayonets sharpened. The value of determined and accurate rifle fire and L.G. fire was impressed on all. Company Commanders were warned that a lesson had been learned in the recent fighting that defence in	See No. 9

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	March RENINGHELST 27th Wednesday		<p>in depth had proved most successful. In various portions of the line where this method of defence had been ignored and men crammed in the front line the results had been disastrous. At present the situation on the Somme is obscure and no definite information has been received but as far as was known the Germans have not yet entered BAPAUME.</p> <p>In the afternoon a parade of the whole battalion was held and the Battalion Commander made a thorough inspection. The Battalion turned out well and is fully and well equipped. The men are fit and in good spirits.</p> <p>In the evening Lieut. A.W.S. Greber was sent forward to Entraining Station and found that trains so far have been running as soon as loaded and earlier than schedule time.</p> <p>"C" Company left camp at 11.15 p.m. the Transport at 12 midnight and the remainder of Battalion at 2.15 a.m. The night was cloudy but quite bright.</p> <p>A copy of the Battalion order relating to the move from RED HORSE SHOE Camp, issued at 1 p.m. today, is attached.</p>	
	March 28th Thursday		<p>The Transport was entrained by 4 a.m. and the Battalion by 4.15 a.m. The train left at 4.30 a.m. an hour and a quarter before schedule time.</p> <p>The morning was not cloudy and very cold.</p> <p>The train journey passed without incident. It commenced raining at 4 p.m. and continued all night. We arrived at Detraining Station (MONDECOURT) at 6 p.m. and were met by a guide. We have to march 9 and a half miles to the village of LOUVENCOURT. The whole Battalion including Transport was detrained by 6.20 p.m. All animals were watered and the Battalion moved off at 7.5 p.m. It rained steadily the whole time and the Battalion arrived at LOUVENCOURT at 10.5 p.m. absolutely soaking wet. Lieut. Grimsley met us and guides were provided for Companies. The billets are dry but rather crowded as the whole of the brigade are billeted here. Cookers accompanied Companies to their billets and a hot meal was ready in about an hour.</p> <p>The C.O. visited Brigade at 12 midnight. There had been a conference of Battalion Commanders at 8 p.m. and the Brigade Major passed on the various points brought up. The position here is that the 15th Brigade are in advance of this Brigade at LEAVILLERS area and are providing the outpost line of the Division. The 53rd Battalion are providing protection for this village. This Brigade must be in readiness to move forward at an hour's notice. A Nucleus garrison must be detailed and be ready to move back as soon as definite orders are received. A.A. precautions must be adopted and L.G. mounted in our areas. As far as is known at present our front is in the direction of ALBERT, which is in the hands of the</p>	See No. 10

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LOUVENCOURT	March 28th Thursday		<p>the hands of the enemy and officers must acquaint themselves into the various roads leading in this direction. All ranks are to be warned against giving information to or acting on orders received from strangers. It appears that Germans have been masquerading as British Staff Officers in rear of our lines and causing great confusion.</p> <p>The rain has stopped but it is still dull and cold.</p> <p>At 6.30 a.m. instructions were received that Nucleus Garrisons would concentrate at VAUCHELLES les AUTHIE at 10 a.m. Six (6) officers namely: - Captain H.A. Roberts, Lieutenants C.T. Bentley, R.J. Poore, R.G. Courtney, W.E. Privett and R.W. Wittelton and 86 other ranks left at 9.30 a.m. "B" Company's travelling kitchen accompanied them and arrangements were made for "B" Company to have their meals cooked on "A" and "C" Coy's cookers.</p> <p>All officers valises were loaded on baggage wagons in preparation for a move at short notice.</p> <p>The C.O. held a conference of Company Commanders at 10 a.m. The points brought forward at the Brigade Conference were impressed on them. They were instructed to make thorough inspections and ensure that all ranks were in readiness at short notice. The men's clothes and boots are now practically dry. The Transport Officer has everything in readiness.</p> <p>In the afternoon instructions were received to close all Estaminets in our area and to collect all soldiers who were not Australians and forward Nominal Rolls to Brigade. There appears to be a fairly large number of stragglers from British regiments here, who cannot account for themselves satisfactorily. Most of them collected in this Battalion area however belong to a Labor Battalion who are digging defensive lines in vicinity of village.</p> <p>During the night the enemy shelled this village with a High Velocity gun. No damage was done.</p>	
	March 29th Friday		<p>A dull cold day.</p> <p>During the morning orders were received that a Company of the Battalion would relieve Outpost Company of 55th Battalion at 7 p.m. tonight. Battalion order No. 10 dealing with the relief was issued at 5.30 p.m. "B" Company with Captain G.H. Mann in command will act as Outpost Company.</p> <p>The Nucleus Camp moves today to LIGNY - SURCANCHE.</p> <p>In the morning Companies held parades from 10 a.m. to 12 noon and carried on with: - Inspection of clothing, equipment and arms. S.B.R. drill and inspection. Belt drill and Muscle exercises. In the afternoon an hour's parade was held, special attention being paid to movements with S.B.R. adjusted.</p>	
	March 30th Saturday			See No. 11

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LOUVEN-COURT	March 30th	Saturday	<p>to movements with S.B.R. adjusted.</p> <p>It started to rain steadily at 1 p.m. and continued till 10 p.m.</p> <p>The C.O., Adjutant and O.C. Outposts reconnoitred outpost position. The Picquet Line consists of three (3) platoon strong points with one in support. The posts are well sited and command the main approaches to the village.</p> <p>At 6 p.m. the C.O. attended a conference at Brigade. The Brigade Commander divided the village into four portions and allotted one to each of the four battalions occupying the village (55th, 56th, 31st and 32nd battalions) for the purpose of discipline, sanitation etc. Instructions were given that, in the event of heavy hostile shelling battalions would make arrangements to move out of the village by prearranged routes. A strict hold must be taken of the men to prevent looting of deserted Estaminets etc. It was decided to provide an inlying picquet of 1 officer and 20 men every night. The 55th Battalion will provide this tonight. This was passed on to Company Commanders at 9.30 p.m. The relief of Outpost Company was complete by 8 p.m.</p> <p>At 5.30 p.m. Battalion Order No. 10, relating to the relief of the Outpost Company, was issued.</p> <p>The latest war news received appears to be satisfactory. The N.Z. Division and the 3rd and 4th Aust. Divisions are in the line. The Bosche advance is being held up and no doubt a counter offensive will soon be launched by the French and British. We all hope it will be seen.</p>	
	March 31st	Sunday	<p>A fine day with occasional showers.</p> <p>Company parades were held in the morning and afternoon.</p> <p>The C.O. and Assistant Adjutant visited all Companies and the picquet line. Everything is satisfactory and the men are behaving well.</p> <p>Two hundred (200) Bosche prisoners passed through the village today. They were captured by the New Zealanders early this morning. The majority of them are young and of peer physique.</p> <p>A training syllabus was issued for company work tomorrow. It includes Gas drill, belt drill, Musketry, Bayonet fighting and open warfare minor tactics.</p> <p>Our Outpost Company was relieved by the 31st Battalion tonight.</p> <p>Copies of Battalion Standing Orders whilst occupying the village of LOUVENCOURT and List of Arrivals and Departures for the month of March are included in the appendices.</p> <p>An amended copy of the Battalion Defence Scheme drawn up during our last tour in the HOLLEBEKE Sector is also included.</p>	<p>See Nos. 12 & 13.</p> <p>See No. 14.</p>

