

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

Artillery

**Item number:** 13/113/2

**Title:** 9th Australian Medium Trench Mortar  
Battery

March 1918



AWM4-13/113/2

18,000-12/1 -8723

**CONFIDENTIAL.**

ORIGINAL.  
DUPLICATE.  
TRIPLICATE.

Australian Imperial Force.

**WAR DIARY**

OF

*9<sup>th</sup> a m I m. Bty*

FOR

*March* 191*8*

Signature of Officer compiling

*[Handwritten signature]*

Signature of Officer Commanding

*[Handwritten signature]*

## WAR DIARY

or

## INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

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

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Parma Dump Camp	1/3/18		<p>Two 6" Newton Guns complete with beds are loaded on trucks at Parma Dump Camp and taken per Light Ply to black Dump.</p> <p>Also Two Newton Beds (6") are set in in Nos. 1 + 2 Reserve Positions</p> <p>Shoot carried out with No. 2 Gun (010 D63.43); 20 rds on "Twin Pillbox", + 20 rds on "Giant". Direct hits were obtained. Open fire 2 p.m. cease 2.15 p.m.</p> <p>Retaliation nil. Casualties to Guns + Personnel :- Nil. Weather cloudy. Obs<sup>n</sup> Poor.</p> <p>69 rds of 6" T.M.G. transported from black Dump to No. 1 Gun Position by G.S. Limbers, also 100 Charges + component Parts.</p>	
	2/3/18		<p>Action carried out as follows:- No. 1 Gun (4 p.m.) 20 rds on Bee Farm (0236015) + 20 rds on Bat Farm (023 D6.9); direct hits on both targets. No. 2 Gun - (4.10 to 4.30 p.m.) fired 30 rds on the "Giant" (012 C3.6), + 10 rds on the "Twin" (011 D9.2). Retaliation:- Nil. Casualties :- Nil. Weather - dull, cold wind + slight snow</p>	
	3/3/18		<p>Action as follows:- No. 1 Gun (2.0 to 2.15 p.m.) 50 rds on wire in front of Wam + Beke Farms. No. 2 Gun 30 rds on "Giant" + 20 rds on Twins (2.0 to 2.20 p.m.)</p> <p>Observations:- poor, Weather, Misty. Casualties:- Nil. Retaliation:- Nil. Work continued on No. 3 Res 6" Newton Gun Position. 200 rds 6" T.M.G (complete) arrive black Dump by Rail. Also 2 2" T.M.L.H. conveyed from Parma Dump to Polka Estaminet by G.S. Limber</p>	<p><i>W.H. [Signature]</i></p>

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Parma Dump Camp	4/3/18		<p>9<sup>th</sup> Australian Medium Trench Mortar Battery assembled at Parma Dump Camp. O.C., - Capt. A. Macallister, M.B., D.G.M.</p> <p>Personnel consisting of Y5A Bty, X5A Bty (part) &amp; V5A Bty (part)</p> <p>Nominal Rolls checked. Z5A Bty relieved at Wolverghem.</p> <p>Right section (Lt. Newmarch) commence tour of duty at Steignast Farm Pillon</p> <p>Centre section (Lt. Taylor) " " " " Supports (U.I.B.7.7)</p> <p>Left section (Lt. Christensen) " " " " Hqs. Wolverghem.</p> <p><del>Right</del> <sup>7</sup> Rounds fired by Rt section (6" Newton T.M.)</p>	
Wolverghem	5/3/18		<p>Right section (Lt. Newmarch), action as follows:- 9.40 p.m., 2 rds, on target 036C90.60; 9.50 p.m., 3 rds, on target 036C90.50; weather fine; cas. nil.</p> <p>Heavy Minenwerfer firing from direction of U12B68.92 engaged by our Artillery.</p>	
	6/3/18		<p>Right section, action as follows:- 2.15 a.m., 4 rds. on target U6C9.3.</p> <p>weather fine; cas. nil., Heavy Minenwerfer firing from direction of U12B68.92 at 2.10 a.m. engaged by our Artillery. Right section dismounts gun from U5B4.5 ready for moving. Centre section carried 4 boxes component parts to Steignast.</p>	

