

AWM4

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

Artillery

Item number: 13/72/3 Part 1

Title: 26th Battery, Australian Field Artillery

September 1917



AWM4-13/72/3PART1

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118. 9

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence
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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

26th Battery, 7th Field Artillery Bde

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
BELGIUM FRANCE	II. 9.	17	DICKEBUSCH. A day never to be forgotten by the men of the 26th. Battery. Owing to the long march on the previous day reveille was blown an hour later than usual.	
Battery at Waggon lines Dickebusch			Breakfast had just been drawn and the men were seated in a group in the vicinity of the cookhouse. then it was that the unexpected happened.	
			A high velocity shell burst in our midst! This was the first shell of a series, but fortunately the remainder fell some distance away. For a moment the whole camp was paralyzed - then came the cry for stretchers. In a wonderfully short space of time the wounded were carried to the dressing stations.	
			During this very trying time the behaviour of all was most praiseworthy.	
			The number of casualties due to this one shell was very great, there being 10 killed 28 wounded and 4 cases of shell - shock, making a total of 42.	
			<u>KILLED</u>	
			18744 Gunner Seale F.L.	
			2317 " Ryan O.J.	
			24398 S/Smith Barblett C.C.	
			19357 Saddler Shipway C.	

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26th Battery, 7th Field Artillery Brigade

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
continued FRANCE	II.	9.	I7	
			I8858 Bombardier Dowling F.G.	
			28799 Gunner Smith E.G.	
			I865I Driver Dale S.G.	
			I8658 A/Bombardier Ferris E.R.	
			26460 Driver Alford W.	
			24382 Driver Nethercott H.G.	
			<u>WOUNDED</u>	
			Lieut. Watt C.W.	
			22806 Gunner Green H.	
			I89I6 " Parnell R.V.	
			22836 Driver Sanders A.E. (X)	
			I873I " Randall D.	
			I9330 Gunner Nelson H.	
			I8684 Driver Jarrett E.L.	
			I8845 Gunner Callaghan P.C.	

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26th Battery, 7th Field Artillery Brigade

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
continued	II. 9. 17			
FRANCE			I2066I Gunner Smith W.G.C.	
			I9350 Driver Stagg F.A.L.	
			I8664 Driver French J.R.	
			I8470 A/Bombardier Harding E.	
			I8624 Corporal Ainsworth G.M.	
			I8873 Gunner Harvey P.U.	
			I8690 Gunner Knight S.H.	
			I8712 Bombardier Noble G.E.	
			I8940 Driver Smith J.C.	
			I8644 A/Bombardier Clark A.J.	
			22799 Gunner Farrington T.	
			I8894 Driver Liddle S.R.	
			22823 Driver Mason W.D.	
			2642I Gunner Shearston J.S.	

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26th Battery, 7th Field Artillery Brigade

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
continued FRANCE	II.	9.	17	
			<u>WOUNDED REMAINING ON DUTY</u>	
			I8708 Driver McCarthy E.L.	
			31123 Gunner Deane F.G.	
			I8936 Corporal Silverton P.G.	
			I534 " Gallagher M.V.	
			I8956 Farriersergeant Armstrong R.H.	
			I0848 Driver Foulks W.C.	
			<u>SHELL-SHOCKED</u>	
			I8937 Gunner Shepherd W.H.	
			I7154 Driver McGoulrick P.P.	
			26484 Gunner Sowter C.W.	
			I8758 Gunner Wilson W.	
			Later in the morning Sir William Birdwood inspected the Officers of the Battery.	
			At II.30 am the advance party made up from the remainder of the Battery went to the	
			new Battery position which was situated near ZILBEKE (I 17 C 3812)	
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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
continued FRANCE	II.	9.	17	
			At the Waggon Lines preparations were made for the guns to move out that night.	
			The scenes in and around DICKEBUSCH during this period were ones of the greatest activity	
			The country for miles was covered with camps and Waggon Lines .Every open space had its	
			collection of tents or hutments, and long lines of tethered horses or mules.	
			The roads were very congested with traffic, endless streams of slow moving vehicles,	
			making their way to the front, guns, limbers, caterpillar tractors, huge motor vans laden with	
			troops, G.S. Waggon and transports of every description. sandwiched in here and there would be	
			a column of Infantry with packs up, plodding along toward the trenches.	
			The roads were inches deep in fine grey dust, which rose in clouds, enveloping everything	
			in a suffocating pall. In many places it drifted above the tree tops, and was wafted across the	
			open fields.	
			By sunset the Battery had once more settled down to the usual routine. Tents had been	
			erected, a wall of sandbags built round the outsides, and the floors excavated to a depth of	
			18 inches, a necessary precaution against bomb splinters. Nightly bombing raids were made by	
			the enemy over our back areas.	
			During the evening , high velocity guns again got busy on the roads and camps, but no	

