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Title: 26th Battery, Australian Field Artillery

February 1918



AWM4-13/72/8PART2

26th BATTERY, 7th AUST. FIELD ARTILLERY BRIGADE.

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1918.

- 21st January - Major LAYFAIR inspected Wagon Lines this morning -
(Note. - Bdr ROHU'S work re next-of-kin of men
killed in action.)
- 22nd January - The Battery was inspected to-day by the C.R.A.,
Lieut-Col. ALLSOP. - Lieut. MACKELLER left to attend a
Signal School at BAILLEUL.
- 23rd January - Lieut. JENKINS who has been attached temporarily to the
26th Battery for the past week, returned to his Unit
(25th) to-day.
Half-holiday granted.
- 24th January - A photograph of the members of the 26th Battery was
taken.
Weather now fine.
- 25th January - A photograph of the Officers of the Brigade was taken
this morning.
Cpl. R POUNTNEY went to St. John's Wood for the
Officers Course of Instruction.
- 26th January - A team picked from the Brigade played a Rugby Match
against 33rd Battalion which resulted in a win for the
latter team. Scores 6 to 3.
- 27th January - No. 18625 Cpl. JOHNS left the Battery for England to
be attached to R.B.A.A.
Half holiday was granted
Movement Orders were received for the Battery to go
into action on the 30th. January.
- 28th) January - Preparations being made for the move.
29th)
- 30th January. - Right Section and Telephonists under Capt COLQUHOUN
with Lieut. BINNIE took over from 14th Battery A.F.A.
This position is the same one which we occupied on
9-11-1917 - GUNNERS FARM
- 31st January - Centre and Left Sections in charge of Lieut. MACKELLAR
left for the position, and the main body moved out
from the Wagon Lines and proceeded to the lines
previously occupied by us when in this Battery position,
- RAWAL PINDI - in the vicinity of BAILLEUL.
The hutments were found to be in a dirty and dilapid-
ated condition, and practically no improvements had
been made since our previous occupation.
Weather foggy.
- 1st February - Foggy weather has returned. - The Battery has now
settled down and the guns are once more pointing tow-
ards the German Lines. Capt. COLQUHOUN & Lieut.
Nivison are at the guns and Lieuts. MACKELLAR and
BINNIE in charge of Wagon Lines.
- 2nd February - The weather cleared somewhat and aeroplanes from
both sides of the line took advantage of it.
The Huns got on to our Left Section with 5.9 Batteries
putting over a great number of shells and driving our
men away from the guns. There were no casualties,
but some of the sleeping quarters were wrecked.
The Right Section was also shelled with gas.

- 3rd February. - The Centre Section and also the Officer's Mess were shelled rather heavily. Luckily there were no casualties.
Lieut. HOGARTH and No. 18750 Cpl. THOMAS returned from School at TILQUES.
- 4th February - Lieut-HOGARTH went to Battery position. - A fairly quiet day.
- 5th February - The Right Section was shelled during the day but little damage resulted.
- 6th February - Major Playfair returned to the Battery from 7th Bgde. Headquarters.
Lieut. WATT who was wounded at DICKEBUSCH returned to the Battery.
The Right Section was again shelled with 4.2 and 77mm hostile batteries. No casualties.
- 7th February - Battery change over. A few shells fell about the Right Section during the course of the day.
- 8th February - Major PLAYFAIR proceeded to ENGLAND on fourteen days furlough.
At night the guns were pulled out and moved a couple of miles further North to HILL 63, there to take up a temporary position for the purpose of covering a raid on WARNETON.
The enemy-shelled the vicinity of the new position just previous to our occupation.
A Bridgeway was blown up and so caused some delay until another was improvised. After the teams had got away again, the Hun Batteries opened up, and the shelling became so severe that it was decided to evacuate till morning. The men found shelter in the CATACOMBS near "HYDE PARK CORNER" for the remainder of the night.
- 9th February - The guns were "shot in" to-day. An 8" hostile Battery shelled about the position. No hits were scored but the communications were broken.
During the "shooting in" of the guns the O.P. was shelled, but in spite of this and the broken communications the Battery Commander completed the task. About 200 rounds fell to the right of our position and close to the control Station.
This night the Officers shared the dug-out occupied by the officers of the 29th Battery whose guns were about 75 yards in front of ours. Our gunners made themselves at home in shelters handy to the guns.
- 10th February - Dull windy weather. - No aerial activity - Until noon it was quiet and then the enemy began shelling with all calibres from "whizz-bangs" 77mm to 8".
Communications were again disorganised but by dint of hard work everything was in order for the raid.
The raid took place at 10 p.m. and at 10.45 p.m. word came through that the attack had been entirely successful, 37 prisoners being taken in addition to 3 machine guns and a Trench Mrotar. About 100 of the enemy were killed. Our casualties were very light. Before midnight the teams had begun to pull the guns back to their old position at GUNNERS FARM. Just as the last gun left the position, the enemy put an 8" Battery on to it. F. sub. gun became overturned and had to be abandoned till the morrow.
The Battery was exceedingly fortunate in not having any losses in this position.
- 11th February - Fierce winds and again overcast. Battery Wagon Lines were inspected in the afternoon by Lieut-Col. CHURCHUS D.S.O.

