

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

Artillery

Item number: 13/72/6 Part 2

Title: 26th Battery, Australian Field Artillery

December 1917



AWM4-13/72/6PART2

WAR DIARY

26th Battery, 7th Field Artillery Brigade

PLACE	TIME	SUMMARY OF EVENTS AND INFORMATION
continued	1.12.17	<p>There was no Artillery activity during the day, the weather being foggy and wet.</p> <p>At the Waggon Lines a Football match was held, 26th Battery versus 41st Battalion, which resulted in a win in our favour by 12 to nil.</p>
	2.12.17	<p>Very little shelling took place around the Battery.</p> <p>No. 6 gun went out of action owing to a damaged bore.</p> <p>An Operation Order was carried out at 8.20 pm on FRELINGHIEN Roads. Hostile 'planes flew over our back areas during the night, the moon being now at the full, and dropped bombs in the vicinity</p> <p>Lieut. Nivison relieved Lieut. Hamilton at the Battery, the latter taking charge of the Waggon Lines. Capt. Colquhoun was still Acting Battery Commander.</p>
	3.12.17	<p>An area shoot by the enemy took place to-day many shells falling near the Battery.</p> <p>Enemy planes were active, and our anti-aircraft fire was good.</p> <p>From 10am till 2pm. various targets were engaged by the Battery, a Group order being carried out.</p> <p>Lieut. Col. Macartney inspected the position at 10am.</p> <p>A new position for the Centre Section was selected by the C.O. at SUPPORT FARM (-----)</p> <p>and work was started on same.</p> <p>Our machines also enemy 'planes were very active all day, visibility being good.</p> <p>Gunners Shand and Driver Whitehair marched in from Hospital to-day.</p>
	4.12.17	<p>Group orders and counter battery retaliations were carried out during the day.</p> <p>The following men were decorated by the Corps Commander, Sir William Birdwood to-day at NEUVE EGLISE.</p>
		<p>Sergeant E. J. Robinson D.C.M.</p> <p>Corporal C. Sanders M.M.</p>

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26th Battery, 7th Field Artillery Brigade

PLACE	TIME	SUMMARY OF EVENTS AND INFORMATION
continued	4.12.17	<p>Private Williams (A.M.C. Detail attached to Battery) M.M. In the Y.M.C.A. tent at the Waggon Lines, in the evening an interesting debate took place on Conscription. Major Playfair D.S.O. took over command of the Right Group.</p>
	5.12.17	<p>The weather was now becoming intensely cold, with heavy frosts and some snow falls. A Football match between the 26th and 107th Batteries resulted in a win for the former by 40 to nil.</p>
	6.12.17	<p>The Battery was busy most of the day. No less than five Operation Orders were carried out, and also Bosch working-parties observed from the O.P., were fired on and dispersed. PONT ROUGE Bridge was ranged on by means of Balloon observation. 5.9s and 4.2s, approximately 100 rounds fell in the vicinity of the Left Section, but no serious damage was done.</p>
	7.12.17	<p>No. 6 gun, 499I was to-day sent to I.O.M. with damaged bore. Eighty rounds were fired on a Group Order, and DOULEMONT CROSS ROADS were fired on with good effect. Observation for ranging was carried out by balloons. Hostile fire was intermittent. A Football match played between the 25th and 26th Batteries proved to be a very rough game. 26th won by 14 points to nil. This was the final of the 7th Field Artillery Brigade Football Competition. The 26th Battery won a Silver Cup which was presented by Lieut. Col. Macartney H.D.K.</p>
	8.12.17	<p>The day was a quiet one, the visibility being indifferent. At the Waggon Lines a Concert was held in the Y.M.C.A. tent at night.</p>

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26th Battery, 7th Field Artillery Brigade

