

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

Artillery

**Item number:** 13/72/5 Part 1

**Title:** 26th Battery, Australian Field Artillery

November 1917



AWM4-13/72/5PART1



Original

WAR DIARY

26th Battery, 7th Field Artillery Brigade

Nov 1917

PLACE	TIME	SUMMARY OF EVENTS AND INFORMATION
	31.10.17	The ordinary camp routine was carried out and there was nothing to report.
	1.11.17)	A special leave of 5 days was granted for men wishing to visit Paris.
	)	Arrangements were being made for the men to form a Football Competition
	2.11.17)	Training of laterals and Signallers was carried out. <i>number of horses suffering from</i>
	)	At this time a number of our horses were suffering from celuritis.
	3.11.17)	
	4.11.17	All members of the Battery were inoculated during the course of the day.
	5.11.17	The usual routine was carried out.
	6.11.17	A general half holiday was granted and Football practice was carried out during the afternoon. Hostile 'planes bombed in the neighbourhood of BAILLEUL during the night.
	7.11.17	The usual routine was carried out. <i>Sgt Trevanion left 26.11 for R.B.A. a Newbury holiday.</i>



PLACE	TIME	SUMMARY OF EVENTS AND INFORMATION	
continued	8.II.I7	<p>A game of football was played this afternoon, 26th. Battery versus 107th. Battery. The ground was very heavy in places under water. The match resulted in a win for 26th. by 9 points to nil.</p> <p>At night orders came through that the Battery was to be ready to go into action the following morning at daybreak. As there had been no previous warning, the camp had to bestir itself.</p>	
Battery in action LE BIZET Sector  3 Section positions 1. GUNNERS FARM 2. at c.2. central 3. at U.2.6.d.9.8.  Waggon Lines RAVELSBERG	9.II.I7	<p>The 26th. Battery under the command of Captain Moriarty, relieved the 3rd. Battery, 45th. Brigade, 8th. Division R.F.A., and took over this Battery's guns.</p> <p>The main position was alongside a shell smashed farm, called GUNNER'S FARM (C.2.d.15.10) near LE BIZET, a small Village on the outskirts of ARMENTIERES, which lay to the South of us.</p> <p>Here the country was very flat, but not ploughed up by shells to the extent of the previous position. Here and there were sparse woods, leafless, but still offering a certain amount of cover.</p> <p>The extent of the front was 4500 yards, the reason being that between the 2 front lines runs the RIVER LYS an obstacle likely to prevent any surprise attack, the front being divided into 5 sections, 5 S.O.S Lines being prepared in order to switch all 6 guns on to a threatened area.</p> <p>This unusually wide sector was covered by the 6 guns of our Battery, and the Left Section S.O.S. ranges were under 3000 yards. The Sections were far apart, the distance between the Right and Centre Sections being 500 yards and from the Centre Section to the left 800 Yards.</p> <p>The Right and Centre Sections were fortunate in having good covered gun-pits, and the living quarters of the gunners were good and dry. Small concrete dugouts were numerous, as these two Sections were close to our subsidiary trenches. The Left Section guns were camouflaged, no covered pits being available. The gunner's quarters were somewhat similar to those of the other sections.</p> <p>The position the Left Section occupied, was close to LAWRENCE FARM (U.2.6.d.9.8. an old 26th Battery position (June 14th, advance position after the Messines attack)</p> <p>The O.P. was in the top of a steel tower built inside SURREY FARM (c.9.d.2.3.) from which an exceedingly good view could be had of the whole front from FREELINGHIE to WARNETON.</p> <p>Immediately after the Battery had moved along the road leading past the Right Section, several salvos of 4.2s came over, showing that the roads were under enemy observation. In the evening some gas shells and 4.2s fell about the Right Section.</p> <p>The 26th Battery was now in the Right Group, commanded by Major T.A.J. Playfair, D.S.O. with Captain Greenshields Adjutant.</p>	<p>See map marked PLOEG-STEERT MESSINES forward and</p> <p>LE BIZET position</p>