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26th Battery, 7th Field Artillery Brigade

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
continued	11. 9. 17		shells fell near enough to the lines, to seriously disturb us. At 10pm orders were given to the effect, that the guns were to leave for the Battery position at 2 am. 39 reinforcements arrived to fill the places of the casualties of the morning.	
BEIGIUM	12. 9. 17		At the appointed time 5 guns moved up I being at Ordnance. The journey took about 2 hours, the last mile and half being on a corduroy road, which wound in and out through the shell-torn country. The night was rather dark, and travelling was necessarily slow. Gas shells began to fall as we neared the position, and the fumes mingled with the stench of dead animals, which lay in numbers along the roadside, filled the air. No time was lost in running the guns into the Pits, which had been prepared the previous morning by our advanced party. We learned from the advanced party, that the enemy earlier in the night, had shelled heavily with gas shells, and the attack had lasted until after 2am. As it was, the gas was fairly strong, and caused much sneezing and coughing. The Battery was fortunate in missing this gas attack. To get the guns into position, and	See map ZILLEBEKE & BELLEWARDE Position

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26th Battery, 7th Field Artillery Brigade

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
continued FRANCE	12. 9.	17	<p>and the teams away again, would have been anything but easy. The necessary wearing of respirators, would have hindered the gunners and drivers a great deal.</p> <p><u>BATTLE OF YPRES Ist. STAGE</u></p> <p>or</p> <p><u>Battle of Menin Road</u></p> <p>The 3rd. Divisional Brigades were now grouped together as "B" Group Ist. Australian Divisional Artillery, under the tactical command of Lieut-Col. W. C. Allsop D.S.O., our own Divisional and Brigade Headquarters not being functioned for the time being.</p> <p>The position we now occupied (I 17c 38 12) was on the crest of a rise, the guns being just below the skyline, in shallow pits, cut out of the bank along the side of a road. Camouflage concealed them from aerial observation. The camouflage consisted of wire netting interlaced with strips of sacking, dabbed with paint of different colours. In some cases cord netting was substituted for wire netting. The camouflage is thrown right across the gun and surrounding ground and makes aerial observation very difficult but being highly inflammable is easily fired from a bursting shell, but when this does happen, can be fairly quickly removed even when on fire, if the interval between fall of shells will permit the</p>	

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26th Battery, 7th Field Artillery Brigade

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
continued FRANCE	12. 9. 17		<p>work being done.</p> <p>Running along the crest were our original system of Support Line Trenches, and from here a good view of the enemy territory could be obtained. To the East lay the ruined village of ZILLEBEKE, and a large lake of the same name. In a North Easterly direction, stood the gaunt ruins of the City of YPRES, the remains of the Tower of the famous Cloth Hall, standing out against the sky. Westward, a cluster of shell-riddled walls, and heaps of bricks and debris, was all that was left of the Village of HOOGE.</p> <p>The slopes of the surrounding hills, were absolutely devoid of trees or other vegetation, the earth being churned up into a sea of shell-holes. Nevertheless scores of Batteries were hidden in craters and broken down trenches.</p> <p>At the Battery position, the Officers and men lived in an old trench, in the bays of which were excavated small dugouts, sufficiently wide to allow three men to lie down, but not high enough to permit of sitting upright.</p> <p>This trench home was in an unsanitary condition, and in many places had been blown in. However it was made as habitable as possible under the circumstances.</p> <p>The Observation Post was in a trench on top of BELLEWARDE RIDGE (J7c 74 60)</p>	

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26th Battery, 7th. Field Artillery Brigade

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
continued FRANCE	12. 9.	17	<p>giving a very good view of enemy front system, which was mainly lines of shell holes organized for defence.</p> <p>The Zero Point was a concrete dugout or Pill-box, originally built inside a farmhouse at J9c I5 40., but the farm house had long since been knocked down by shell fire, leaving the concrete only standing.</p> <p>Our 5 guns were all shot in and registered by 4 pm. This was a lengthy process as 4 Brigades had arrived into action, all, with orders to register this day, the consequence being that numerous guns were shooting at the same Zero Point at the same time.</p> <p>The Battery front was along the Western edge of NONNE BOSSCHEN WOOD, and ran back to POLYGONNE WOOD, the Western edge of this wood, being our northern Group Boundary.</p>	
continued	13. 9.	17	<p>During the day a few shells fell about the position, one bursting in B subsection Pit. Fortunately the gun was at Ordnance, and the crew away. The majority of these shells were 4.2s</p> <p>In the evening and at intervals through the night, a goodly number of 5.9s fell, one being a direct hit on a portion of our trench which was unoccupied.</p> <p>After midnight we were again visited by gas shells, but as a light breeze was blowing</p>	