PLACE	TIME	SUMMARY OF EVENTS AND INFORMATION
continued	9.12.17	100 rounds were fired on a Group Order, the fire being directed against enemy roads. A few shells fell in rear of the Battery during the day
Centre Section C.I.d.55.50		C.O. 5th. Aust. F.A. Brigade
	10.12.17	At 11am the Battery position was inspected by Lieut. Col. O'Mahoney and the Acting C.O., in view of the former taking over in a few days time. The Centre Section guns were shelled intermittently all day, necessitating the gun crew's evacuation. At least 1000 rounds fell. The dial-sight of No. 4 gun was hit, and many shells fell very close without doing any damage. The Centre Section were to pull out to-night to their new position at SUPPORT-PART . Hostile 'planes were very busy and apparently the Centre Section position had been registered by the enemy. A Group Order was carried out, 100 rounds being fired on enemy roads, and an enemy working-party was fired on and dispersed with loss. Hostile 'planes, Gotha bombing 'planes flew over our back areas during the afternoon and bombs fell in the vicinity of the Waggon Lines. The 25th and 26th were grazing horses at the time and some of the 25th men were hit. The 'planes returned to their own lines safely in spite of vigorous anti-aircraft fire.
	11.12.17	The Trench Mortar Rugby Football team was to have played the 26th Battery team to-day, but as the former were unable to place their team in the field the match was forfeited.
	12.12.17	The vote on the Referendum (2nd. Conscription) was taken to-day. General Sir William Birdwood was expected to inspect the Batteries and Waggon Lines to-day but the inspection was postponed. Seven Gotha 'planes flew over during the afternoon bombing. Anti-aircraft fire was very effective in spite of the cloudy weather. One machine was brought down on its return journey by one of our 'planes, inside our lines. It is reported that one of the occupants fell into the RIVER LYS.

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26th Battery, 7th Field Artillery Brigade

PLACE	TIME	SUMMARY OF EVENTS AND INFORMATION
continued	12.12.17	<p>The Battery carried out a number of Group Orders, over 300 rounds being fired on various targets.</p> <p>Hostile shelling was very light and all guns were in action at the Battery.</p>
	13.12.17	<p>Over 300 rounds were fired during the day in accordance with Group Orders. Working-parties were also fired on and dispersed.</p> <p>Crosses which had lately been under construction by men of the Battery, were now completed, and erected at the graves of the men who fell during the recent offensive.</p> <p>At the Waggon Lines a Football match (Rugby) was played between the 26th Battery and 9th Field Ambulance teams, and which resulted in a win for the latter by 13 points to nil.</p>
	14.12.17	<p>Ammunition expended in carrying out Group Orders and firing on hostile working parties, amounted to approximately 500 rounds. There was very little return fire.</p> <p>The Battery position was inspected to-day by the C.R.A., Brig-Gen. H.W. Grimwade C.M.G.</p>
	15.12.17	<p>Hostile artillery was fairly active, especially 4.2 Batteries. About 400 rounds fell in proximity to the Battery position.</p> <p>To-day the guns were ranged and the calibrations checked.</p> <p>The Divisional Artillery Final Football Match was played to-day, The 26th Battery represented the 7th Brigade, the 3rd Divisional Ammunition Column being the opponents. A fine game resulted in a win for the 26th Battery by 23 points to nil. Brig-Gen. Grimwade presented the Captain of the winning team, Lieut. Mackellar with a Silver Cup.</p> <p>Lieuts. Peyton and Hogarth returned from furlough in England, Lieut. Hogarth remaining on the Battery strength.</p> <p>Lieut Peyton left the 26th after being that Battery's Sergeant Major for over 12 months and was taken on the 27th Battery strength.</p>

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26th Battery, 7th Field Artillery Brigade

PLACE	TIME	SUMMARY OF EVENTS AND INFORMATION
continued	16.12.17	<p>Operation orders were fired in the course of the day.</p> <p>The enemy shelled in the immediate rear of the Centre Section's new position, necessitating a temporary evacuation.</p> <p>Orders were received to make all arrangements to have all guns ready for an immediate switch of fire down on to ARMENTIERES front. Apparently the possibility of an enemy attack was expected. Lines were laid out and a new and alternate O.P. selected at LE BIZET CONVENT (C.14. a. 5, 7.)</p>
	17.12.17	<p>Battery change over took place to-day, gunners from the battery position being relieved by gunners from the Waggon Lines.</p> <p>An exciting air-battle took place, 7 hostile 'planes attacking one of our Australian Flying Corps R.E.8 Machines. The latter outmanoeuvred and broke up the enemy formation. He repeatedly returned to the attack and finally the enemy withdrew.</p> <p>An Australian Rules Football match was played to-day between the 7th Brigade and Divisional Trench Mortars, the latter winning by 3 points.</p>
	18.12.17	<p>During the morning the Battery position and guns were inspected by Brig-Gen Grimwade, and three American Officers, General Barry and Staff, accompanied by the Acting Commanding Officer.</p> <p>Our guns were again busy firing Operation Orders, approximately 200 rounds being fired.</p> <p>Hostile artillery was active, a fair number of shells falling around the position, including some gas shells.</p> <p>A very heavy frost had now set in, accompanied by dense fogs and the roads were very treacherous.</p> <p>Lieut. Binnie returned and was taken on the 26th Battery strength, after having passed his examinations at St. Johns Wood, and Lieut. Hamilton was transferred to 3rd. D.A.C.</p>