WAR DIARY

26th Battery, 7th Field Artillery Brigade

PLACE	TIME	SUMMARY OF EVENTS AND INFORMATION
Waggon Lines near NIEPPE	10.II.I7	Intermittent shelling occurred during the day, and at night gas shells fell, the roads seemingly being the main objective. During the day the guns were ranged. The Waggon Lines moved from Ravelsberg to Nieppe. The new Lines were very muddy, but the hutments were dry, and the horselines were covered in. Lieut Bates was temporarily attached to the Battery
	11.II.I7	Captain Moriarty and Gunner Racey transferred to the 27th. Battery and Lieut. Nivison was now acting Battery Commander. The enemy shelled in the vicinity of the guns during the day with 4.2s and gas shells and there was the usual shell-gas attack at night.
	12.II.I7	For several hours to-day the enemy shelled the roads at the rear of the Battery with 8 inch shells, and during the night salvos of 4.2s and gas shells frequently came over.
	13.II.I7	The day was very foggy. No artillery activity took place until nightfall, when the enemy fired the usual gas shells. Lieut. Bates reported back to the 107th. Battery.
	14.II.I7	The day was again very foggy, and there was very little artillery activity day or night. Lieut. Boxhall was attached to the Battery from the 3rd. Divisional Trench Mortars.



WAR DIARY

26th Battery, 7th Field Artillery Brigade

PLACE	TIME	SUMMARY OF EVENTS AND INFORMATION
continued	I5.II.I7	<p>The visibility was good and the enemy artillery was active. Roads, farmhouses etc. were systematically shelled at intervals. Enemy aircraft was also very active during the morning. Throughout the night, the enemy shelled in the vicinity of the Battery with gas and 4.2s but no damage was done.</p> <p>Lieut. Hamilton having reported back from Paris leave now became acting Officer Commanding.</p>
	I6.II.I7	<p>A fairly quiet day at the Battery, occasional salvoes of 4.2s and gas coming over during the night. The guncrews changed over in the afternoon and Capt. Colquhoun who had been Assisting Adjutant marched in to the Battery and was taken on strength, he now becoming Acting O.C. Major Playfair went to Divisional Artillery Headquarters as Acting Brigade Major.</p> <p>The prevailing weather now was dull and very foggy, with showers.</p>
	I7.II.I7	<p>The enemy shelled in close proximity to the guns, the majority of shells falling beyond and doing no damage.</p>
	I8.II.I7	<p>A quiet day at the Battery. At the Waggon Lines arrangements had been made by for crosses to be made and erected in Memory of our comrades who fell in the recent offensives. The work was to be executed by men of the Battery, and a Memorial Fund inaugurated to defray the expenses incurred.</p>



WAR DIARY

26th Battery, 7th Field Artillery Brigade

PLACE	TIME	SUMMARY OF EVENTS AND INFORMATION
continued	19.II.I7	At the Battery the Left Section had been continually shelled by the enemy. They had apparently been spotted, as immediately our guns fired the enemy strafed them. The ground round about was considerably torn up by this shell-fire, but no casualties occurred and the guns sustained no damage. The gun crews had an exciting time, it being necessary to leave the guns and make for cover as soon as a shoot had finished. Left Section moved to prepared position at MAISON 1875 (U.2.6.c.6.4.)
Left Section MAISON 1875 U.2.6.c.6.4.	20.II.I7	Few shells fell around the Battery position and no casualties occurred. The Waggon Lines were being greatly improved by the building of duck-board walks, and new roads, and the camp was being drained.
	21.II.I7	The enemy heavily shelled the Battery but little damage was done. A half-holiday was given to the men at the Waggon Lines, and a Concert given by the 36th. Battalion Band was very much enjoyed.
	22.II.I7	2nd. Lieut. Mackellar who had finished his course at St. John's Wood marched in to-day and was taken on the strength of the Battery.
	23.II.I7	Our Left Section was still being annoyed by continuous shelling. It was thought advisable to move the guns to another position, a new position which was then being prepared. This was to be done on the first suitable day. No casualties had so far resulted.