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26th Battery, 7th Field Artillery Brigade

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
continued FRANCE	13. 9. 17		<p>very little gas found its way into the trench.</p> <p>The flash of No.6 gun being found to be visible over the Ridge ,it was moved to between Nos.2 and 3,this necessitating all guns being at an average interval of 13 yards.</p> <p>Orders are received to have 1000 rounds per gun at the position.drivers have to bring a full echelon up each night and on at least 3 nights 2 echelons.</p>	
BELGIUM Battery portion at ZILLEBEKE (I 17c 38 12) Waggon lines west of DICKBUSCH	14. 9. 17		<p>The 26th.Battery Waggon Lines moved to day.This was deemed advisable owing to the conspicuous colour of the horses(all greys) and the lack of cover.The new lines were situated in the centre of a thick belt of trees adjacent to the Road.</p> <p>Here there were dry stables and Harness rooms,but no huts for the accomodation of the troops.The digging in and sand bagging process therefore had to be repeated.</p> <p>Our sixth gun returned from Ordnance and was taken to the Battery position.</p> <p>Orders were received to fire 180 rounds per Battery ^{per day} on Roads and approaches within Battery zone.The whole front was divided up between Batteries each Battery covering an average of sixty yards.</p>	

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26th Battery, 7th Field Artillery Brigade

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
continued FRANCE	15. 9.	17	<p>At the Battery two practice barrages were carried out in connection with the forth-coming offensive.</p> <p>At 9 am. Group after Group opened up. In the afternoon at 4 pm. all groups opened up simultaneously, and for half an hour or more a storm of shells was let loose on the German trenches.</p> <p>Viewed from the crest the area covered by the barrage, appeared to be heaving like a sea. Great columns of smoke mingled with dust, rose high into the air. The shrapnel bursting low over the trenches with a puff of white smoke, could be plainly seen. A party of our Infantry went over with this barrage, and succeeded in capturing a strong point and forty prisoners. These prisoners appeared in very poor condition. All were thin and haggard, and dazed by the effect of the bombardment. The majority were middle-aged men and bearded, but quite a number were merely youths, and judging from their appearance, not more than 17 and 18 years of age.</p> <p>Immediately our barrage ceased, the enemy vigorously counter-attacked with his Artillery on the Batteries and roads.</p> <p>The barrage itself consists of what might be termed a barrage of different calibre sub-barrages being in the following order.</p>	

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26th Battery, 7th Field Artillery Brigade

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
continued FRANCE	15. 9.	17	<p>A. On the German front trench an 18 pounder barrage</p> <p>B. 200 yards beyond A.a barrage of 4.5 Howitzers and 18 pounders mixed.</p> <p>C. 200 yards beyond B.a Machine gun barrage</p> <p>D. 200 yards beyond C.a 6in.Howitzer barrage</p> <p>E. 200 yards beyond D.an 8in.and 9.2 barrage</p> <p>F. 200yards beyond E. a 60 pounder barrage.</p> <p>The barrage covered ground, to a depth of 1000 yards, and in the 18 pounder barrage at any rate the shells falling 10 yards apart. At Zero hour guns of each calibre opened and crept forward in 100 yard lifts say every 3 minutes to a farther depth of 2000 yards. It will be seen that the enemy ground, from his front line trench to a depth of 1000 yards behind is simultaneously showered with missiles, ranging in size from .303 rifle ammunition to 9.2in shells, and this shower of steel along a several mile front, is walked forward and backward in 100 yard lifts to a depth of 3000 yards behind the enemy front line trench, and each shell is capable of bursting into so many fragments. And whilst all this is taking place in connection with the barrage, intended only to deal with his Infantry, the other artillery machine, called the counter battery group is pounding at his artillery. ^{One} All must be forgiven for being</p>	
	15. 9.	17		

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26th Battery, 7th Field Artillery Brigade

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
continued FRANCE	15. 9.	17	surprised that he is able to throw so much back.	
do	16. 9.	17	<p>During the morning 3 Gotha 'planes, escorted by 14 Taubes flew slowly over our back country, the former dropping bombs. The fleet recrossed their own lines without casualty.</p> <p>The 3rd. practice barrage was opened at 5 am. and the 4th. in the afternoon. Each barrage was followed by hostile retaliation on our trench system and in the vicinity of Battery position</p>	
do	17. 9.	17	<p>2 Barrages were carried out bringing more or less heavy retaliation on Battery positions and trenches. Whilst ammunition wagons were being unloaded, the enemy commenced shelling the right flank of the Battery and the camouflage of 2 gun pits was set on fire but promptly put out as fortunately water was handy in shell holes. Some ammunition was destroyed, and very plucky work was performed by Corporals Robinson, J. Shiels, Johns, Bombardier Pountney, Gunners Donovan, Croft, O'Neill and Cadell and some drivers whose names unfortunately were missed. A shell burst in front of a team causing them to swing round on top of the gunners, when No. 18642 Gunner Cadell O.R. was jammed and received an injury to his hand, necessitating his removal to hospital.</p>	
do	18. 9.	17	<p>Early this morning a shell entered the side of the trench, and burst on a level with the duck-board walk, less than 6 feet from the officers sleeping portion, wrecking the cook-</p>	

