

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

Infantry

Item number: 23/43/20

Title: 26th Infantry Battalion

March 1917



AWM4-23/43/20

WAR DIARY

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

26 *Pr*

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.

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date 1917	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Ref. Maps. FRANCE 57 c. 57 d.	Remarks and references to Appendices
Contalmaison	March	1	Battalion moved from Huts at CONTALMAISON & assembled in sunken road in WARLENCOURT.		
Warlen court	"	2	<p>On the night of 1/2na the Bn attacked MALT TRENCH (a German trench running east & west 500 yards North of WARLENCOURT. (See sketch report attached))</p> <p>Right Boundary MS C4.6 Left boundary M4 a 7.7 (vide sketch & special report attached.)</p> <p>Prisoners taken in this attack belonged to 64th Res Rgt. 1st Pioneer Rgt & 6th Coy Amb. also a few men of 1st Gds. Res. Regt.</p> <p>Awards in connection with this attack were as follows:-</p> <p>CAPT. P. H. CHERRY awarded M.C. This officer found a gap in the wire & led his men with great dash through it. When in the trench he captured 2 M.G.'s one of which he personally turned on the enemy. He remained on duty although wounded.</p> <p>Lieut. C. C. WARD awarded M.C. Took command when all other Coy officers had become casualties. He consolidated the position gained & repelled a counter attack inflicting heavy casualties. His frequent reports were of utmost value to HQ.</p> <p>Lieut. F. C. LLOYD awarded M.C. Showed marked ability in consolidating his position also marked initiative in protecting his left flank until 28th Bn on his left got into position.</p> <p>CAPT. A. O. WOODS awarded M.C. In conspicuous bravery. He rallied his men when held up by wire & finding a gap led them through it. He was the first man in the enemy trench where a fierce fight ensued. He was severely wounded late but continued to encourage & direct his men.</p> <p>The following other ranks also received Military Medals:-</p>		I & VII VIII a

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WAR DIARY

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Place	Date 1917	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Ref. Maps. France	Remarks and references to Appendices	
Warlencourt.	March 2nd (Continued)		936 Sgt. W.G. Saunders 1700 Plt. C.H. Roberson 275 Sgt. A. Borella 593 Cap. L. O'Neil 4478 Plt. G.L. McLeod	549 Plt. L.E. Jarvis 257 " F.R. Denney 4064 Corp. E.V.R. Lee 389 Cpl. P. Neilson.	s7 c s7 d	
Martinpuich	3th		Bn was relieved in the position they had gained, on the night of the 2nd by 28th Bn. & moved to bivouacs at M 21 d (near MARTINPUICH)			II V
Warlencourt	4th		Bn relieved 28th Bn at MALT TRENCH. Left boundary M 4 c 4.2 Right " M 5 d 5.3.			III IV VI
Martinpuich	6th		Bn relieved by 28th Bn & moved to bivouacs in the S.A.P.S.			
	7th		Moved to bivouacs at M 2 d.			
Cortalmaison	8th		Bn moved from tent M 2 d to huts at Cortalmaison (X 16 c)			VIII
BECOURT	9th		Bn moved to BECOURT Bugae Camp, Becourt (X 25 c)			
	10th - 18th		Bn engaged in training special attention being paid to "Battalion in attack" in open formations & advance guard movements. Also to bringing out initiative of junior commands.			
Bapaume.	19th		Bn marched to Avesnes (about 1 mile S.W. of BAPAUME & bivouaced in timber road (H. 26 b))			
Vaulx	20th		Bn moved to Vaulx & took over outpost line from 23rd Aust. Inf. Bn. For ais positions see sketch (VAULX C 26 central)			IX X XI
	22nd		27th Bn took over a number of posts on left of our sector.			XII XV XVI

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Vaulx	1917 March	23rd	<p>During the afternoon a German plane was shot down by an airman of the 32nd Squadron R.F.C. landed about 200 yards in front of one of our outposts. The German pilot made a dash for his own lines but was shot in the back as he ran by one of the men on our post. He was then taken prisoner & sent on a stretcher with all haste to the Aia post where he stated that his name was Prince Suedick Charles of Prussia. The German plane was dragged into back behind a small copse that during the evening & the next day handed over to the 32nd Squadron R.F.C. who dismantled it & carted it away.</p>	
		26th	<p>Bn. attacked & took LAGNICOURT (See special report & sketch attached) The battalion was relieved the same evening ^{by 19th Coll R.I. Pms} & returned to bivouacs in VAULX I, b 8.5.</p>	<p>XIII XIV XV XVI XVII XVIII XIX XX</p>
		27th	<p>Bn marched to huts at Bazentin S 14 a</p>	
		28th	<p>Presentation of ribbons at 2pm by Lt. Gen. Sir W. R. BIRDWOOD KCSI KCMG etc. in connection with awards given at MALT TRENCH. later Bn moved to Hut Camp near Contalmaison X 21 b (Sect's Redoubt North)</p>	