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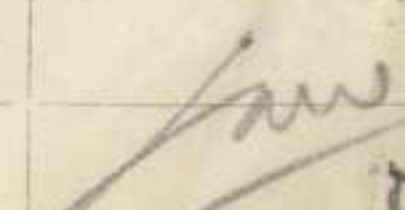
Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
LOUVEN-COURT	March 31st Sunday		<p>GENERAL REMARKS FOR MONTH ENDING 31st MARCH 1918. =====</p> <p>The health of the battalion generally throughout the month has been good. For the greatest part of the month whilst in the WYTSCHAETE sector the weather was fine and as a plentiful supply of gum boots were available feet cases were few.</p> <p><u>Training:</u> Owing to the fact that whilst in support at WYTSHAETE practically the whole of the battalion was engaged on tactical working parties, opportunities for training were limited. However approximately 200 men were put through a Musketry Course including grouping and application practices and on the whole the men shot well.</p> <p>Fortunately, we had the afternoon of the 26th and the whole of the 27th inst. at RENINGHELST to shake the men up after their sojourn in the line.</p> <p><u>Leave:</u> Up to 24th inst. when all leave was cancelled, leave to U.K. was most liberal.</p> <p><u>Reports by quarter Master and Transport Officer, Captain F.M. Shannon and Lieut. V.U. Leeves respectively, hereunder:</u></p> <p><u>Quarter Master's Branch:</u> <u>Rations:</u> From the 1st to 26th inst. Rations were good, fresh meat, fresh vegetables and bread being exceptionally good issues. No complaints whatever were received either as to quality and quantity. The battalion was in the line up to this date and mechanical transport was used which proved most satisfactory. On 26th inst. Supply moved and from that date to the 31st inst. rations were not so good consisting mainly of preserved meat and biscuits with a very small percentage of bread. <u>Iron Rations:</u> A complete issue was made to battalion at RENINGHELST on the 26th inst. Each man is now in possession of 24 hours Emergency Rations. <u>Returns of Empty:</u> During the month returns of empties from battalion were satisfactory. <u>Fat:</u> 2800 lbs. odd were returned to Railhead up to 26th inst. Some fat was received from Companies after this date but this could not be returned to supply owing to sudden move it will have to be shown in next month's returns. Railhead, brigade or Division figures for month are not yet available. <u>Paper:</u> Over 1200 lbs have been returned to Railhead and above remarks re Returns apply in this instance also. I feel confident however that the battalion Returns will head the Division. <u>Solder:</u> 42 lbs was returned to D.A.D.O.S. The melting of solder from empty tins was not satisfactory. However when circumstances permit it will be given another trial. <u>D.A.D.O.S.</u> A very large quantity of stores of all description were drawn during the month and issued. <u>Salvage:</u> No return is available from D.A.D.O.S. yet but I consider our Returns more than satisfactory and will leave a credit balance against most stores issued to me. <u>Winter Clothing:</u> In accordance with</p>	

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LOUVEN-COURT	March 31st Sunday		<p>with orders the mens' second blanket and sheepskin vests were returned and returns were satisfactory.</p> <p>Transport Section: During the month the whole of the vehicles have been overhauled and the First Line vehicles painted. The Cookers were also overhauled but owing to the sudden move would have been painted by 31st inst. Two, however, were finished and the remainder will be painted at first opportunity. Two light draught horses and one light draught mule were evacuated and have not been replaced so far. The animals otherwise are in a healthy condition and pronounced satisfactory by the D.A.D.V.S. The fodder ration was reduced by two pounds per head but so far has had no effect on the appearance of the animals. The stables at NORFOLK CAMP, KEMMEL, were whitewashed twice during the month. The Transport moved off on the 26th inst from KEMMEL to RENINGHELST, a distance of 4 and a half miles by road and entrained from HOPOUTRE to MONDECOURT on 28th inst. From MONDECOURT they proceeded to LOUVENCOURT by road and arrived there in good condition. The Transport has been and is still prepared to move at an hour's notice. The accommodation here at LOUVENCOURT is fair and stables and stables have been found for some of the animals. The Brigade Veterinary Officer inspected the animals daily.</p> <p>The Battalion at time of writing is at LOUVENCOURT and is in readiness to move at an hour's notice.</p> <p>Statement showing strength of Battalion etc. at 31st March is included in the appendices.</p> <p>Re Battalion Fat and paper Returns. The following information has been received: - The amount of fat returned to Railhead was 3,100 lbs being 160 lbs less than that returned by the 55th Battalion. That Battalion headed the list for Fat Returns. This Battalion however was first in the paper Returns with 1155 lbs with the 53rd Battalion second with 738 lbs.</p>	
			31/3/18.	<p><i>H. W. Dakin</i> Lieut-Colonel, Commanding 56th Battalion, A.I.F.</p>



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WAR DIARY

APPENDIX

OF

56TH BATTALION A. I. F.

FOR

MARCH 1918

LIST OF APPENDICES.

No.	Subject.
1.	Works Report from 1st to 12th March 1918.
2.	Battalion Relief Order No. 6.
3.	Table of Inter-Company Reliefs.
4.	Orders for Headquarters Guard.
5.	Battalion Relief Order No. 7.
6.	Intelligence Summary from 21st to 24th March 1918.
7.	Works Report from 21st to 24th March 1918.
8.	Battalion Move Order No. 8.
9.	Training Syllabus for 27th March 1918.
10.	Battalion Entraining Order No. 9.
11.	Battalion Outpost Relief Order No. 10.
12.	Standing order for Louvenscourt village.
13.	Arrivals and Departures for month of March.
14.	Battalion Defence Scheme for Hollebeke Sector.
15.	Table showing battalion strength at 31st March 1918.

APPENDIX. /

56TH BATTALION,
A.I.F.56TH BATTALION WORKS REPORT.
=====1 No. 26
Date 13-3-18

Summary of work completed and in course of completion carried out by 14th Field Coy. Engineers with Fatigue Parties supplied by 56th Battalion, A.I.F. in WYTSCHAETE SECTOR for the period from 1st March to 12th March 1918.

DUCKWALKS:

OWRAET WOOD to DELBSKE FARM and S.P. 7.0.10. 640 yards laid on bearers.
PICCADILLY FARM. 300 yds. on bearers.
S.P. 8.0.10. 60 yds. on bearers.