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26th Battery. 7th Field Artillery Brigade

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
continued FRANCE-	18. 9. 17		<p>house. The explosion drove a shower of shell-splinters and evil smelling mud among the sleeping telephonists who were only ten feet away. The trench and dug-out timbering was splintered and riddled with holes, but strange to say no one was hurt.</p> <p>Practice barrages were again in operation, and brought forth the usual retaliation.</p> <p>The roads came in for a particularly heavy strafing, and the drivers of the ammunition waggons and pack mules had an unenviable trail. time</p> <p>Great quantities of ammunition were now being conveyed to the guns and everything pointed to the attack taking place at an early date. Numbers of tanks were making their way across country toward the line.</p> <p>At night time the enemy shelled the position with 5.9s, the majority falling short.</p> <p>The 25th. Battery, which occupied portion of the same trench suffered. One shell made a direct hit on the trench, killing a Corporal and wounding two gunners</p> <p>The enemy has been keeping up a well scattered and fairly heavy harassing fire, not apparently directed against anything in particular, but probably hoping with luck for chance hits to cause casualties. The firing is so scattered that it is more noticeable at night when dumps can be seen going up at irregular intervals. Apparently some of his shells have</p>	

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26th. Battery 7th Field Artillery Brigade

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
continued FRANCE	18.	9. 17	fallen on Battery positions and fired the ammunition dumps. at times The whole country is illuminated for some seconds. The Batteries are so thickly packed that some of these loose shells must get a target	
	19.	9. 17	All day fierce artillery duels and bombardments took place. No. 18710 Sergeant McIntosh was injured by the recoil of one of the guns, the injury necessitating his removal to C.C.S. and thence to Hospital. One gun was damaged and had to be removed to ordnance. 2 further practice barrages were fired, and brought back the usual retaliation from the enemy At times during the night, the stillness was almost uncanny, and it seemed to be the calm before the storm. Towards midnight heavy showers of rain fell, which threatened to interfere with the pending attack. Fortunately, however, after half an hour, the rain ceased, and the weather became fine again. Lieut. Moriarty acting as F.O.O., accompanied by Telephonists Verey and Shand, left the Battery during the night for Battalion Headquarters. Lieut Moriarty took over the duties of Liason Officer and Capt. L. J. Colquhoun acted as F.O.O.	
	20.	9. 17	The day of the attack. Zero hour was 5.40 am. Simultaneously, every gun along the front both large and small, began to fire. The early morning quietness was suddenly transformed into a raging inferno. The darkness was split by thousands of gun flashes, and the din was terrific. The earth shook with the intensity of the bombardment, and the air was filled with the screeching of shells. Behind the great barrage, the Infantry launched their attack along a front extending from the north of LANGEMARCK to the YPRES-COMINES CANAL. The 2nd. and 5th. armies operated in this area. "B" Group 3rd. Australian Divisional Artillery worked in conjunction with the 1st. Australian Divisional Artillery, covering the 1st. Australian Divisional Infantry. By 10 am. on this day, news came through that all objectives had been gained, the position maintained and consolidated, the Divisional objectives being NONNE BOSSCHEN WOOD, portion of GLENCORSE WOOD and the final objective was a North and South line half way through POLYGONNE WOOD, which had been a bone of contention, and had been the scene of much fierce fighting. The 2nd. Australian Division on our left gained all objectives.	

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26th Battery, 7th Field Artillery Brigade