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Wolverghem	4/3/18		Action carried out by Right Section as follows:- 6.55 p.m., 5 rds, on target 036 C.55; 8.40 p.m., 5 rds. on 036 C.55; 9.10 p.m., 3 rds. on 036 C.9.4; 10.5 p.m., 5 rds, on 036 C.8.7; 11.5 p.m., 2 rds on V6 C.9.2; 11.38 p.m., 7 rds, on 036 C.8.4; 12.25 am, (8/3/18) 4 rds. on 036 C.85.40; 1.10 am, 4 rds on 036 C.7.4; 3.35 am, 8 rds on V6 C.6.4; + again at 4.0 am, 10 rds on V6 C.6.4. Casualties:- Nil. Weather, fine. Centre & Left sections put gun in new position at V5 C.8.1.	
	8/3/18		Under operation Order No. 142, 15 <sup>th</sup> Inf Brigade, 20 rds. were fired on the wire in front of Enemy Trenches V6 C.150875 at 9 p.m. + 12 p.m. Retaliation was heavy in vicinity of Steignast Farm, with 20 direct hits on Pillbox casualties Nil; but one traversing stay bent. Weather, fine. Lt. Sanders attached; Lt. Taylor + Sdr. Ruskin left to attend Gas School.	
	9/3/18		Action as follows:- 6.10 p.m., 5 rds. on 036 C.90.98; 8.10 p.m., 4 rds. on V6 C.8.3; 9.15 p.m. 10 rds. on 036 C.78.01; 10.0 p.m., 11 rds on 036 C.98; + 10.30 p.m., 6 rds on 036 C.8.9. Cas. Nil, Weather clear. New Coy Minnie firing from vicinity of 036 C.80.90, continuously on front system. Heavy firing round Steignast with 15 direct hits between 8 p.m + 4.30 am.	
	10/3/18		Section relief carried out to-night.	<i>Officially Signed</i>

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Wolverghem	10/3/18 Contd.		<p>Following reliefs were carried out  Right section to Wolverghem, Centre section to Messines. Left section to Support at U1677.  Lt. Christensen to take over centre section whilst in line during absence of Lt O. Taylor.  Lt Sanders to take over left section whilst Lt Christensen in centre section.  Steignast Farm to be vacated by forward section, the headquarters of which to be for future in Messines. Relief carried out without casualties. Action carried out by centre section as follows:- At 10pm 40 rds fired on enemy wire (056 A21) + (056 A1099) weather frosty. Casualties to personnel and guns Nil. Ammunition Carried Nil. Reported a direct hit has been obtained on No 3 Reserve Gun 2" ML at 034205. 75 gun badly damaged. Divisional order received that further firing by this Battery to cease unless on S.O.S. signal or direct order of Group Commander. This is owing to shortage of T.M.G and having expended allowance.</p>	
do.	11/3/18		<p>Action carried out by centre section as follows:- At 10.30pm 15 rds fired on Kwi Farm (036 C66) weather frosty. Casualties to personnel. Nil. Ammunition carried Nil. Retaliation 7.7 and 4.2 around gun position. Enemy activity periodical 7.7 and 4.2. Light mine weeper action at intervals 7pm to 2 am. At 9pm to 10.30pm a new projectile sounding like light Gas shell showing</p>	<p>Difficult to get</p>

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Wulverghem	11/3/18	Contd	Streamers of light fired from direction of Kingsblere on to left sector, 250 of these were observed. Would consider these light minewerfer except for range.	
do	12/3/18		Selection of new 6" Newton Gun positions <del>and</del> Depot Farm (028 D89) selected. Dismounting No 1 Gun and beds ready for transport to new position	
do	13/3/18		Forward section (centre) standing by all night on S.O.S. No 2 Gun bombarding Kiwi Farm assisting raiding party. Support section (left) working ammunition forward and standing by S.O.S lines. Reserve section locating 2" position which had been blown in. Action carried out by Centre section as follows:- At 3.30 am 15 Rds were fired on Kiwi Farm (036 C 4055) light rain falling. Casualties to personnel and guns Nil. Retaliation practically nil (a dozen gas shells yellow cross). Enemy activity. Pillbox at Messines (living quarters) had to be vacated during day owing to 5.9 Guns calibrating on Church. Party of gun crews lightly shelled about dusk while going down Hun's walk.	
do	14/3/18		No action carried out today. Enemy activity on right of Pillbox 30 rds 7 7 fired Hostile minewerfer activity about 8.40pm, about Merondelle Rd and Kiwi Farm. Machine Guns active along Cinema Road	<p><i>Macalister</i></p>