TIMBER:

Front of S.P. 5.0.10. 50" x 30" timber cleared for field fire.

WIRING:

S.P. 5.0.10.	150"	apron and concertina.
S.P. 6.0.10.	160"	" " "
S.P. 1.0.9. }		
NEW S.P. }	290"	" " "

DRAINAGE:

S.P. 8.0.10. 7.0.10. 6.0.10. 1.0.9. NEW S.P. (0.9.d.9.6).

FILLING:

S.P. 5.0.15. Drains dug, shell holes in vicinity of S.P. drained and filled in.

CONNECTING UP:

S.P. 5.0.15 - 1.0.9. NEW S.P. - 5.0.10 connected up.

S.P. 8.0.10: Completed. Contains 3 Bays. 2 shelters.

S.P. 7.0.10: 90% completed. Contains 5 Bays, 4 Travs. 5 shelters.

S.P. 6.0.10: 90% completed. " 5 " 4 " 5 "

CAMOUFLAGE:

S.P. 8.0.10 and S.P. 6.0.10 camouflaged.

SHELTERS:

OWRAET WOOD. 4 three men shelters completed.
PICCADILLY FARM. 6 four men shelters completed.
2 cookhouses.
"B" Coy. 1 Q.M.S. Store.

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APPENDIX. /

(2)

MACHINE GUN POSITION:

S.P.8.O.I.O. 50% complete.

CARRYING PARTIES:

From CLARKE DUMP to S.P.8.O.I.O. PALMA DUMP to PICCADILLY FARM.
 ROSE DUMP to S.P.8.O.I.O. - Following material handled and carried.
 235 sheets corrugated iron, 21 bundles Camouflage, 674 duckwalks,
 2,150 Sandbags, 120 metal and revetment frames, 1200 wooden and iron
 pickets, 255 coils plain and barbed wire, 20 hurdles, 250 A frames,
 9 sections Cupolas, 7 rolls malthoid, 2 pumps and hose, and sundry
 other items.

REVETMENT PANELS:

90 Revetment Panels constructed.

DUMPS:

Tidying up Dumps and maintenance of Duckwalk tracks.

AN AVERAGE OF 130 MEN PER DAY SUPPLIED.

56TH BATTALION, A.I.F.
No. 12/3/18.
Date.....

(Sgd) E.B. Gardner, Lieut.,
 Works Officer,
 56th Battalion, A.I.F.

56TH BATTALION
Headquarters,
20/3/18.

Reference: 1/10,000 - Sheet 28 S.W.2.

1. The 56th Battalion will relieve the 53rd Battalion on the 21st and night 21st/22nd March, 1918.
2. (a) Companies will move forward into the line with a minimum trench strength of 130 other ranks and a maximum trench strength of 140 other ranks.
(b) Covering parties must be supplied while the relief is being carried out.
3. Companies will take over sectors from the corresponding companies of the 53rd Battalion as follows:-

FRONT LINE	"D" Co.
RAVINE	"A" Co.
ROSE WOOD	"B" Co.
DENYS WOOD	"C" Co.

and will move forward in that order with 15 minutes interval between each Company.
4. The leading Company will pass ESTAMINET CORNER at 7.30 p.m. where guides from 53rd Battalion will be picked up.
5. "A", "B" and "C" Companies will each send one officer and one N.C.O. forward in daylight on 21st inst. to take over trench stores. O.C. "D" Co. will send one officer and one N.C.O. to spend the night 20/21st with front line Company.
6. Receipts will be obtained for all maps, documents, ammunition, trench stores and Supporting point Rations and forwarded to Battalion Headquarters by 12 noon on 22nd inst.
7. All existing Lewis Gun Anti-Aircraft defences will be taken over.
8. O.C. "C" Co. will send two Lewis Gun teams to report to Company Headquarters, DENYS WOOD, at 6 p.m. on 21st inst. to relieve the 53rd Battalion teams at MARTIN'S FARM and DAMM STRASSE, and will detail 1 N.C.O. and 6 men as guard for Battalion Headquarters.
9. The following officers and N.C.O.'s will go forward on 21st inst. and take over in daylight.

SIGNALLING OFFICER
LEWIS GUN OFFICER
INTELLIGENCE OFFICER
SCOUT OFFICER
WORKS OFFICER
BOMBING OFFICER
BATTALION GAS N.C.O.

Lewis Gun Officer will take over all Gun Boats at Store in RAVINE.
10. The 53rd Battalion will take over this area, and Company Commanders will ensure that all dug-outs and shelters are left in a clean and sanitary condition. Certificates to this effect will be furnished to Battalion Orderly Room by 6 p.m. 21st inst.
11. On completion of relief the following code word will be wired to Battalion Headquarters:-

"S A R D I N E"

Issued at 5.30 p.m. by runner.

No. 2. "A" Co.	No. 2. "B" Co.
No. 3. "C" Co.	No. 4. "D" Co.
No. 6. R.M.O.	No. 7. L.G.O.
No. 8. Sig. Off.	No. 9. Q.M.
No. 10. C.O.	No. 11-2-3 War Diary
No. 1 File.	

Williamson
Captain,
Adjutant 56th Battalion, A.I.F.

TABLE OF INTER-COMPANY RELIEFS

(Subject to alteration. Confirmation will be sent to Companies on morning of relief)

56TH BATTALION.

A.I.F.

No. 3 Vol. 26

Serial No.	Date.	Company.	From.	To.	Remarks.
1.	Night of 23/24th	"D"	FRONT LINE	ROSE WOOD	The two extra Lewis Guns in the front line will be taken over and manned by the incoming Company.
		"B"	ROSE WOOD	FRONT LINE	
2.	Night of 25/26th	"B"	FRONT LINE	RAVINE	do.
		"A"	RAVINE	FRONT LINE	
3.	Night of 28/29th	"A"	FRONT LINE	DENYS WOOD	do.
		"C"	DENYS WOOD	FRONT LINE	

"D" Coy. will relieve the following parties of "C" Coy. by 2 p.m. on 28th. One L.G. team (1 & 3) and gun at DAMM STRASSE. One L.G. team (1 & 3) to man Battalion gun at MARTENS FARM. (Rationed by Artillery).

"B" Coy. will relieve "C" Coy. Guard at Battalion Headquarters (1 & 6) by 2 p.m. on 28th inst.

"A" Coy. will relieve all of above parties by 10 a.m. on 29th inst.

Company Commanders will make mutual arrangements regarding reliefs.

All working and carrying parties to be taken over. Receipts will be exchanged for all trench stores and forwarded to Battalion Headquarters the morning after relief.

(Sgd) G.A. Williamson, Captain,
Adjutant 56th Battalion, A.I.F.

22/3/18.

Issued at 6 p.m. by runner to:-

O.C. "A" Co.	O.C. "B" Co.
O.C. "C" Co.	O.C. "D" Co.
Right Bn.	Left Bn.
14th A.I. Bde.	Support Bn.
War Diary (5)	File.