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PLACE	TIME	SUMMARY OF EVENTS AND INFORMATION	
FRANCE continued	20.9.17	<p>Whilst the advance was in progress our aeroplanes were kept busy .The sky literally swarmed with machines flying to and fro' over the trenches.Frequently a machine would crash to earth in flames,but whether British or German it was hard to say.</p> <p>The Batteries came in for only a light shelling during the day,the enemy having his guns concentrated on the moving Infantry.</p> <p>At night S.O.S. signals were repeatedly sent up,to be immediately answered by the Artillery,and so quell any hostile movement.</p> <p>At 2pm. orders were received to reconnoitre a new position for the advance,the position selected being on top of the BELEWARDE RIDGE (J7c 55) .Australian Pioneers commence to build a road,to the rear slope of the Ridge,but a working party is arranged to level off a track forward on to the Ridge,as the ground is badly torn by shell-holes,and quite impassable at present.</p> <p>At midnight orders are received that we advance to the new position in daylight,each Battery of the 26th.,27th.,and 108th.Howitzer to be registered in the new position before the other moves.</p> <p>Instructions are sent to the Waggon Lines,for teams and ammunition pack horses to be up in the morning at 10 am.</p>	
		<p>BATTLE OF YPRES 2nd. STAGE</p> <p>or</p> <p>Battle of Menin Road</p>	
FRANCE BELGIUM Battery position at BELLEWARDE RIDGE (J.7.c.5.5. Waggon Lines DICKEBUSCH	21.9.17	<p>It was fairly apparent that the enemy would endeavour to counter-attack at dawn,and in anticipation of this,a barrage was put downat 4.30 am opposite our new front line,on what were termed the new S.O.S. Lines.After remaining there for some minutes,a large percentage of the guns commenced creeping forward to thoroughly search all ground opposite our new front line.In the meantime the drivers and pack-horses arrived and commenced moving ammunition down to the forward position.It was considered inadvisable to attempt to get the gun to the BELLEWARDE RIDGE position,so a temporary position was selected at the side of the Corduroy Road,just built by our Pioneers.Ammunition dumps and gun platforms were prepared here by all available spare gunners,intime to receive the guns on arrival.</p> <p>At 10 am the gun limbers arrived and hooked in individually,and were sent on forward one by one at quarter hour intervals,the only available route being along the YPRES-MENIN ROAD TO</p>	<p>See map marked ZILLEBEKE & BELLEWARDE Position</p>

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WAR DIARY

26th Battery, 7th Field Artillery Brigade

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PLACE

TIME

SUMMARY OF EVENTS AND INFORMATION

continued 21.9.17

BIRR CROSS ROADS, quite a well known death trap, and thence along the Corduroy Roadround ETANG de BELLEWARDE (LAKE).

The Roads were crowded with teams, pack-mules and Red Cross Cars. German prisoners were working as stretcher bearers, and the open spaces about the dressing-stations, were busy with A.M.C. men, attending to the wounded.

Now and again a Taube would fly over and drop bombs on the roads. One of the 26th. teams returning to the Waggon Lines fell a victim. Five horses were wounded, and two drivers were scratched slightly by flying fragments. Hostile planes also machine-gunned the roads.

The guns were got into the temporary position safely, shot in and camouflaged, and the next battery the 27th. well on their way by noon, to take up a temporary position on our left, the 12 guns being finally in position and measuring 180 yards from flank to flank.

Work was immediately commenced on the new Ridge position and 20 3rd. Divisional Trench Mortar men arrived to assist in leveling off the track and preparing the six pits. During the afternoon conditions around the temporary position were becoming somewhat strained. A large number of Pioneers were working continuing the road southward to meet another road coming through CHATEAU WOOD, a battalion of Infantry was working laying a light railway, more batteries of other groups were arriving and taking up positions, a reserve battalion of Infantry were digging trenches on the slope of BELLEWARDE RIDGE, some of the trenches being only 20 yards in front of the guns, and a continuous stream of guns, pack-mules and horses were moving along the road. At intervals during the whole afternoon, enemy 'planes were flying overhead, and it was fairly obvious that something unpleasant would happen soon; and it did that night, for directly it was dark we received the S.O.S. signal and immediately answered, but we had not been firing for five minutes, when the enemy commenced to shrapnel the wood. A few moments before a battalion of Infantry had arrived from somewhere and was halted behind the Battery, and the Battalion Commander and Battery Commander were in consultation as to the possibility of getting the Infantry through our guns and on to the ridge. The guns of course could not stop firing, and the Bosche shrapnel was effective, so the only cover open was soon adopted, and the Infantry were stowed along the ditch running along the road. The gun detachments were reduced to a minimum working number, the remainder being placed in the ditch immediately behind each gun. This lasted for quite an hour. The Infantry suffered a little but not heavily, and of the gunners only one man was wounded, notwithstanding the fact that shrapnel was hitting the shield, and two guns were put out of action. This was largely due to the fact that the shells were bursting extremely high and on our extreme right and our gun shields afforded good protection for the working numbers, while the ditch served as a trench