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Montalmaison	March 29 - 31st	1917	<p>Bn. resting & refilling</p> <p>Awards in connection with Lagnicourt were as follows:—</p> <p><u>CAPT. P. H. CHERRY</u> awarded <u>V.C.</u> This officer was in charge of C. Coy which stormed & cleared the village. His gallantry, bravery is beyond description. His leadership, coolness & bravery set a wonderful example to his men. On clearing the village he took charge of the situation & with about 100 men beat off a most determined counter attack. He was wounded early in the day & most regrettably killed about 7.30pm. During the day he personally killed 9 Germans.</p> <p><u>MAJOR. J. A. ROBINSON</u> awarded <u>D.S.O.</u> This officer supervised the assembly at the jumping off point & when the attack was launched directed the mopping up parties & pointing out places of assistance, absolutely regardless of heavy M.G. & snipers fire. His example right through the engagement including a very heavy enemy counter attack was magnificent.</p> <p><u>LIEUT. A. STAPLETON</u> awarded <u>M.C.</u> This officer was in charge of the party that cleared up the eastern obstacles of the village & showed great leadership & coolness. Later he showed great bravery & succeeded in driving off a very deadly counter attack.</p>	

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	March 31st	1917	<p>Lagnicouls Areas (continued)</p> <p>The following were awarded the D. C. M.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">No 3167 Pte Alfred STAFFORD 3162 " A. R. WALLACE</p> <p>The following were awarded M. M.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">No 4488 Pte C NUTT 1821 Sgt E. J. POWELL 3162 - Pte A. R. WALLACE 4752 Pte J. McCORMACK 1559 Sgt G. C. LOWES 1176 " S. SMITH. Pte M. J. DURKAM 263 Sgt A. H. ARMSTRONG. 586 Sgt C. E. DE VIS 5372 Pte J. McMENIMAN</p>	

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
			<u>MARCH.</u>	
			Strength on 28. 2. 17.	
			<u>JOINED</u>	
			From Hospital	Office O.R.
			Reinforcements	26 692
			Detached units	3 190
				1 35
				5 112
				9 337
				35 1029
			<u>DEPARTED.</u>	
			Detached units	5 80
			Hospital	2 119
			Killed	2 38
			Wounded	10 170
			Missing	1 26
			Died of wounds	1 -
				21 433
			Strength on 31. 3. 17.	14 596

*Drawers
L. Col
26th Bn AIF*

Operation Order No 49

1.3.17

Reference map Le Sars, Loupart Wood, LE BARAVE 10000

1. The enemy is holding MALT TRENCH from LOUPART ROAD to GREVILLERS LINE and has strong points in the trench at LOUPART ROAD and at junction of GAMP and MALT Trenches. He also holds about 150 yds of GAMP TRENCH.

The wire is being cut by our artillery today. The right Brigade holds MALT TRENCH to the LOUPART ROAD and has a post at M5205½

The 28th Battalion have posts at M407.9½ and M400½.3

2. at date and time to be fixed later the 26th Batts. will attack MALT TRENCH from the LOUPART ROAD to the junction with GAMP TRENCH (inclusive).

The 28th Battalion will attack in conjunction from the intersection of MALT TRENCH and GAMP TRENCH to a point approx. M463.0

3. Prior to zero time the Battalion will assemble on tapes on line approx. M466½.4 to M504½.4. "A" Coy on left "C" centre "B" right and "D" in reserve.

A Coy. will seize and occupy strong point at intersection of GAMP and MALT TRENCHES and establish a strong point at M460.7 (approx).

C Coy. will enter MALT TRENCH at M506½ approx., clear and occupy it and establish a strong point at M500.0 (approx)

B Coy. will seize and occupy strong point at junction of MALT TRENCH and LOUPART ROAD and establish a strong point at LOUPART ROAD

(APPENDIX I)

at M5 a 3½ 0 (approx).

D Coy. will remain in reserve at SUNKEN Rd.
WARLENCOURT at M10 6 0.5 (approx)

4. When objectives have been gained A Coy will connect up communication sep from junction of MALT and GAMP TRENCHES to point already dug.