APPENDIX.

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ORDERS FOR GUARD ON BATTALION HEADQUARTERS ONRAET FARM

56TH BATTALION,
A.I.F.

56th Battalion, A.I.F.
22/3/18. Date.....

1. The Guard will consist of 2 N.C.O's and 6 men.
2. Sentries will remain on post until properly relieved. N.C.O's must personally post each sentry.
3. From 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. the sentry will be posted outside the entrance to the Farm and will wear equipment and carry a rifle with bayonet fixed.
4. He will pay proper compliments to all officers according to rank and will prevent men congregating near the entrance.
5. From 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. the sentry will be posted inside the entrance, near the Strombes Horn, in clean fatigue with Small Box Respirator.
6. He must know the direction of the Battalion front and the colors of our S.O.S. signal in use.
7. In the event of the following, he will immediately warn the officer on duty: -
 - (1) An S.O.S. signal anywhere within sight.
 - (2) A heavy enemy barrage on or in vicinity of our front.
 - (3) Unusual M.G. fire.
 - (4) On hearing a Strombes Horn.
 - (5) Gas shells falling in the neighbourhood.
8. On no account will he sound the alarm for Gas without referring to the Officer on duty. The Strombes Horn will be sounded only by order of an officer.
9. The N.C.O. in charge is responsible that every man is acquainted with these orders.

(Sgd) G.A. Williamson, Captain,
Adjutant 56th Battalion, A.I.F.

S E C R E T.

Copy No. 7....

56TH BATTALION ORDER No. 7.

Reference 1/10,000 Sheet 28, S.W.2.

Headquarters,
24/3/18.

56TH BATTALION.

A.I.F.

1. The 7th Battalion, A.I.F. will relieve the 56th Battalion on night of 24th/25th March.
2. The 56th Battalion will move into Support Area, WYTSCHAETE, which is being vacated by the 53rd Battalion tonight.
3. Companies will occupy same sectors as before and will send an Officer in advance to take over stores and arrange accommodation.
4. Receipts will be obtained for all Defence Schemes, area maps etc. and trench stores and forwarded to Headquarters by midnight.
5. Front Line Company will detail an officer specially to hand over and obtain receipts for Supporting Point Rations at FORRET FARM.
6. All Gum Boots in possession of Front Line Co. will be handed in to Gum Boot Store, RAVINE, when relief is complete.
7. Lieut. J.C. Watt, M.C., D.C.M. will hand over and obtain receipts for all Gum Boots and will remain behind until all boots are collected from Front Line Co. and handed over.
8. Company Commanders will arrange to have parties sent in advance in time to collect rations at WYTSCHAETE.
9. On completion of relief the following code word will be wired to Rear Battalion Headquarters:-
"F O R B E S"
10. ACKNOWLEDGE.

Issued at 3 p.m. by runner to:-

Williamson
Captain,
Adjutant 56th Battalion, A.I.F.

1. O.C. "A" Co.
2. O.C. "B" Co.
3. O.C. "C" Co.
4. O.C. "D" Co.
5. C.O.
6. 14th A.I. Bde.
7.)
8.) War Diary.
9.)
10. File.

COPY.INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.For Period 6 p.m. 21/3/18 to 6 p.m. 24/3/18.

OPERATIONS: Our Artillery. Our artillery were constant in their harassing fire on enemy positions and with counter battery shoots. The enemy front line pill boxes and his tracks were subject to intermittent bursts from the field guns day and night whilst his gun positions and troop billeting areas in COMINES, HOUTHEM, WERVICQ, KORTEWILDE, ZANDVOORDE and TENBRIELEN received constant shelling from the heavies and siege guns.

PATROLS: No Man's Land was patrolled each night by 2/Lieut. H.R. Williams and his patrol. In the 3 nights he sent out four patrols and inspected the areas in the vicinity of the TWINS, the GIANTS and that portion of the enemy line from the GIANTS to the HOLLEBEKE road. Also Lieut. Watt and Lieut Grimsley patrolled the southern area to gain information on the state of the ground and enemy motor and wheeled transport reported to have been heard in the enemy forward area.

THE ENEMY SHELLING and gas bombardments decreased considerably from his previous weeks record and came down to his former very moderate standard. He confined his work to intermittent shelling of the centres of our activity. The area round the RAVINE, ONRAET FARM and front line receiving his chief attention. Battalion Headquarters at ONRAET FARM were subject to a gas bombardment on the night of 23/24th which lasted for some time.

ENEMY M.G. & T.M.: Were active at night time. His M.G's with indirect fire across our forward area and his T.M's on our wire and working parties.

ENEMY DEFENCES: The enemy has been fairly busy with work in his forward area and he has constructed many camouflage screens on our side of his tracks and roads, also he has formed several dumps in the same area. At our direction much of the camouflage and two of his dumps were destroyed.

56TH BATTALION.

A.I.F.

No. 6/26

(2)

by our artillery.

AIRCRAFT: Only one enemy plane was seen over our ~~kxn~~ lines during the period under consideration. This plane flying low went over ~~kxx~~ our forward area and the RAVINE. It was subject to a considerable amount of machine gun and rifle fire from our troops and seen returned to the ~~xxx~~ enemy lines. Our planes were up each day and daily crossed the enemy lines. No air fights were witnessed.

SIGNALLING AND FLARES: The enemy continued the use of his light green chain flares throughout the night also other strange and varied lights were sent up by him and as no resulting action was ~~xxx~~ directed in connection with these their purport cannot be stated.

(Sgd) A.H. Grimsby, Lieut.,
Intelligence Officer,
56th Battalion, A.I.F.



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(COPY)

WORK DONE BY 56TH BATTALION
MARCH 21/24/3/1918.

56TH BATTALION,
A.I.F.

WIRE-FRONT LINE: S.P.4.O.II: Flanks and rear protected by a 220 yds belt of double apron festooned barbed under front apron and French under rear apron. 85% completed. Garrisons of all other S.P's have been employed repairing and strengthening wire in vicinity of our posts. Wire across whole front is good but needs to be watched as it is being frequently damaged by Minnenwerfer fire particularly to left of and in front of S.P.4.O.II and between S.P.2.O.II and S.P.1.O.II RIGHT.

STRONG POINTS: S.P.3.O.II a breach caused by heavy Minnenwerfer repaired and drained by party of 1 Engineer and 1 & 4 Infantry in three nights. Completed.

S.P.6.O.II and S.P.9.O.IO. A party of 1 & 6 Inf. from garrisons assisted by two Engineers employed nightly in improving S.P's.

S.P.1.O.IO A party of 1 and 4 Inf. and 2 Engrs employed for three nights draining S.P. and repairing shelters. Completed.

REAR COY H.Q.: Parapet of entrance to Pillbox strengthened by laying 100 sandbags.

RAVINE (DEEP DUGOUTS (2): A permanent party of 2 and 12 employed in pumping out.