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WAR DIARY

26th Battery 7th Field Artillery Brigade

1917

PLACE	TIME	SUMMARY OF EVENTS AND INFORMATION
continued	21. 9. 17	<p>for the spares. Directly the S.O.S. was stopped, an attempt was made to run our guns up on to the Ridge position. It was very dark and raining slightly and the first gun bogged and went almost out of sight, ten yards from the road and it was not considered safe to attempt to move more before daybreak. The majority of the gunners had to sleep in the open this night, but luckily very little shelling took place. Occasionally shrapnel shells burst along the road, but we received no casualties.</p> <p>During the afternoon an unfortunate but unavoidable accident occurred during the ranging of one of the newly advanced Batteries. A premature shell burst at the muzzle, killing and wounding a number of our Infantry standing in front of the guns.</p> <p>Sergeant Kille No. 19307 was wounded in the neck and evacuated to hospital. (Copy of letter and enclosure received from Brig. Gen. Coxen D.S.O.)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Ist. Australian Divisional Artillery Headquarters 21st. Sept. '17</p> <p>C.O. "A" Group C.O. "B" Group C.O. 7th. A.F.A. Brigade C.O. 3rd. Army Brigade C.O. 12th. Army Brigade C.O. 3rd. Aust. D.A.C. D.T.M.O. Ist. Aust. Divisional Artillery D.T.M.O. 3rd. " " " 3rd. Aust. Divisional Artillery</p> <p>In forwarding the attached, I wish to convey to all ranks, my appreciation of the excellent work done during yesterday's operation, and also during the equally trying period of preparation which preceded it.</p> <p>Please convey my thanks to everybody under your command, and ensure that this and the attached letters are read on parade at the first opportunity.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(signed) Walter Coxen Brigadier General C.R.A. Ist. Australian Division</p>

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26th Battery, 7th Field Artillery Brigade

PLACE	TIME	SUMMARY AND INFORMATION
continued	21, 9, 17	<p>(Copy of enclosure)</p> <p>20th. Sept. 1917</p> <p>Dear General Coxen,</p> <p>General Sir Herbert Plumer, Commanding Second Army, has asked me to convey to you and all under you, his most sincere thanks for the excellent work your artillery have done in the past weeks and to-day, which resulted in all objectives being taken with a minimum of casualties.</p> <p>Lieutenant General Sir William Birdwood also says-- "Please thank the artillery for the most gallant and important part they have taken in a good day's work."</p> <p>Yours very Sincerely, (signed) William Napier B.G.R.A. 1st. Anzac.</p>
	22. 9. 17	<p>At daybreak the guns were run up by hand to the Ridge position (J7c 55). The Reserve Infantry Battalion supplied a party of sixty to pull the gun out of the bog. This party got on the drag ropes and the Sergeant in charge said "Now when you're all mad I give you the hoffice" and having been given the "hoffice" they pulled the gun out and up into the pit with the greatest ease.</p> <p>The new position was quite open to aerial observation, there being no cover whatever. The surrounding country was churned up by shells, the shell-holes being linked together so numerous were they.</p> <p>In our immediate rear stood the gaunt ruins of CHATEAU WOOD, and on its fringe, what was once a very picturesque lake. On the slopes and flat country to the right and below our position were nearly a dozen tanks, some bogged, others put out of action by enemy fire. Corduroy roads were being built as fast as possible past the Ridge.</p> <p>Observation was obtained from the crest of the Ridge, the guns being only 50 yards away. The recently evacuated German front line could be seen a few hundred yards away, and the position taken up by our guns was one of the most forward of the Group.</p> <p>BELLEWAARDE RIDGE to-day resembled a gigantic ant's nest. Hundreds of men moving to and fro. Owing to the Batteries being so close to one another there was a certain amount of</p>

WAR DIARY

26th Battery, 7th Field Artillery Brigade

PLACE	TIME	SUMMARY OF EVENTS AND INFORMATION
continued	22.9.17	<p>congestion. The gunners next set to work excavating shelters for themselves on the hillside. In many cases the simple method of, covering a shell-hole with a sheet of iron strewn with earth and debris, leaving a narrow entrance on one side sufficed. In some parts where the ground was steep enough, a hole a few feet long and a couple of feet deep was cut out of the bank and a curtain of empty sandbags hung in front, to keep out the rain and dew. The Officers quarters were in a blind trench, acting as "bed and living room". The major portion of the trench was open to the sky.</p> <p>Enemy balloons overlooked the position, and hostile 'planes flew over, and about 11am. we realized the keenness of his observation.</p> <p>The Ridge and the Wood received a very severe strafing. Eleven inch shells came hurtling over in quick succession, interspersed with salvoes of 4.2s. There was an immediate scatter for shelter, shelter such as there was! This was kept up during the afternoon. Heavy casualties resulted amongst the Infantry battalion in reserve and some of the Batteries suffered. Only one man of our Battery was wounded, No. 826 Gunner McGeary, hit by a fragment of shell penetrating and breaking his arm. He was removed to hospital.</p> <p>During the night the low lying and wooded country was shelled with gas-shells, but a light breeze lifted the gas.</p>
	23.9.17	<p>The day was quiet until noon. From that time until dark the enemy shelled intermittently with 5.9s. About 5pm. the roads were heavily shelled by hostile 4.2 Batteries and a number of transports came to grief. At times this shelling became intense, forming a veritable barrage through which the incoming and outgoing teams went at a mad gallop.</p> <p>For several hours during the night we endured a fierce shell-gas attack. The men were fortunate to be living on a rise. Those camped in the hollows and about the wood got the full strength of the gas fumes.</p> <p>The drivers were going hard with pack-horses all day and until late at night moving ammunition up.</p>
	24.9.17	<p>Brigadier General Coxen C.R.A. 1st. Australian Divisional Artillery relinquished command of "B" Group (7th. and 8th. F.A. Brigades) and Group was placed under command of Brigadier General Bessel-Brown C.M.G. D.S.O. C.R.A. 5th. Australian Divisional Artillery.</p> <p>At 5.30 am. a practice barrage was fired.</p> <p>For two hours during the morning a hostile area shoot took place, the shelling</p>