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26th Battery, 7th Field Artillery Brigade

PLACE	TIME	SUMMARY OF EVENTS AND INFORMATION
continued	19.12.17	Operation Orders were carried out during the course of the day, 260 rounds being fired. There was very little enemy fire.
	20.12.17	The Right and Centre Sections were relieved to-day by the 14th. Battery, 5th Australian Field Artillery Brigade.
	21.12.17	The Left Section Pulled out during the day being relieved by the 14th Battery. Preparations were being made to move to new Waggon Lines next day.
	22.12.17	<p>The Brigade moved off about 10am.</p> <p>The 26th Battery Waggon Lines were now situated a short distance from CROIX DU BAC, on the main road leading to that village and about a mile from STEENWERCK. The 10th Battery 4th Brigade had just vacated these lines.</p> <p>The accomodation consisted of Nissen huts in good repair, and the horse lines were dry and covered in. Generally the lines were similar to those just evacuated.</p> <p>Capt. Colquhoun and some of the Battery Staff went to the new Battery position at LE BIZET, followed by the Right Section guns at night. The front was very quiet, there being practically no artillery activity.</p> <p>No. 18927 Sergeant Robinson E. J. left this Battery to attend the St. Johns Wood School.</p>
	23.12.17	<p>Lieuts. Nivison, Hogarth and Binnie and the remaining guns and crews went into action. Lieut. Mackellar was left in charge of the Waggon Lines.</p> <p>The guns were in position in 3 detached sections, roughly $\frac{1}{2}$ mile distance between each Section. The RIVER LYS ran in the rear of the Battery, the Centre Section being on the river bank. The guns were in the open and camouflaged one on either side of a ruined farmhouse.</p>

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26th Battery, 7th Field Artillery Brigade

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PLACE	TIME	SUMMARY OF EVENTS AND INFORMATION	
Battery in position in 3 Sections	23.12.17	<p>Two or three rooms in the farmhouse were tenable, and here the gunners lived. At the rear were also two sand bagged cupola dugouts. The Right and Left Section guns were in pits covered by cupolas, and also screened by ruins. The Officer's Mess was in a house which was quite intact.</p> <p>The City of ARMENTIERES presented a much different appearance as to when this Battery pulled into action in HOUPLES in January last. Scarcely a dwelling or public building has escaped the Hun shells. No civilians were permitted to reside in the City, and the streets were patrolled day and night by Military Police. By all appearances the City had been systematically shelled. At this time it was fairly quiet, the only portions receiving hostile attention being the outlying districts and roads leading towards the trenches.</p> <p>The gunner's quarters had been made very comfortable by the addition of stoves, furniture and household utensils "borrowed" from hurriedly evacuated houses nearby. At the Centre Section there was in fact a piano, and many an hour was pleasantly whiled away.</p>	See map marked HOUPLES position
R. Sect. c.20.d.15.45			
C. Sect c.19.b.20.35			
L. Sect c.14.c.8.9. & c.14.c.9.1.			
	24.12.17	<p>Christmas Eve. To-day there was much activity about the cook-house. Sucking pigs were purchased, and carts were busy in the neighbouring Towns procuring eatables. The Battery Canteen donated a sum of 900 francs to assist the Men's mess. Xmas puddings were issued by the Comforts Fund, each man having a half-pound allowance. The C.R.A. had beer sent to the various Batteries, and everyone did their best to make Christmas as merry as circumstances would permit.</p>	
	25.12.17	<p>A typical Christmas day for France. The cold was intense and snow fell at frequent intervals. Along the front only desultory firing could be heard. Early in the morning the Battery mess-cart took to the position the xmas provender set apart for the men at the guns. At both Battery position and Waggon Lines a happy time was spent, and for a while the hardships and monotony of war were forgotten. Xmas parcels from Australia failed to arrive in time for Christmas, but the English mail brought a googly number, and these in a way made up for the absence of the Australian mail.</p>	
	26.12.17	<p>To-day there was some artillery activity, but the visibility was poor owing to frequent sleet and snow storms. A new allotment of English leave was now granted to this Brigade. 7 men per Battery per week being allowed to go on "Blighty" leave</p>	