R.A.P. party of 2 Engrs and 1 & 4 Inf. employed job, including gas proof arrangements, completed.

WELL (New) party of 2 Engrs and 2 & 8 Inf. sunk well a further 4ft 6" and timbered. Not completed.

Duckboard track double wired connects to nearest track. completed.

DRAINAGE: Existing drain was extended 20 yds, revetted with small A frames and expanded metal frames. Completed. A corrugated iron trough is necessary to carry waste water from cookhouse to drain.

OAK SUPPORT TRENCH: To improve communication to LEFT SECTOR & FORRET FARM the incomplete portion of OAK SUPPORT was being revetted and duckboarded.

(2)
20 yds was completed and a further 15 yds Sap prepared.

GENERAL: Carrying parties carried forward 30,000 lbs S.A.A. to front line S.P's. Party of 2 & 30 other ranks employed with 14th Field Coy Engineers on SUPPORT LINE. Party of 1 & 25 other ranks employed carrying forward Trench Mortar ammunition night of 23rd.

(Sgd) J. McF. Harvey, Lieut.,
Works Officer, 56th Battalion, A.I.F



Reference: Sheet 28, 1/40,000

Headquarters,
25th March 1918.

1. The 56th Battalion, less Transport, will move to RENINGHELST AREA on 26th inst. by Light Railway from POLKA SIDING - N.21.d. Transport will move independently to same area.
2. Three trains each taking 360 men will move at following hours:-
 10 a.m.
 10.30 a.m.
 11 a.m.
 50 other ranks, Brigade Headquarters, will move on 11 a.m. train.
3. An Advanced Party consisting of Lieut. Grimsley, 1 Sgt. per Co. and 1 from Headquarters will report to Area Commandant's Office, RENINGHELST, at 7 a.m. on 26th inst. N.C.O.'s will report to Lieut. Grimsley at Battalion Headquarters at 4.30 a.m. with Company States.
4. The Battalion will march to LA POLKA in the following order:-
 HEADQUARTERS
 "D" Co.
 "B" Co.
 "C" Co.
 "A" Co.
 Headquarters will pass LAMP POST CORNER at 8 a.m.
5. Companies will move in parties of 15 at 50 yds. interval, and with 100 yds. between Companies.
6. DRESS: Full Marching Order with blanket. Mess tins to be carried on back of pack. Unexpired portion of day's rations to be carried. Water bottles to be filled.
7. O.C. Details at BELGIAN BARN will arrange to have all details at LA POLKA SIDING by 9.30 a.m. on 26th inst., where they will rejoin their Companies.
8. Transport will be available as under:-
 One and a half limber per Co. and one for Headquarters. These will arrive at LAMP POST CORNER at 6.30 a.m. All Lewis Guns, magazines and Cooking gear will be loaded on limbers and 1 No. 1 Lewis Gunner will accompany each limber. 1 Cook per Co. will accompany Cooking gear and will act as brakesman for Cookers.
9. All Shelters and Dugouts vacated must be left in a sanitary condition and usual certificates will be rendered to B.O.R. immediately on arrival at New Camp.
10. Marching Out States to be at B.O.R. by 7 a.m. and Marching In States half an hour after arrival at New Camp.
11. Watches to be synchronised at Bn. Signal Office by 6.30 a.m.

Issued by Runner at 8 p.m. to:-
 as per reverse.

Paul Williamson
 Captain,
 Adjutant 56th Battalion, A.I.F.

No. 1. O.C. "A" Co.
No. 2. O.C. "B" Co.
No. 3. O.C. "C" Co.
No. 4. O.C. "D" Co.
No. 5. O.C. Details
No. 6. Q.M.
No. 7. T.O.
No. 8. }
No. 9. } War Diary
No. 10. }
No. 11. File.

6. Q. M. The
7. T. O.
8.)

9. } War Diary.

* 11.4 0.1
 * 11.4 0.1
 11.4 0.1

•	00	51	11
•	00	11	11
•	00	11	11
•	00	11	11

APPENDIX

9

SYLLABUS OF TRAINING FOR 27/3/18.

REVEILLE	7 a.m.
BREAKFAST	7.30 a.m.
SICK PARADE	8 a.m.
COMPANY PARADE	9 a.m. to 12 noon.
DINNER	12.30 p.m.
(BATTALION PARADE	2 p.m. to 3 p.m.
(Particulars to be notified later.	



Every available man to be on parade, including all Specialists. Companies will be at the disposal of Company Commanders. Inspections to be made to ensure that all ranks are thoroughly and completely equipped. Every man must be in the possession of 3 pairs of socks and deficiencies must be drawn from Q.M. tomorrow. The Quartermaster has still some clothing left and Company Commanders will keep in touch with him. All Lewis Gunners will report to L.G. Officer at Transport Lines at 10 a.m. Remainder of Companies to carry on with Close Order Drill and Rifle Exercises. Steadiness and strict discipline must be insisted on.

26/3/18.

Williamson
 Captain,
 Adjutant 56th Battalion, A.I.F.

Reference sheet 28, 1/40,000
" " 27, 1/40,000

Headquarters,
27th March 1918.

1. The 56th Battalion with Transport will entrain at HOPOUTRE SIDING (Sheet 27.L.17.d.) on 28th inst as follows:-
(a) "C" Coy. with Coy. Cooker and team on train No. 6 departing at 2.45 a.m.
(b) Remainder of Battalion and Transport on train departing at 5.45 a.m.
2. Railway arrangements:-
(a) No Troops or Transport will be permitted to enter the station yard until the R.T.O. is ready.
(b) All trains will consist of 1 officers' carriage, 17 flat trucks and 30 covered trucks.
(c) Each flat truck will take on an average 4 axles.
(d) Each covered truck will take 6 H.D. Horses or 8 L.D. Horses or 40 men.
(e) No personnel or stores will be allowed in the brake vans at each end of the train or on the roofs of the trucks. No covered trucks should be used for luggage as it restricts space available for personnel.
(f) Transport will arrive at the entraining station 3 (three) hours before the departure of the train and the personnel one and a half hours.
3. Billeting Party:-
An Advanced Party consisting of Lieut. Grimsley and 1 N.C.O. per Coy. and one from H.Q. will act as billeting party. This party will take bicycles and will travel by No. 1. train departing at 11.45 a.m. on 27th inst. The Officer-in-Charge will report to Brigade H.Q. representative at R.T.O.'s Office, Detraining Station.
4. Columns will pass Starting Point (Road junction G.28.a.4.6.) at following times:-
"C" Coy. at 11.15 p.m. on 27th inst.
Remainder of Battalions less Transport in following order:-
Headquarters, }
"A" Coy. }
"B" Coy. } at 2.15 a.m. on 28th inst.
"D" Coy. }
Distances of 100 yds. will be maintained between Companies.
5. Lewis Guns:-
"C" Coy. will take all Lewis Guns and Gear with them. These will be transported to entraining station by limber and unloaded there. The L.G.O. will accompany Transport and take sufficient Lewis Gunners with him to unload guns and gear at the station. Only chests etc. will be left on limbers.
6. Dress:-
Full Marching Order with blanket. Steel helmets. Felt hats must not be worn. Mess tins on haversack. Packs to be worn "Gallipoli" fashion.
7. Rations:-
Rations for 28th inst will be carried on the man and on Cookers. Water Bottles to be filled.
8. Baggage:-
Officers' Valises, Company Records, B.O.R. Gear and Medical and Signalling Stores will be ready for loading at 10 minutes notice any time after 9 p.m., 27th inst.
9. Transport:-
Supply and Baggage Wagons will accompany Transport. Breast ropes for horse trucks must be provided by the Battalion. Ropes for lashing vehicles on the flat trucks will be provided by the Railways.