WAR DIARY

26th Battery, 7th Field Artillery Brigade

PLACE	TIME	SUMMARY OF EVENTS AND INFORMATION
continued	24. 9. 17	beginning in front of BELLEWAARDE RIDGE and working back through the wood and finishing up on the roads
	25.9.17	<p>The Ridge was again severely shelled to-day, and the guns had to be vacated for some time. Hostile 'planes were very daring, flying low above the roads, and firing machine guns on the traffic. The enemy artillery also paid much attention to the roads.</p> <p>During the nights bombing raids on the roads and camps in the back areas are frequent the moon now being at the full.</p> <p>18954 Driver Whitehair W. and 18630 Driver Aspinwall T. both received injuries caused by a bursting shell and were sent to Hospital. No. 31124 Gunner Davis G.R. received flesh wound in his thigh but remained on duty.</p> <p>S.O.S. Signals were answered at 5.30 am. and a Practice Barrage opened at 6.30 am. At 8.30 am. great difficulty was experienced in getting ammunition up, but the drivers did wonders.</p>
	26. 9. 17	<p>Zero hour 6.50 am. Another attack was made by the 5th. Australian Divisional Infantry on our front and all objectives were gained, the final objective being the remainder of POLYGONNE WOOD. The 4th. Australian Division and New Zealanders on our left captured ZONNEBEKE. Lieut Money of 107th. Howitzer Battery and formerly a gunner in this Battery acted as F.O.O. Officer and together with telephonists No. 18466 Gunner Greer, No. 32536 Gunner Hayward and No. 18677 Gunner Hills went over with the Infantry</p> <p>No. 353 A/Bombardier Macintosh A.K., 729 A/Bombardier Johnston W. and 9299 Gunner Donovan J.J. evacuated to C.C.S. suffering from Mustard Gas poisoning, and the following men were evacuated to hospital--</p> <p>No. 18718 Gunner O'Neill J., shell wound in leg No. 30534 Driver Macintosh C.W. shell wound in the arm No. 32511 Gunner Walkem G.C. shell wound in foot No. 24628 " McDermott H.J. bullet wound in leg back</p> <p>Orders are received to reconnoitre position for advance in J8b. The position looks anything but cheerful as during the whole afternoon it was kept under heavy shell fire.</p> <p>At 4.10 pm. S.O.S. rockets went up right along the front as far as one could see and were immediately answered and kept up until after 8pm. and repeated twice during the night.</p>

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26th Battery, 7th Field Artillery Brigade

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PLACE	TIME	SUMMARY OF EVENTS AND INFORMATION
BEIGIUM Battery portion at BELLEWARDE RIDGE (J7c 55) Waggon lines Dickebusch	26. 9. 17	The battery was shelled by a 5.9 gun at night, and one direct hit was obtained on No.2 gun, blowing a wheel and portion of the elevating gear off, but as we not firing at the time the majority of the men were in the trench, and we escaped casualty.
	27. 9. 17	<p>The Battery position and the Ridge was heavily shelled during the day from 11am. to 5pm. with 8in., 5.9, and 4.2 shells. It became necessary for all to leave the guns. This was an exceptionally fierce strafe. D Sub.gun was blown up, the force of the exploding shell hurling it over E Sub.gun which was some yards distant.</p> <p>The S.O.S. Signal was ordered at 6pm. Our signal during the whole operation, was a rifle grenade, bursting into a parachute, Red over Green over Yellow lights, most easily picked up by the Rocket Guard and quite impossible to confuse with enemy lights. The stop signal was always given by telephone from Group after receipt of a message from the Infantry, this being probably the only safe way under the circumstances, although it was necessarily slow and caused a great waste of ammunition very often.</p> <p>2 S.O.S. Signals were answered during the night.</p>
do	28. 9. 17	<p>The Battery Commander in the afternoon again reconnoitred a proposed new position for the guns.</p> <p>Late in the evening orders were received cancelling the above, and the Battery was ordered to draw out and return to the Waggon Lines. Numbers of Hun 'planes raided at night a large number of bombs being dropped in the back areas.</p> <p>3 wheels had been sent up from the Waggon Lines during the day, and the two shell-crumpled guns were got out and away to Ordnance before dark. At 9pm. the remaining 4 guns were manhandled down on to the corduroy road. The limbers arrived, hooked in and got away safely; during this operation the enemy being particularly quiet.</p> <p>Our ration cart commonly known as the "Pill-box" was hit on the MENIN ROAD in the afternoon No.30534 Driver MacIntosh and No.32511 Driver Walkem being wounded and one horse killed.</p> <p>During the seventeen days September 12th. to 29th., one hundred and forty-eight thousand some odd hundred rounds of ammunition were reported to have been fired by the eight Batteries of "B" Group. Each Howitzer Battery fired approximately 2/3 the number of rounds fired by an 18m pounder Battery. So it will be seen that this Battery fired approximately (the number being underestimated) for 17 days</p>