WAR DIARY

26th Battery, 7th Field Artillery Brigade

PLACE	TIME	SUMMARY OF EVENTS AND INFORMATION
continued	27.12.17	<p>The visibility to-day was fairly good, and advantage was taken of the weather and the guns ranged and checked. Enemy balloons were up early, and there was some aerial activity. In the night a hostile 4.2 Battery shelled the vicinity of the Left Section but very little damage was done. No shells have yet fallen near the Right and Centre Sections, and great care is being taken to cover up all tracks in the snow, leading to and from the guns.</p> <p>No. 22830 Gunner Nail was accidentally injured whilst serving the gun, losing the top joint of a finger, and it was found necessary for him to report to the hospital.</p>
	28.12.17	<p>A very clear day. Our 'planes were very busy over the trenches and one in particular refused to be driven off, altho' great numbers of machine guns were firing at him in addition to the Hun anti-aircraft guns.</p> <p>Hostile 'planes flew over our back areas and were engaged by our own machines.</p>
	29.12.17	<p>At the Battery position it was very quiet. Incendiary shells were fired on a Minnenwerfer position, direct hits being obtained.</p>
	30.12.17	<p>Again it was very quiet and the visibility was poor. About midday the vicinity of the Right Section was shelled by the enemy. A Group Order was carried out and the shooting reported effective, explosions being observed and the hostile shelling ceasing.</p>
	31.12.17	<p>To-day was the Anniversary of the 26th Battery's arrival in France.</p> <p>B Sub. gun was taken out of the pit into the open for sniping purposes. 160 rounds were fired in accordance with an Operation Order, and 120 rounds on trenches and farms, the fire being very effective.</p>

WAR DIARY

26th BATTERY, 7th FIELD ARTILLERY BRIGADE.

CASUALTY LIST

Killed in Action

18458 Gnr. GENTLE C.G. 1-2-17
 18944 " STIMSON L.N. 6-6-17
 2317 " RYAN O.J. 11-9-17
 19357 Dvr. SHIPWAY C. 11-9-17
 28799 Gnr. SMITH E.G. 11-9-17
 18744 " SEALE F.L. 11-9-17
 24398 S/S. BARBLETT C.C. 11-9-17
 18858 Bdr. DOWLING F.G. 11-9-17
 32135 Dvr. HERBERT H.A. 17-10-17 (about)

Died of wounds.

18752 Gnr. TINDALE J.E.W. 23-5-17
 18449 " DOUGHTY C. 19-6-17
 24382 Dvr. NETHERCOTT H.G. 11-9-17
 18651 " DALE S.G. 11-9-17
 18658 " FERRIS E.R. 12-9-17
 26460 " ALFORD M. 13-9-17
 18628 T/Bdr. ANDREW H.G. 7-10-17
 18693 Gnr. LUCK E.J. 9-10-17
 18754 " UTER F. 18-10-17

Wounded in Action

Officers

Lieut. WATT C.W. 11-9-17
 " FRAZER R.V. 3-10-17

Other Ranks.

18662 Gnr. FOWLER R.M. 21-1-17
 18637 " BLEACH H.B. 30-1-17
 18718 " O'NEILL T.F. 1-3-17
 26472 " CROFT F.J. 30-4-17
 19307 Sgt. KILLE J. 21-5-17
 18858 Bdr. DOWLING F.G. 21-5-17
 18732 Gnr. ROSS C. 22-5-17
 19307 Sgt. KILLE J. 21-5-17 (2nd Occn.)
 18470 Gnr. HARDING E. 22-5-17
 18624 T/Cpl. AINSWORTH G. 22-5-17
 18633 Bdr. BARNARD G.C. 4-6-17
 22818 Gnr. JORDAN A.F. 4-6-17
 22850 Sgt. WEIL C.W. 4-6-17
 18858 Bdr. DOWLING F.G. 5-6-17 (2nd Occn.)
 22782 Gnr. ANDERSON W.S. 5-6-17
 18874 Sgt. HOGARTH W.W. 6-6-17
 18652 Bdr. DeDEAR L.G. 6-6-17
 18710 Sgt. McINTOSH A.A. 7-6-17
 1863L Gnr. ASTILL A.H. 9-6-17
 18727 A/Bdr. QUIGLEY G.M. 9-6-17
 18645 A/Bdr. COGLE J.K. 9-6-17
 18925 Dvr. RHALL S.M. 11-7-17

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26th. Battery, 7th Field Artillery Brigade.

CASUALTY LIST (contd.)

Wounded in Action
Other Ranks.