10. Marching Out States:-

Complete Marching Out States to be furnished to B.O.R. at 6 p.m. on 27th inst. The Transport Officer will show number of men, Horses, H.D. or L.D., Wagons, G.Sp., Wagons limbered, G.S., 2 wheeled and other 4 wheeled vehicles. The Transport Officer will be provided with a complete Marching Out State for train No. 7. and will report with it to R.T.O. at Entraining Station.

11. Watches to be synchronised at B.O.R. at 10 p.m. 27th inst.

12. ACKNOWLEDGE.

Issued at 1 p.m. on 27th inst to:-

Williamson
Captain,
Adjutant 56th Battalion, A.I.F.

- No. 1. O.C. "A" Co.
- No. 2. O.C. "B" Co.
- No. 3. O.C. "C" Co.
- No. 4. O.C. "D" Co.
- No. 5. Q.M.
- No. 6. T.O.
- No. 7. C.O.
- No. 8. L.G.O.
- No. 9. }
- No. 10. } War Diary.
- No. 11. }
- No. 12. File.

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56TH BATTALION ORDER No. 10

=====

APPENDIX. // 37

Copy No.

A.I.F.

11/10/26
Headquarters,
30th March '18.

Reference Sheet 57D 1/40,000

1. The 55th, 56th, 31st and 32nd Battalions are occupying LOUVENCOURT.
2. (a) The 56th Battalion will provide an Outpost Company to occupy Sector from LOUVENCOURT - ACHEUX road (inclusive) at O.5.b.6.3. to LOUVENCOURT - BUS-LES-ARTOIS road (inclusive) at I.36.a.3.1.
(b) The 31st Battalion will occupy sector on best.
(c) The 53rd and 54th Battalions are occupying ACHEUX and LEAL VILLERS area.
(d) The enemy are known to occupy MESNIL and ALBERT.
3. "B" Company will relieve outpost Company of 55th Battalion at 7 p.m. on night of 30/31st inst.
4. Detailed instructions issued separately to O.C. Outposts.
5. The Picquet Line will be the line of resistance.
6. In the event of an enemy attack developing towards this position the 56th Battalion will be utilized to reinforce and hold the Picquet Line. On the alarm being given Companies will stand to arms on alarm posts and despatch an N.C.O. to Battalion Headquarters for Orders.
7. All Officers and Senior N.C.O.'s from "A", "C" and "D" Companies will reconnoitre the picquet Line today and make themselves acquainted with approaches to all posts.
8. Rations: "D" Company travelling kitchen and cooks will be placed at the disposal of O.C. Outposts tomorrow 31st inst. O.C. "D" Company will arrange to have meals cooked on "A" and "C" Companies' ~~gasker~~ travelling kitchens.

O.C.,
Captain
E.H. Mann.

Issued at 5.30 p.m. by runner to:-

Williamson
Captain,
Adjutant 56th Battalion, A.I.F.

No. 1. O.C. "A" Co.
No. 2. O.C. "B" Co.
No. 3. O.C. "C" Co.
No. 4. O.C. "D" Co.
No. 5. ~~File~~.
No. 6.) War Diary.
No. 7.)
No. 8. File.

264

STANDING ORDERS WHILST OCCUPYING LOUVENCOURT.
 =====

1. The whole Battalion, including Transport must be in readiness to move at an hour's notice.
2. In the event of hostile aircraft, all men must be kept under cover and not allowed to congregate in the streets.
 A.A. Lewis Guns will open fire at all enemy aeroplanes within range.
3. No light must be showing in billets at night.
4. Company Commanders and Transport Officer must take all precautions against fire.
5. Sentries must be placed over each billet.
6. Estaminets are open from 12 noon to 2 p.m. and from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
 No soldiers will be allowed on the premises between these hours.
7. The Provost Sergeant and Regimental Police will patrol the Village and have authority to clear and close any Estaminet.
8. An Inlying Picquet of 1 Officer and ^{20 other Ranks} 1 M.C.O. will be provided nightly by each Battalion in turn.
- 9.. In the event of the Village being evacuated by the civilians, guards must be immediately placed over deserted Estaminets etc.
10. The civilians here are very poor and every effort must be made to check anything in the shape of looting or destruction of property. Offenders will be very severely punished.
11. In the event of this Village being heavily shelled especially at night, Companies and Transport of necessary will move by shortest route clear of the village on to LOUVENCOURT - LEALVILLERS road.
 Battalion Headquarters will move to right post of Picquet Line.
 Companies and Transport will send reports there immediately they are clear of the village.
12. This Battalion will provide 1 Officer and 2 men daily to regulate watering of horses at Watering Point from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.
 Companies will provide parties as follows:-

"D" Co.	From 7 a.m.	to 10 a.m.
"C" Co.	From 10 a.m.	to 1 p.m.
"A" Co.	From 1 p.m.	to 4 p.m.

Williamson
 Captain,
 Adjutant 56th Battalion, A.I.F.

331/3/18.

LIST OF ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES FOR MONTH ENDING 31st MARCH 1918. BATTALION.

From Hospital.
Officers. Other Ranks.
 Nil. 67.

From leave to U.K. & Paris.
Officers. Other Ranks.
 8. 136.

Capt. G. H. Mann.
 Lieut. J. Bull.
 Lieut. R. G. Courtney.
 Lieut. J. C. Watt, M.C., D.C.M.
 Lieut. J. T. Adams.
 Lieut. L. Scott.
 Lieut. J. McF. Harvey
 2/Lieut. S. F. Spratt.

To Hospital.
Officers. Other Ranks.
 Nil. 93.

On leave to U.K. and Paris.
Officers. Other Ranks.
 5. 126.

Lieut. J. C. Watt, M.C., D.C.M.
 Lieut. L. Scott.
 Lieut. A. A. Blackpool.
 2/Lieut. S. F. Spratt.
 Major C. R. Lucas.

From Schools of Instruction.
Officers. Other Ranks.
 7. 51.

Lieut-Col. F. D. W. Oatley
 Capt. G. H. Mann.
 Capt. A. M. Cohen.
 Lieut. R. J. Poore, M.C.
 Lieut. E. B. Gardner
 Lieut. W. H. Gilbey
 2/Lieut. L. K. Threlkeld.