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Wulverghem	15/3/18		Received pay and distributed same to Battery. Two men No 1332 Gnr Bennett. L and No 30943 Gnr Norton. AG evacuated to Div Rest Strm Support section carrying bombs from right tram head to Steignast Gun position. Forward section brought back from reserve position to Messines No 3 Gun (2") which was damaged by shell fire, same being sent to 23 I.O. No. for repair. Standing by at night on S.O.S. lines.	
do	16/3/18		Gun crews standing by S.O.S. Supports section carrying ammunition. Lt. Sanders (supports section) reported to Camp for instruction in 6" Newton Gun. Reserve section on Gun laying and drill. Lt. O. Taylor and Bdr. Ruskin reported back from Gas school. Gnr Garlick reported from detached duty.	
do	17/3/18		Section relief carried out tonight. Right section to supports (Lt. Sanders). Centre section to Wulverghem (Lt. Christensen) and left section to Messines (Forward) Lt. O. Taylor.	
do	18/3/18		Selecting a third 6" Reserve position, which has been fixed at 0314 D 65.10. Transporting ammunition to Reserve Gun positions U4A 85.55, U4B 15.25, U4C 88. Forward section standing by on S.O.S. Supports section guarding ammunition parties. Standing orders S.O.S. signal issued to all concerned. Reserve section at Bath parade Gun laying in the afternoon.	<p style="text-align: right;"><i>[Signature]</i></p>

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Wulverghem	19/3/18		<p>Forward section take up quarters in Steignast Farm. Supports section take up quarters at Messines. Forward section withdrawing No 7 Active Gun to Huns Walk. Supports section acting as guides to Ammunition carrying parties and carrying ammunition. Action carried out by Left section as follows:- At fifteen rounds were fired on Minewerfer position (036 C 7070) at the various times viz 8.15 pm, 9.0 pm, 10.20 pm, 11.36 pm, 3.20 am, and 4.45 am. Weather raining all night and slight mist. Forward section standing by on S.O.S signal. Casualties to personnel and guns. Nil. At 8.15 pm, 30 rds (Enemy retaliation) 4.2 on Pillbox (White Spot cottage). 8.25 pm 20 rds 4.2 on same. From dusk to dawn enemy Machine Guns in vicinity of Warneton and Kiwi Farm active on Huns Walks and Steignast. For Gas attack enemy retaliated with 20 rds 5.9 on Steignast; on two red flares being sent up 4.7 opened up on Hirondelle Road and on Messines Ridge. All quiet by 11 pm. 12.40 to 3 am. 20 rds of all calibres on Huns Walk and Hirondelle Road.</p>	
do	20/3/18		<p>Action carried out by <sup>left</sup> section on the following Targets:- On Minewerfer Position (036 C 5550) 10 Rds were fired at 9.0 pm, 9.45 pm and 12.45 am. On Light Minewerfer and Pineapple Position <sup>(U6C0055)</sup> 14 Rds were fired at 1.20 am, 1.30 am, and 1.33 am (21/3/18).</p>	<p><i>Difficult Capt</i></p>

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Wolverham	20/3/18		<p>On Minewerfer Position (U12A15) 18 Rds were fired at 1.58 am, 2.03 am, and 2.15 am (21/3/18)</p> <p>On Minewerfer Position (U11B8590) 14 Rds were fired at 2.20 am, 2.24 am and 2.30 am (21/3/18)</p> <p>On Minewerfer Position (O36C5550) 8 Rds were fired at 3.20 am and 3.26 am (21/3/18)</p> <p>Weather moonlight and misty. Casualties to Guns: Nil. Casualties to Personnel, Enr Hart. W. J. and Enr Smith R. B. (wounded). Retaliation. At 9.35 pm Enemy retaliated with 30 Rds 4.2 around Steignast and 20 Rds along Huns Walk. At 3 am 150 Rds 4.2 and 5.9 on U5D and at 3.45 am, 15 Rds 4.2 near Steignast. Between 10 pm to 3 am (21/3/18) Minewerfers fairly active along whole front and Machine Guns at short intervals.</p>	
do	21/3/18		<p>Forward section standing by on S.O.S lines and dismounting No 1 Gun at Steignast. Support section supplying No 1 and No 2 Reserve 2" T.M. with ammunition. Reserve section altering No 3 and No 4 2" Gun positions and supplying Nos. 3.475 Gun positions with ammunition. Action was carried out by the left section on the following targets: Minewerfer Position (O36C5550) 10 Rds were fired at 11.15 pm, 10 Rds at 11.35 pm and 6 Rds at 12.15 am (22/3/18). On Light Minewerfer Position (U6A44) 16 Rds were fired at 1.0 am (22/3/18) and 12 Rds on same position at 1.30 am (22/3/18). On Minewerfer Position</p>	

