

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

Artillery

**Item number:** 13/39/29

**Title:** Headquarters, 12th Australian Field  
Artillery Brigade

September 1918



AWM4-13/39/29



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WAR DIARY  
OF

12TH ARMY BRIGADE, AUSTRALIAN FIELD ARTILLERY.

FOR  
SEPTEMBER 1918.

ORIGINAL

~~DUPLICATE~~

~~TRIPPLICATE~~

*H.R. Bowden* Lieut.  
Officer Compiling.

*P. Mountgery* Lieut.  
Acting Adjutant.

*E.W. Richards* Major.  
T/Commanding 12th Army Brigade, Aust.F.A.



## WAR DIARY

or

## INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Erase heading not required.)

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 and the Staff Manual respectively. Title Pages  
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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
1:	9:18.		Brigade in Action in O.1 (Sheet 62c) Harassing Fire carried out and opportunity targets engaged all day with good results. Much enemy movement and transport seen and batteries in action picked up.	
2:	9:18.		PERCENNE was mopped up during the day. Our Batteries continued to fire heavily covering small infantry advances carrying out harassing fire and engaging opportunity targets. We shelled FLAMICOURT heavily which was offering a good deal of resistance.	
3:	9:18.		Similar operations were carried out as on day previous.	
4:	9:18.		Orders were received for Brigade to pull out of action, move to Wagon Lines in vicinity of DOMPIERRE and pass into Corps Reserve. All clear at 10 p.m.	
5:	9:18.		In reserve in Wagon Lines - nothing to report.	
6:	9:18.		do do	
7:	9:18.		do do	
8:	9:18.		do do	
9:	9:18.		Brigade moved Wagon Lines on to the Somme River in the vicinity of FRISE.	
10:	9:18.		Nothing to report.	
11:	9:18.		A Brigade dismounted parade was held and inspected by Brig. General W.A. COXAN, C.M.G., G.O.C. R.A. The general state of turnout and equipment was highly satisfactorily.	
12:	9:18.		Orders were received for Brigade to move into action in the vicinity of BERNES and VENDELLES to relieve 5th Army Brigade, R.H.A. Brigade to be grouped under Lieut. Col. COHEN D.S.O. as Reserve Group 4th Australian Division Artillery. Relief was completed by 6 p.m.	
13:	9:18.		In action in Defensive Positions as above. Fired on S.O.S. Lines at 8-30 p.m.	
14:	9:18.		Nothing to report.	
15:	9:18.		Batteries still in action in Defensive Positions near BERNES. Information was received of an operation to be carried out on the 18th instant. Batteries are to move into forward positions on night 17/18 reconnoitred forward of VENDELLES and ammunition, 600 rounds per 18 pdr and 400 rounds per 4.5 How to be dumped at position which are approximately 1500 yards from the present outposts. Throughout the day our Infantry by a process of peaceful penetratio	

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			<p>15:9:18. have advanced their line about three hundred yards and taken 50 prisoners. Enemy artillery activity not very great.</p> <p>16:9:18. Enemy artillery more active than usual guns of small calibre chiefly being used. Throughout the night ammunition was dumped on forward positions for forthcoming operation. Rain fell during the night.</p> <p>17:9:18. Weather gradually cleared and became fine in early afternoon. Batteries and Headquarters moved into position forward of VENDELLES. All Batteries in action laid on barrage lines and in communication with H.Q. at their new location by 12 midnight.</p> <p>18:9:18. At 4 a.m. Barrage opened, 4th Australian Division attacked with a jumping off line near JEANCOURT. 1st Australian Division were on our left. At 6-35 a.m. a report was received that all was well and at 7-3 a.m. first objective was reported taken. While creeping barrage was in progress reconnaissance was made of forward battery positions to cover final objective. At 10-5 a.m. orders were received for Batteries to move forward as infantry were established on final objective. Batteries moved forward by sections to positions near LE VERGUIER and were in action and in communication by 1-30 p.m. Throughout the day Lieut. H.K.BARRACLOUGH rendered valuable service as F.O.O. He followed the Infantry forward and although maintenance of communication was difficult much valuable information was received from him throughout the day. His report included a lengthy eulogy of the behaviour of our Australian Infantry. He described how they moved forward close to the barrage but in a manner which shewed they had no particular interest in it. From a trench on the crest near LE VERGUIER detachments captured enemy numbering quite four times their own strength. Germans here made no attempt to fight but left their cover and surrendered as soon as the barrage passed over them. Prisoners captured by 4th Australian Division numbered about 900.</p> <p>19:9:18. Weather again inclined to be unsettled. At 7-14 p.m. S.O.S was ordered as a Brigade of the Division on our Left was being attacked. This was stopped at 7-35 p.m. Canal crossing were harassed throughout the night.</p>	