To Schools of Instruction.
Officers. Other Ranks.
 7. 66.

Lieut-Col. F. D. W. Oatley
 Capt. G. H. Mann.
 Capt. A. M. Cohen.
 Lieut. W. H. Gilbey.
 Lieut. E. B. Gardner.
 Lieut. H. G. Thompson.
 2/Lieut. P. J. Rochford.

From Detached Duties.
Officers. Other Ranks.
 Nil. 102.

This embraces Working parties who were detached for a short period with
 184th Tunnelling Co., 14th Field Co. Aust. Engineers, etc.

Transferred from other Units.
Officers. Other Ranks.
 Nil. 2.
 (1 from 54th Bn.)
 (1 from 30th Bn.)

Transferred to other Units.
Officers. Other Ranks.
 Nil. 4.
 (2 to 30th Bn.)
 (1 to D.A.D.O.S.)
 (1 to Aust. Corps.
 (Wireless.)

Casualties sustained. Rejoined.
Officers. Other Ranks.
 Nil. 22.
 (ex Wounded)

Casualties Sustained.
Officers. Other Ranks.
 Nil. 6.
 (1 Killed)
 (3 Gassed)
 (2 Wounded)

Rejoined from Supernumerary.
Officers. Other Ranks.
 1. 2.
 Lieut. W. M. Pitt, M.C. (2 ex T.B.)

Placed on Supernumerary.
Officers. Other Ranks.
 Nil. 1
 (Cadet Bn.)

Rejoined from Seconded List
Officers. Other Ranks.
 1. Nil.
 Capt. E. L. Dalkeith.

Placed on Seconded List.
Officers. Other Ranks.
 1. Nil.
 Lieut. A. B. Heugh.

New Reinforcements received.
Officers. Other Ranks.
 Nil. 1. 13/30 Bn.

31/3/18.

Williamson
 Captain,
 Adjutant 56th Battalion, A.I.F.

56TH BATTALION DEFENCE SCHEME

=====

Map ref.
WYTSCHAETE 1/10,000

APPENDIX. 14

COPY No.

56TH BATTALION.

In the Field,
22/3/18.

14 Vol. 26

Date.....

1. BATTALION AREA:-

- (a) Frontage. The front held by the Battalion extends from the ROOZERBEEK at 0.II.d.30.15 to the ST. ELOI-HOLLERBEKE ROAD exclusive 0.I2.a.0.6
- (b) Boundaries. Northern Boundary. Runs from LOCK 5 to 0.I2.a.0.6 to ST. ELOI-HOLLERBEKE ROAD exclusive to ST. ELOI thence to 0.I.d central thence to VIERSTRAAT.
- Southern boundary. The ROOZERBEEK-0.I6.a.2.4.- 0.I5.b.75.45 - 0.9.d.0.0. - MARTINS FARM.
- (c) Topography. The Front Line positions are sited on a gentle forward slope and command the enemy positions in front. The ROOZERBEEK Valley on the Southern boundary is very marshy and would be extremely difficult to negotiate in wet weather. The high ground running from ROSE WOOD northwards through the RAVINE and DELBSKE FARM is the main tactical feature. It commands all the country in front and the ROSE WOOD Defences overlook the ROOZERBEEK Valley.

2. DEFENSIVE POSITIONS:-

- (a) The Front System consists of 5 Strong Points as under:-

- No. 1.0.II.
No. 2.0.II.
No. 3.0.II.
No. 4.0.II.
No. 5.0.II.

No.1.0.II is the revetted and duckboarded trenches about 50 yards apart connected by duckwalks. They cover the ROOZERBEEK.

No.2.0.II is a revetted trench.

No.3.0.II is FORRET FARM one small revetted trench. There is pill box accommodation here. FORRET FARM is a pill box and is used as forward Company Headquarters.

No.4.0.II is in HOLLERBEKE with 2 posts about 20 yards apart built in ruins. Pill Box accommodation.

No.5.0.II is a revetted trench with cupola accommodation about 200 yards in rear of No.4.0.II.

Duckboards connect all posts. Wire is fairly good throughout and a thick belt on whole front is at present under construction.

Rear Company Headquarters is in a pill box at 0.I0.d.9.7.

SUPPORT LINE consists of a series of Strong Points:-

- | | | |
|-------------------|---|----------------|
| 3.0.I6 ROSE WOOD | } | RIGHT SUPPORT. |
| 1.0.I0 do. | | |
| 9.0.I0 Forward of | } | LEFT SUPPORT. |
| 6.0.II RAVINE | | |
| 7.0.II WOOD | | |

RESERVE LINE is a series of Strong Points from DENYS WOOD.

ENGLEBRIEN FARM. RAVINE WOOD and DELBSKE FARM to 0.I0.b.15.75.

COMMUNICATIONS:- OLIVE TRENCH is at present the only C.T. to the Front Line System. It is in good condition as far as 0.II.s.0.6 where it becomes shallow. It is not advisable to use this C.T. beyond front line Rear Company Headquarters in daylight.

(2)

2. DEFENSIVE POSITIONS (Contd)

- (a) Another C.T. extends from RAVINE through DELBSKE FARM to S.P.5.O.II. RAVINE TRACK is a combined tramline and duckwalk from ONRAET FARM to the RAVINE. Another duckwalk track extends from ONRAET FARM to DELBSKE FARM. OLIVE TRACK is a duckwalk track from CLARKE DUMP through DENYS WOOD to O.9.d.3.4. to OLIVE TRENCH. OTHER DUCKWALKS (a) From O.10.c.2.3 to ROSE WOOD Company Headquarters at O.16.a.8.7. (b) From RAVINE Track at O.15.b.3.8 to DENYS WOOD Company Headquarters. (c) From O.10.c.2.7 to DELBSKE FARM. DIVISIONAL RESERVE LINE- Strong Points in Square 9.a. and d.

3. METHOD OF HOLDING THE LINE.

- (a) One Company and 6 Lewis Guns in Front Line System.
 (b) One Company in the RAVINE (Left Support).
 (c) One Company in ROSE WOOD (Right Support).
 (d) One Company in DENYS WOOD (Reserve).

The Picquet Line is held by 4 Platoon Strong Points. A proportion of the garrison of S.P.4.O.II is withdrawn to S.P.5.O.II by day. The garrison of S.P.3.O.II is withdrawn to Pill Box near FORRET FARM by day. Advanced Company Headquarters at FORRET FARM O.11.b.2.1. Rear Company Headquarters at O.10.d.90.75.

Left Support Company in RAVINE with garrisons in S.P.9.O.IO. 6.O.II, 7.O.II (when completed).

Company Headquarters in RAVINE at O.10.d.1.6.

Reserve Company (DENYS WOOD) are distributed in following Strong Points:- 5.O.15, 1.O.9, 2.O.9, 5.O.IO, 6.O.IO, 7.O.IO, 8.O.IO.