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WAR DIARY

26th Battery, 7th Field Artillery Brigade

PLACE	TIME	SUMMARY OF EVENTS AND INFORMATION
continued	24.II.I7	<p>A football match was held in the afternoon between the 26th Battery and 23rd. Machine Gun Section resulting in a win for 26th by 12 points to nil. The match was played near STEENWERCK. The day was very wild, with a fierce wind blowing, and the ground was very heavy.</p> <p>Battery Sergeant Major Peyton and Sergeant Hogarth were notified of their promotion to 2nd. Lieutenants.</p>
	25.II.I7	<p>The day being quiet and the visibility poor, the Left Section guns were moved back about 300 yards.</p> <p>Sergeant Harrison C.E. was appointed Acting Battery Sergeant Major.</p> <p>A football match under the Australian Rules was played between the 26th and 27th. Batteries and resulted in a win for the latter by 6 points. A strong gale was blowing and during the afternoon snow fell.</p> <p>A Y.M.C.A. Representative, Mr. Norman, had been attached to the 7th and 8th Brigades and a commodious tent was erected in the 26th lines.</p> <p>Sergeant Robinson J.E. was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal.</p>
	26.II.I7	<p>The Left Section were again shelled, and two men from the 9th. Australian Light Trench Mortar Battery, who were working on the 26th gun-pits were killed.</p>
	27.II.I7	<p>A Football match between the 26th Battery and 19th Battalion, resulted in a win for the former by 20 to nil.</p> <p>The 43rd. Battalion Band played at the Waggon Lines during the afternoon, and a Pierrot Troupe from the same Battalion gave an entertainment in the Y.M.C.A. tent at night.</p> <p>During the afternoon the enemy shelled in the vicinity of the Battery, approximately 250 shells falling. These were from a 4.2 Battery situated near FRELINGHIEN.</p>



## 26th Battery, 7th Field Artillery Brigade

PLACE	TIME	SUMMARY OF EVENTS AND INFORMATION
continued	28.II.I7	<p>At intervals during the morning 4.2 and 5.9 shells fell near the position, but no casualties resulted.</p> <p>Hostile machines flew over STEENWERCK but were driven off by anti-aircraft fire.</p>
	29.II.I7	<p>The day being clear, aircraft were active, and the Battery was under direct observation from 3 enemy balloons.</p> <p>The Right Section were shelled from 8pm. till 12.30 am., but no damage was done.</p> <p>Group orders were carried out by the Battery on various targets during the course of the day.</p> <p>At the Waggon Lines a football match under the Australian Rules, was played between a combined team from Headquarters, 25th and 26th Batteries, and 27th Battery resulting in a good win for the latter</p>
	30.II.I7	<p>A quiet day until 4pm. when the Centre Section was heavily shelled by a hostile 5.9 Battery. The gun crews were forced to leave the position. The trenches and living quarters were smashed but no guns were hit, although some shells fell very close to the pits. No casualties occurred, and after an hour and a half, the shelling ceased and the gunners were able to go back to the guns.</p> <p>At night 2 raids were carried out, the first at 5.15 and the second at 1.0am, by the 10th Australian Infantry Brigade on enemy trenches in front of WARNETON. Both raids were highly successful, killing an estimated number of 100 Bosch and capturing 5 live prisoners, only 8 casualties being suffered by the raiding party. The covering fire was carried out by the Left Group including our 25th and 27th Batteries, and a demonstration was made on the right by the 26th and 107th.</p> <p>An enemy working party was reported by the Brigade O.P. Officer in the afternoon and fired on by the Battery with excellent effect.</p> <p>Battery change over took place to-day, and gunners from the Battery portion were relieved by gunners from the Waggon Lines. No casualties occurred.</p>