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26th Battery, 7th Field Artillery Brigade

1996

PLACE	TIME	SUMMARY OF EVENTS AND INFORMATION	
		<p>Per gun per day 188 rounds per Battery per day 1128 rounds per gun per 17 days 3197 rounds per Battery per 17 days 19185 rounds</p> <p>Of this number practically every round was carried by our own drivers and horses under the most trying conditions. The drivers did very remarkable work indeed.</p>	
BELGIUM	29. 9. 17	<p><u>BATTLE OF YPRES 3rd. STAGE</u> or <u>Battle of BROODESEINDE</u></p> <p>At 8am. Brigade and Battery Commanders proceeded by motor lorry to reconnoitre Battery positions covering ZONNEBEKE front. The lorry was left at MENIN GATE YPRES and the position arrived at after a 5000 yards walk along ZONNEBEKE ROAD. The positions were occupied by the New Zealand Divisional Artillery. 3 of the Batteries and the road were being strafed during the whole afternoon with 8 inch.</p> <p>The 7th. and 8th. Brigade Batteries under tactical command of Lieut. Col H.D.K. Macartney became No2 Group</p>	
Complete Battery at Waggon Lines			
Battery position FRIEZENBERG RIDGE I.6.b.3.3. Waggon Lines VLAERTINGHE	30. 9. 17	<p>At 9am. the advance party moved up to YPRES by motor lorry and then walked to the new position which was on FRIEZENBERG RIDGE near WILD WOOD (16b 33). The 7th Brigade relieved the 1st. New Zealand Brigade, the 26th. Battery taking over from the 3rd. New Zealand Battery.</p> <p>The New Zealand guns were taken over and the same afternoon practice barrages were carried out at 2.5pm. and 4.25pm. each Battery having about 60 yards of front to cover with one 8th. Brigade Battery superimposed</p> <p>The second half of the detachments arrived at 3pm. The remainder of the Battery evacuated Waggon Lines and travelled a couple of miles further north to Waggon Lines on the outskirts of the village of VLAERTINGHE (). The roads en route were very congested, and it took the column at least two hours to travel so many miles. The entire Brigade pulled in to an open field adjacent to a railway line and main crossing. Enemy balloons were up at the time.</p>	<p>See map marked</p> <p>FRIEZENBERG & BORRY FARM POSITIONS</p>

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118.

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

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY. 26th Battery, 7th Field Artillery Brigade.

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	30.9.17.		<p>Immediately the horse lines were arranged, the men set to work digging in. By dark the camp was fairly settled. All night enemy 'planes were over dropping bombs, and anti-aircraft and machine guns were very busy. Some bombs fell very close to the lines but no casualties resulted.</p> <p>The Battery position which was on the side of a road in line with six other Batteries, the whole 36 guns being at an average interval of 15 yards, was rather heavily shelled in the evening, and during the night. The communications were cut, but were restored again after good work by Corporal A.J. Shiels and telephonists No. 18634 Begg A., 18711 Noakes P.E., and 18739 Shand C. under trying conditions. Gunners Begg and Shand were wounded, the former being removed to hospital and the latter remaining on duty. No. Bombardier Goswell also was wounded but remained on duty.</p> <p>The gun-pits were built up with sandbags forming a dwarf wall, and these were camouflaged when the guns were not firing. The gunners slept in "very" light proof shelters about 5 yards in rear of the guns. The Officer's mess was in a "Pill Box" which had originally been inside a ruined farmhouse, the telephonists and cookhouse being inside a "Pill-box" and a few men having cover inside a derelict tank.</p> <p>(The original of above appears on the same sheet as entries for subsequent month and will be found with the diary for that month).</p>	