Garrison consisting of Lewis Gun and Bomber with percentage of riflemen will be left in the new strong posts and in MALT TRENCH the remainder of the attacking companies will be sent back to SUNKEN ROAD WARLENCOURT before daylight.

5. 40 shovels and 20 picks per compy. will be collected from dumps at SUNKEN ROAD WARLENCOURT, also extra bombs Rifle Grenades + Lewis Gun panniers.

6. Dumps for P. & Stores S.A.A. + Bombs have been established at M10 6 ½ 5

M10 C 6 ½ 7½

M15 6 5. 2

7. Report messages etc will be forwarded to Battalion Head Quarters.

8. Artillery programme will be forwarded later, also positions of Battalion Head Quarters and R.H.P

9. Orders re ration water etc have already been communicated to officers concerned.

(Signed) W Y G Hinman Capt.

adpt.

2: 3: 17

Reference Map LE BARQUE $\frac{1}{10,000}$

1. The Battalion will be relieved tonight by the 28th Battalion.
2. Our present front will be taken over by 2 coys of the 28th Battalion.
 - C Coy of the 28th Batta on left.
 - B Coy right.
3. All stores etc will be handed over by mutual arrangement. Lewis Gun panniers required by relieving unit will be handed over and receipts obtained.
4. D Coy will be relieved by K Coy of the 28th Batta. by mutual arrangements of O.C's concerned.
5. On completion of relief A and C Coys will move into 26th AVENUE. B and D Coys to GUN PIT ROAD.
6. Completion of relief will be notified to Br. Hd. Qtrs. by names of O.C then 'CHERRY'.
7. Care must be taken when handing over that the situation is well in hand.
8. 1 N.C.O. or man per Coy. will report to AID POST to go in advance.
9. Patrols will be sent to front and rear at dusk to collect any wounded and bury any dead.
10. Battalion Head Quarters will be in 26th AVENUE

(Signed) W. V. Henman
 _____ Capt.
 _____ Adj't.

4. 3. 17.

1. 26th Battalion will relieve 28th Battalion in the left sector of the Brigade front tonight 4/5 Feb.
2. The left boundary of the Brigade is now the DRY DITCH at M4 C 65.95.
3. Order of relief will be as follows:-
 A Coy. will relieve the left Coy. - B Coy. will relieve the right Coy. - B will relieve support Coy. in SUMKEN ROAD WARLENCOURT. - C Coy. will relieve RESERVE Coy. in GALLWITZ TRENCH.

First Company will move at 5.30 P.M. 100 yds interval will be maintained between Coys. and platoons.

4. GUIDES will meet incoming Coys. at CHALK PIT
5. Battalion Hd. Qtrs. will be at 28th Battalion Hd. Qtrs. in GALLWITZ TRENCH till completion of relief when it will move forward to dug-out behind AID POST in WARLENCOURT.

REPORT REQUIRED.

Casualty Report for 24 hours up to noon 12.30 P.M.

Situation Reports

{ 4.15 AM
4.15 PM

Intelligence Summary }
 Patrol Reports }
 Works Reports }

5 A.M.

(Signed) W. J. Heriman
 Capt

Adjt

III

All trench stores, maps etc. will be taken over and receipts given. 1 copy of receipt will be forwarded to Battalion Head Quarters.

Completion of relief will be sent to Battalion Head Quarters in code

Appendix 1 contains list of reports required.

(Signed) W. J. Steinman Capt

Adj't

7th Australian Inf. BrigadeMarch 5th '17Operation Memorandum No 5.

Patrolling will be carried out nightly and during fogs.

Scouts must be sent definite tasks, being given clear question to answer.

In order that arrangements may be made to suspend artillery and machine gun fire on NO MAN'S LAND while patrols are out, Commanding Officers concerned will notify Brigade Head Quarters by the D. R. who leaves Brigade H. Q. at 11 A.M.

- I. The time scouts or patrols leave our lines
- II. The questions they have to answer, or the tasks allotted them.
- III. At what time they are to return.
- IV. The number in the patrol.

Any neglect of this order may result in men being killed by our artillery or machine guns.

all posts will be informed when scouts or patrols go out, the time and probable direction of their return being given.

(Signed) N. Wallington
Capt.

H/ Brigade Major
7th Aust. Inf. Bde.

Issued at 9 A.M.

7th Infantry Brigade.March 2nd 1917Secret

Operation Memorandum No. 3.

The following moves will take place as soon as posts and captured trenches are consolidated. These moves will take place gradually by mutual arrangement between Battalion commanders, so that the position is not for a moment endangered, and fighting can go on until the line is connected with adjoining Bde's.