Company Headquarters in Pill Box at DENYS WOOD O.9.d.5.3.

BATTALION HEADQUARTERS -ONRAET FARM -O.14.a.2.1.

ADVANCED BATTALION HEADQUARTERS -RAVINE -O.10.d.1.4.

4. ACTION IN CASE OF ATTACK.

The Garrisons in the Front Line System will offer all possible resistance to any enemy attack.

In the event of a heavy preliminary bombardment alternate Lewis Gun positions may be selected on the flank of a post, so that the Lewis Gun may miss the bombardment and bring fire to bear on attacking troops. LEFT SUPPORT COMPANY will defend the S.P's 9.O.IO -6.O.II -7.O.II -and will hold themselves in readiness for an immediate counter attack against any of the Front Line Posts which may have been overwhelmed.

No counter attack however will be launched until the Posts from which it is to be made is properly manned by garrisons brought from the rear.

RIGHT SUPPORT COMPANY will defend the S.P's 3.O.I6 -1.O.IO, each with one platoon, and will occupy the alternate S.P's 2.O.IO, 3.O.IO with two platoons which will hold themselves in readiness to move forward to Left Support posts.

RESERVE COMPANY (DENYS WOOD) will man their Strong Points and await orders from Battalion Commander.

~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Lewis Gun crews at MARTINS FARM and DAMM STRASSE will report with their guns to the O.C. Reserve Company.

WORKING PARTIES

- (a) Parties forward of Company Headquarters Line Company will report at once to Picquet Line.
 (b) Parties in rear of Company Headquarters Line Company will report back to their respective Companies without delay.



(3)

5. ACTION IN CASE BATTALION ON FLANKS ARE BEING HARD PRESSED OR DRIVEN BACK:
 If Right Battalion is driven back ROSE WOOD Company will give all possible assistance by bringing flanking fire to bear on the enemy.
 Reserve Company, DENYS WOOD will man Strong Points as previously instructed.
 If Left Battalion is being driven back Battalion will stand to arms and await instructions from Headquarters.

90th BATTALION
 A.I.F.
 No.
 Date
 At

ACTION IN CASE ENEMY RAIDS OUR SECTOR.

The usual S.O.S. Signal will be sent up and as soon as it has been determined that action is purely local and in the nature of a raid special signal will be sent up by Officers of Front Line Company only. At present this signal bursts into 2 RED and 2 WHITE lights. On signal being sent up, artillery will concentrate on locality.
 Dispositions as laid down in para 4 Defence Scheme will be adopted by all Companies. S.P.'s on flanks on enemy raid will render all possible assistance to post being raided by cross L.G. and Rifle fire, and if possible local counter attacks on flank of raid.

6. S.O.S.: - by (a) Rifle Grenade Signal.
 (b) Signal Service.

There are Relay Posts at all Company Headquarters and Advanced Battalion Headquarters. S.O.S. fired by the Front Line will be repeated by these Stations.

7. SIGNAL COMMUNICATIONS.

- (a) BURIED CABLE from Brigade Headquarters to Battalion Headquarters to DENYS WOOD Company Headquarters to Advanced Battalion Headquarters to Artillery Group Headquarters, to Headquarters of Battalion on our Right.
 (b) GROUND LINE TELEPHONES. From DENYS WOOD Company Headquarters to ROSE WOOD Company Headquarters to Advanced Battalion Headquarters to Front Line Company Headquarters to FORRET FARM. Also from Advanced Battalion Headquarters to Headquarters of Battalion on our left.
 (c) VISUAL. From DENYS WOOD Company Headquarters to Brigade Headquarters
 (d) RUNNERS. Relay Stations at Advanced Battalion Headquarters and at DENYS WOOD..

8. AMMUNITION. Dumps.

1. Brigade.....CLARKE DUMP.....0.15.a.1.4.

CATTEAU FARM.....0.8.c.8.4.

2. Battalion.....ROSE DUMP.....0.10.c.25.25.

In addition there are Company and S.P. Dumps of S.A.A. and Grenades at Company Headquarters and Strong Points.

9. RATIONS. Rations are carried forward by Light Railway from MACONCHIE to CLARKE DUMP and from there pushed forward by hand to RAVINE. Cooking under Company arrangements.
 Y.M.C.A. Cocoa Stall in RAVINE.

10. WATER.

- (1) ONRAET FARM.
 (2) DENYS WOOD.
 (3) ROSE WOOD
 (4) A well is under construction in RAVINE.

(4)

11. GAS. Strombos Horns, Gas Rattles and Gongs are located at all Company Headquarters and Advanced and Rear Battalion Headquarters.
12. ARTILLERY:- The Brigade Front is covered by the HOLLEBEKE GROUP. Headquarters at N.15.b.8.2. The Group consists of three batteries of 18 pounders, and one battery of 4.5 howitzers, all of six guns each. The Australian Corps Heavy Artillery is available for counter battery work. An F.O.C. occupies an O.P. near Front Line Company Headquarters during day and Liaison Officers are at Forward Battalion Headquarters. Company Commanders must keep in touch with these Officers.
13. MACHINE GUNS:- The 14th and 25th Machine Gun Companies protect our front by barrage and direct fire.
14. TRENCH MORTARS:- Stokes and Heavy Mortars fired from various positions on front.
15. ANTI-AIRCRAFT LEWIS GUNS:

O.9.b.13.55.
 O.8.d.60.05. ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~
 O.9.d.30.50.
 O.10.d.30.55
 O.10.b.2.6
 O.16.a.90.70

16. OBSERVATION POSTS:

O.10.d.8.7
 O.11.a.0.0

17. CANTEN:

Battalion Headquarters ONRAET FARM.-O.14.a.2.1.

18. Q.M.STORE:

MACONCHIE SIDING. Transport Lines at NORFOLK CAMP.

19. CEMETERY:

OOSTAVERNE WOOD, O.15.c.40.85.



Williamson
 Captain,
 Adjutant 56th Battalion, A.I.F.

56TH BATTALION,
A.I.F.

No.....

Date.....

APPENDIX TO WAR DIARY: MARCH 1918.

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56TH BATTALION
A.I.F.

No. 15 Vol 26

264

strength of battalion on 1/3/18 (including detached:
In Hospital, At Schools and On Command etc. 14 Off. 284 OR.

Drafts etc. received during the month including:
Officers and Other Ranks ex sick and ex wounded

<u>officers.</u>	<u>other Ranks.</u>
43	1012
4	76
47	1088
=====	

strength of battalion on 31/3/18 (including detached:
In Hospital, At Schools and On Command etc. 13 Off. 248 O.R.

Transfers, Evacuations, out of Div. area, Secondings etc.

<u>officers.</u>	<u>other Ranks.</u>
44	950
3	138
47	1088
=====	

31/3/18.

Williamson
Captain,
Adjutant 56th Battalion, A.I.F.