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	20:9:18.		Nothing of importance to report. Harassing Fire was again maintained throughout the night.	
	21:9:18.		Harassing Fire carried out.	
	22:9:18.		An order was received that Batteries would be withdrawn and pass into Corps Reserve on night 22/23. At 10-45 p.m. the last battery was reported clear of position and all moved into Wagon lines in the vicinity of MONTIGNY FARM and HERVILLY.	
	23:9:18.		At 2 a.m. a despatch was received ordering relief of 3rd Army Brigade, Aust. F. A. on night 23/24. At 9 a.m. reconnaissance party moved forward. 47th Battery completed relief at 5 p.m. and by 9 p.m. the relief by remaining Batteries were also completed in the vicinity of HARGICOURT. On the night 23/24 1st Australian Division was relieved by the 30th American Division. Harassing fire was maintained during the relief.	
	24:9:18.		Relief of the 1st Australian Division still in progress. Preparations are being made for an operation by the 30th American Division with the Division on its flanks to take BELLECOURT and the HINDENBURG LINE. In this operation the 27th and 30th American Divisions jump off the Australian Corps front, the 5th Australian Division going through the 30th American Division and 3rd Australian Division through 27th American Division. Positions were reconnoitred for this Brigade in the vicinity of VILLERET. Lieut. Col. H.W.LLOYD, C.M.G., D.S.O. now commands Left Group. 5th Australian Div. Arty. consisting of 12th, 4th and 5th Australian Brigades, and 65th Army Brigade, R.F.A.	
	25:9:18.		At 5-5 a.m. Batteries and Tactical O.P. reported S.O.S. signal on Divisional front. This Group was ordered to open fire at 5-40 a.m. Batteries were ordered to stop firing but at 5-55 a.m. S.O.S. signal was again reported and all batteries fired until 6-30 a.m. It was ultimately ascertained that our own Group front was never attacked, but a small raiding party had penetrated the front line outposts on the right of 30th American Division. Throughout the day the enemy was active pushing out daylight patrols.	



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	26:9:18		Enemy artillery activity has increased HARGICOURT receiving consistent attention and a great deal of Gas Shell has been used. Enemy still offensive with patrols on Divisional front.	
	27:9:18		Enemy artillery still active. Preparation of Forward positions before the operation on the HINDENBURG LINE was proceeded with and ammunition was carted to new positions throughout the night.	
	28:9:18		At daylight this morning a minor operation was carried out by the 37th and 30th Divisions to straighten up the line and to obtain a suitable jumping off line for the operation on the morning of 29th. 30th American Division established themselves satisfactorily but the 27th American Division met with some difficulty and the situation was obscure throughout the day. At night all batteries moved up to forward positions near LA VILLERET where they were installed and laid on barrage lines by 12 midnight.	
	29:9:18		At zero hour 5-30 a.m. barrage opened exactly to time and well placed. Not a great deal of information was obtained throughout the morning but considerable numbers of prisoners soon started to come back. Before the operation Lieut. L. C. SETON "MC" went forward as F.O.O. with an Officer of the 5th A.F.F. Brigade. Lieut. L.C. Seton "MC" was wounded by machine gun fire early in the afternoon. It transpired that in moving forward he found a party of infantry held up in front of him by a nest of enemy machine guns. There was apparently no one to take charge so Lieut. L.C. SETON "MC" organised a party to attack the hostile machine gun. He secured an enemy machine gun himself moved forward and opened fire on some enemy machine gun gunners. Another enemy machine gun on his flank simultaneously opened fire on him. Lieut. L.C. SETON "MC" maintained his fire although wounded in three places. By keeping the enemy under fire he enabled the infantry to outflank and mop up the machine gun nest. He was then brought back to the dressing station. The 30th American Division although failing to mop up thoroughly went through the HINDENBURG LINE and BELLECOURT but were considerably disorganised. At about 12 Noon the 5th Australian Division went through the 30th American Division. It is not clear at what point they passed through but at the end of the day NAUROY	

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			<p>29:9:18. had been taken and a line established a little short of first objective.</p> <p>30:9:18. Throughout the day the infantry have been gradually forcing the enemy towards the further objective. Much fire has been carried out on various targets in conjunction with this operation at the request of infantry.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>F. Mountray</i> Lieut. Adjutant, 12th Army Brigade, Aust. F. A.</p>	