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*W. H. Calverly Capt*

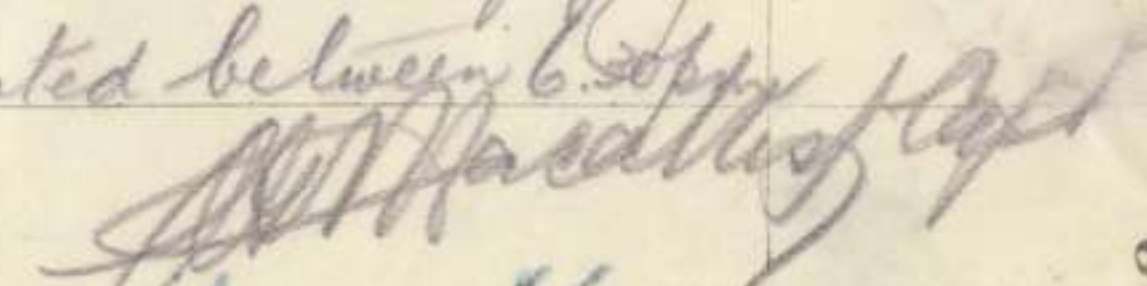
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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Wulverghem	21/3/18 Contd		(036C 55.50) 6 Rds were fired at 2.45 am (21/3/18) Weather:- Moonlight and foggy. Casualties to Guns and Personnel:- Nil. Retaliation:- Enemy retaliated at 9.30 pm with 50 Rds 4.2 in vicinity of Steignast. Between 11 pm and 2.40 am (21/3/18) Pineapples active from Windmill to Kivi Rd. Between 3. am to 3.30 am (21/3/18) heavy shelling of various calibres on front system from Hun's Walk across right Battalion. Between 3.30 am and 4.15 am (21/3/18) enough gas shells with H.E. were thrown in the vicinity of Steignast to necessitate continuous wearing of S.B. Rs.	
do	21/3/18		Forward section standing by on S.O.S lines and transporting Gun from Steignast to Hun's walk. Support section completing ammunition supply to No. 1 2" Gun and putting in Gun at 0.34 C8.V. Reserve section transporting Gun (6") from Wulverghem to Messines. Action was carried out by the Left section on the following targets:- At 10.5 pm 10 Rds were fired on Light Mortar Position (036C 55.50). At 11.25 pm 8 Rds were fired on Light Mortar Position (036A 20.10) and 5 Rds on same position at 11.35 pm. 6 Rds were fired at 12.0 (midnight) on Light Mortar Position (036C 55.50) and 6 Rds were also fired at 12.25 am on Light Mortar Position (036A 20.10). Weather:- Moonlight and heavy fog. Casualties to Guns and Personnel:- Nil. Retaliation:- Enemy retaliated between 6.30 pm	<p style="text-align: right;">         J. H. Hasall        Lt     </p>

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Wulverghem	22/3/18 Conta		to 7.30pm with 60 Rds 4.2" in vicinity of Steignast Farm and on Pillboxes, Herondelle Road. at 11.30pm 10 Rds of 4.2" on Huns Walk and Septieme Barn. At 12.25am (22/3/18) 5 Rds Momeverfers right of Steignast, evidently new "Light" positions. From dusk to dawn Machine Guns quieter than usual. Gas sent over by our people 12.0 midnight and 12.20am appeared to be sent over by 4" Stokes - Hot Projectors. No 1554 Gun Robinson, E.J. evacuated to Hospital.	
do	23/3/18		Forward section on S.O.S. lines. Intelligence: - At 4pm 15 Rds 4.2" near Steignast. At 7pm about 30 Rds Gas shells behind Steignast. Machine Guns active for an hour after dusk till 10pm. Between 2.45am + 4:00am (24/3/18) very quiet on enemy side. At 3am 100 Rds incendiary put over by our 3" Stokes from Cinema Rd. Selecting Gun Position No 3 Reserve (6) Despaigne Farms.	
do	24/3/18		Forward section standing by on S.O.S. lines. Support section overhauling guns in position Reserve section usual parades. Cancellation Order received for Messines Group Artillery Orders Nos 93 + 94, also movement order for Battery to hand over to 2nd Aust. Divn T.M. Batteries and assemble at date notified later and move to area unknown. A 4.2" shell landed and burst in Pillbox occupied by 2nd Lieut Sanders, telephonist and	10