- 12th February - Dull and misty weather. A quiet day at the Battery
Usual routine carried out at Wagon Lines.
- 13th February - Dull and misty weather. Another quiet day at the
Battery.
- 14th February - Still foggy and overcast.
Our Left Section guns were very active all day, a
total of 160 rounds being fired by request from the
Infantry.
Lieut. MACKELLAR evacuated to hospital suffering from
injury to knee.
- 15th February - Visibility indifferent but weather clearing. Aircraft
were inactive owing to unsuitable weather conditions.
Approx. 50, 10 cm shells from the direction of
FRELINGHIEN fell about the Battery position.
Our Left Section fired about 60 rounds at the request
of Infantry.
- 16th February - The recent spell of dull weather has at last broken.
To-day the sky was clear and the sun shone with some
warmth. There was a fair frost in the night.
Aircraft were very active and H.V. guns shelled our
back areas.
Artillery activity increased right along the line,
and firing continued throughout the night.
- 17th February - Another fine day. Aircraft and Balloons active on
both sides of the line. Our anti guns were
continually in action, but in the majority of cases
the Bosche planes flew at a great height and well
out of range.
Our back areas were again shelled by the enemy.
Approx. 150 rounds were fired on various targets such
as working parties, tramways, roads etc
Over 600 15 cm shells fell in and around the Battery
position. -(C.l.c.80.80., C.l.c.50.20.)
- 18th February - During the day 150 rounds were fired, some at Infantry
request, others on working parties reported from the
O.P.
Being a clear moonlight night aerial activity was
greater than usual. Numbers of our machines passed
over to the enemy's territory, whilst several Hun
planes dropped bombs in our back areas in this
neighbourhood.
- 19th February - Hostile artillery was inactive to-day. Our guns fired
130 rounds in ranging and testing 106 fuzes.
A fine warm day but visibility indifferent owing to
haze. Bombing raids were carried out at night.
- 20th February - A sudden change in weather conditions, with cold
winds accompanied by rain squalls. Visibility was
bad and consequently there was no artillery activity.
The C.R.A. inspected Wagon Lines during the afternoon.
- 21st February - Weather had slightly improved but the ground was very
muddy. Ranging and testing of 106 fuzes was continued
to-day. There was practically no hostile fire about
the position.
- February - Dull but fine. About 50 rounds were fired on parties
of the enemy with good effect. German guns became
active about the middle of the day. About 200 rounds
fell about the position, including a large percentage
of gas shells.

- 23rd February - Dull and showery. Visibility was poor and artillery activity very slight. Nothing special to report.
- 24th February - Weather improving. Visibility was fair, and there was some aerial activity but practically no artillery action. Nothing special to report. Major PLAYFAIR returned to D.A.H.Q. to-day.
- ~~25th-February-~~
25th February - Weather changeable. Our guns fired on a working party dispersing same. There was no hostile fire. A Lecture was given by Capt. Chaplain MITCHELL at the Y.M.C.A. tent in 26th Battery Wagon Lines on "Queer things of Nature".
- 26th February - Our guns were active throughout the day firing on enemy working parties and similar targets. The enemy carried out a destructive shoot with a 5.9 battery, approx. 150 rounds falling in the vicinity of the Battery. No guns were hit or casualties caused. The weather was fine and the visibility good. Aircraft were very active.
- 27th February - Weather changing to dull and cool. Visibility was only fair and there was little artillery activity. The Wagon Lines were inspected in the afternoon by Lieut-Col. CHURCHUS D.S.O.
- 28th February - Weather dull but visibility was good. About 50 5.9's fell about the battery position but little damage was done. 80 rounds were fired by our guns on a Group Operation Order, and 90 rounds on hostile movement observed from the O.P. The Wagon Lines were inspected to-day by Genl. GRIMWADE C.M.G. Hostile bombing planes visited the back areas at night. A good concert was given by the 10th Field Ambulance Pierrot Troupe in the 7th Brigade Y.M.C.A. tent. Mr Norman the Y.M.C.A. Representative leaves for Australia to-morrow. Under his able management the Y.M.C.A. has proved a great benefit and help to the troops.
- 1st March - An inspection of the Battery positions of the 7th Brigade was made by Brig-Gen Sir, W.R. BIRDWOOD, K.C.B. The guns were in action continuously during the day a total of 200 rounds being fired on targets such as working parties, roads, traffic and general hostile movement. There was no hostile artillery retaliation in our direction. A Patrol from 43rd Battalion, 11th Aust. Inf. Bde. crossed the River LYS by Bridge this night, for the purpose of mopping up enemy listening posts. Our guns "stood to" during the operation. Strong winds and rain squalls developed during the night. During the past fortnight much ammunition has been conveyed to the position by pack horses. To-night 1800 rounds were taken up.