22800	Gnr.	GODDARD F.G.	21-7-17
18911	"	O'CONNOR C.J.	22-7-17
18675	Sgt.	HARRISON C.E.	26-8-17
18631	Gnr.	ASTILL A.H.	26-8-17 (2nd Occn.)
19279	"	GLAZIER S.R.	26-8-17
18956	Far/Sgt	ARMSTRONG R.H.	11-9-17
31123	Gnr.	DEANE S.G.	11-9-17
18708	Dvr.	MCCARTHY L.L.	11-9-17
18916	Gnr.	PARNELL R.V.	11-9-17
18731	Dvr.	RANDALL D.	11-9-17
18684	"	JARRETT E.L.	11-9-17
12066	Gnr.	SMITH W.G.C.	11-9-17
18664	Dvr.	FRENCH J.R.	11-9-17
18624	Cpl.	AINSWORTH G.M.	11-9-17 (2nd Occn.)
18690	Gnr.	KNIGHT S.H.	11-9-17
18940	Dvr.	SMITH J.C.	11-9-17
22799	Gnr.	FARRINGTON T.	11-9-17
22823	Dvr.	MASON W.D.	11-9-17
18441	Gnr.	COOPER C.C.	11-9-17
19275	Dvr.	PROST O.	11-9-17
826	Gnr.	MCGEARY A.	22-9-17
18936	A/bdr.	SILVERTON P.G.	11-9-17
1534	Gnr.	GALLAGHER M.V.	11-9-17
22806	"	GREEN H.	11-9-17
22836	Dvr.	SANDERS A.E.	11-9-17
19330	Gnr.	NELSON H.	11-9-17
18845	"	CALLAGHAN P.C.	11-9-17
19350	Dvr.	STAGG F.A.	11-9-17
18470	A/bdr.	HARDING E.	11-9-17 (2nd Occn.)
18873	Gnr.	HARVEY P.U.	11-9-17
18712	T/bdr.	NOBLE G.H.	11-9-17

Wounded in Action.
other Ranks.

18664	Gnr.	CLARK A.J.	11-9-17
18894	Dvr.	LIDDELL S.R.	11-9-17
26421	Gnr.	SHEARSTON J.	11-9-17
2602	"	GODDARD H.J.	11-9-17 (2nd Occn.)
31124	"	DAVIS G.R.	23-9-17
18758	"	O'NEILL T.F.	26-9-17
17154	Dvr.	MCGOULRICK P.	11-9-17
18937	Gnr.	SHEPHERD W.H.	11-9-17
27888	"	WILSON H.H.	11-9-17
19307	Sgt.	KILLE J.	21-9-17 (3rd Occn.)
9299	Gnr.	DONOVAN J.J.	24-9-17
18766	Dvr.	WHITEHAIR W.	25-9-17
24628	Gnr.	MCDERMOTT H.J.	26-9-17
18630	Dvr.	ASPINWALL T.	26-9-17
353	T/Bdr.	Macintosh A.K.	26-9-17
32511	Gnr.	WALKER G.C.	28-9-17
30534	Dvr.	MACINTOSH C.W.	28-9-17
729	Gnr.	JOHNSTON W.	27-9-17
18739	"	SHAND C.M.	30-9-17
18634	"	BEGG A.	30-9-17
18670	T/Bdr.	GOSWELL J.S.	30-9-17
18745	A/Sgt.	SHIELDS J.S.	3-10-17
18677	Gnr.	HILLS E.B.	3-10-17
18712	"	NOAKES P.E.	3-10-17
18739	"	SHAND C.M.	3-10-17 (2nd Occn.)
19277	"	FADDY T.H.	3-10-17
18936	T/Cpl.	SILVERTON P.G.	7-10-17 (2nd Occn.)
18670	T/Bdr.	GOSWELL J.S.	7-10-17 (2nd Occn.)
22802	Gnr.	GANNON J.D.	7-10-17
32516	"	BEWSHER E.J.	16-10-17
34408	Dvr.	BUMFORD C.G.	14-10-17

WAR

DIARY

26th Battery, 7th Field Artillery Brigade.CASUALTY LIST (Contd.)Wounded in Action.Other Ranks.

32157	Dvr.	O'HARA J.	11-10-17
26472	Gnr.	CROFT F.J.	8-10-17 (2nd Occn.)
28429	Dvr.	BAKER C.E.	18-10-17
18884	A/Bdr.	KAY A.T.	18-10-17 (2nd Occn.)
22830	Gnr.	NAIL N.	26-12-17

 Sapper CRUIKSHANKS W. 18-10-17
 (Telephonist attached from
 Headquarters).

Accidently Injured.

18699	Gnr.	Goatley C.L.	27-1-17
18684	Dvr.	JARRETT E.L.	9-8-17
18757	Gnr.	WHALE C.T.	2-9-17
18700	Sgt.	McINTOSH A.A.	19-9-17
2309	Gnr.	Bambrough T.A.	8-10-17.