W. McCallister Capt

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Wulverghem	24/3/18 Contd		batman severely wounding Cms Thompson (the batman) and slightly wounding Lieut Sanders	
do	25/3/18		Handing over to 2 <sup>nd</sup> Aust. Dwn T.M. Battery cancelled until further orders. Section reliefs carried out as follows:- Lieut Sanders and right section to Steignast. Lieut Taylor and left section to Wulverghem. Sgt. Coleman and centre section to Messines Weather: Dull and cold.	
do	26/3/18		Forward section standing by on S.O.S lines. Orders received at 10pm last night for Battery to be prepared to move at half an hour's notice. Standing by, prepared all night and day	
do	27/3/18		Forward section standing by on S.O.S lines. Standing by orders for Battery move cancelled. Move postponed for the present.	
do	28/3/18		Relief postponed until 1 <sup>st</sup> April. Forward section standing by on S.O.S lines. Two-inch small stores received from Res Camp. Dranontre for handing over.	
do	29/3/18		Forward section standing by on S.O.S lines. Support section at Messines Reserve section at Wulverghem (casual parades) Weather: wet.	
do	30/3/18		Forward section standing by on S.O.S lines. Support section at Messines. Reserve	

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*Atkinson*

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Wulverghem	30/3/18		Section at Wulverghem (usual parades). Weather - wet.	
do	31/3/18		Forward section standing by on S.O.S lines. Support section at Messines. Reserve section at Wulverghem (usual parades) Weather wet.	
			Handed over forward position to Lt Smart, 4 <sup>th</sup> AM.T.M. Bty from Lt Sanders. Forward section report back to Headquarters Camp Wulverghem.	

*MacCarthy Capt -  
O.C. 9<sup>th</sup> AM.T.M. Bty.*

SECRET

## 8th AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY BRIGADE

ORDER No. 167.

Copy No.

Reference Sheet 28 S.W. 1/20,000

25th March 1918.

1. On the night 25/26th March 1918 an operation with Stokes Mortar having for its object the gassing of the enemy in his trench systems about U 6 c and U 6 a will be carried out by No. 2 Special Coy. R.E.
2. ZERO hour will be notified later.
3. The operation will take place provided the wind is between N.W. and S.S.W. inclusive, and provided the wind velocity is greater than 2 m.p.h..
4. A similar operation is taking place simultaneously on the left Bde. front of 2nd Aust. Div.
5. The following codes will be used in connection with this operation :
  - RATIONS will mean "Conditions favourable"
  - REM will mean "Conditions unfavourable at present"
  - RETURN will mean "Conditions unfavourable; operation cancelled".
6. The map issued with Brigade Order No. 164 shows dangerous areas in connection with this operation. All ranks are to be cleared from the dangerous area shown on accompanying map by ZERO. The earliest time that the vacated areas will be re-occupied will be as indicated on map mentioned.
7. A special Gas Alert will be maintained by 17th and 18th Bns. during the operation.
8. C.O. 17th Bn. will wire code word - W A S P - when trenches vacated have all been re-occupied. Special precautions will be taken to prevent surprise in case enemy has occupied some of our forward posts.
9. ACKNOWLEDGE by wire.

Issued at 1 p.m. to

	Copy
17th Battalion	1
18th "	2
20th "	3
31st "	4
8th A.L.I.M.B.	5
Right Group M.G.	6/7
Right Group Arty.	8
Left Group Arty.	9
8th Fld Coy. Eng.	10
15th Fld Coy. Eng.	11
5th Pnr Bn.	12
2nd A.I.Bde.	13
5th A.I.Bde.	14
6th A.I.Bde.	15
5th Aust. Div.	16
No-2 Special Coy RE	17
'Z' Special Coy RE	18
Staff Captain	19
War Diary	20/22
File	23

*J. Wilson*  
 Captain,  
 Bde. Major, 8th Inf Bde.