(a) The new boundaries of the Bde and Battalion in the front line are as follows:-

Left Divⁿ Boundary G 34 central - G 34 d 3.0

M 4 d 5.8 thence down GAMP TRENCH to present Divisional Boundary.

Inter-Brigade Boundary G 35 d 0.6 - G 35 d 2.0

thence down old C.T. (inclusive to Right Bde) to M 5 d 6.6 - crossroads at M 11 a 6 $\frac{1}{2}$. 3 - M 16 c 3 $\frac{1}{2}$. 6 thence along present Inter Bde Boundary.

Inter-Battalion Boundary Junction of LOUPART ROAD and MALT TRENCH

at M 5 c 5.6

M 10 b 40.45

M 10 c 8.7

M 15 c 9.5

b (b) The 24th Battalion will take over the right and Battalion sub-sector. The 25th Battalion will take over the left sub-sector. The 25th Battalion will gradually withdraw and move into reserve. The 25th Battalion will move into support.

Moves will commence at once, and it is hoped will be completed tonight having due regard to para I.

The front line will consist of:-

1. Line of posts.
2. Picquet line - The captured trenches.
3. Support line - The line Coupe Trench.

V

WARLENCOURT NORTH - SUNKEN ROAD

(4) Reserve - Gallwitz trench

The support Battalion will occupy Aqueduct Road and 7ers Line.

(5) The Reserve Battalion - 2 Coys in 26th AVENUE and 2 Coys in GUN PIT ROAD

The Head Quarters of Units will be

Brigade Hd. Qrs. Markspaech South

Forward Hd. Qrs. M 20 d 6. 3

Left Battalion Warlencourt if suitable dugouts can be found.

Right Battalion Warlencourt.

Support Battalion Aqueduct Road, South-East of Chalk Pit.

Reserve Battalion 26th Avenue.

(Signed) H. Wellington Capt.

4th Bde Major

4th Aus. Inf. Bde.

7th Australian Infantry Brigade

Copy No. 2

March 4th 17Operation Memorandum No. 4.

- 1 The frontage to be held by the Brigade has been altered to include LAYTON LANE.
- 2 The whole position will be considered as an out-post line. "A" Battalion will furnish Picquets and Posts. The Posts are those put out on the line N15-6.50.30 - N14C 65-85.
- 3 The posts which will not be more than 100 yds apart, and mutually supporting will be held and the trench linking these will be patrolled. Picquets will be disposed in the most suitable position for the support of the Posts.
- 4 "B" Battalion will form the Support, based on LE SARRS, with at least one Coy. in SCOTLAND Trench.
- 5 "C" Battalion will form the Reserve in 26th AVENUE and GUN PIT ROAD.
- 6 "D" Battalion will be the resting Battalion in ACID DROP or BAZENTIN CAMPS.
- 7 Orders for the moves will be issued later. The probable date is the night 5th/6th inst.

(Signed) H. Wellington

Adj Bde Major

Capt.

7th Aust. Inf. Bde.

VI

5. 3. 17.

The G. O. C.
7th Brigade.

With reference to your 68/80 of 4/3/17 I have to report as follows:-

The Battalion was ordered to attack MALT TRENCH between the junction of LOUPART ROAD and C.T. now named EMMA ALLEY. The 25th Batta. were to attack on our left & the 27th Batta. Co-operate on our right. Three companies of the Battalion were sent into the attack "A" Coy. on the left, "C" Coy. in the Centre and "B" Coy. on the right. "D" Coy. were held in reserve. I had received instructions from the G. O. C. that in the event of patrol reporting wire not cut the attack would be postponed - at midnight on 1/2 inst. by phone orders were received to go ahead.

Tapes were immediately put out for a jumping off line approx. 250 yds. from and parallel to the objective.

The attacking Coys. filed into position adopting two waves each of two platoons. The frontage was too great to permit of the Coys. going over as a continuous line in two waves.

The Coys. were on position at ten minutes before Zero time 3 a.m. Immediately our artillery opened the attacking party moved up well under the barrage & followed it when the lift came at Zero + 3.

The enemy's wire consisting of teleposts about 4ft 6in high & about 8ft. thick was not destroyed but fortunately 5 lanes had been cut. This enabled the attacking party to file through but the centre Coy. were forced well to the right of their objective. They however immediately bombed up towards the left while the attacking party on the right who had also effected an entrance through a similar lane bombed down towards the right. Both these parties had considerable opposition & using the password "WISDOM" distinctly state that this word was repeated by the enemy. During this time the right Coy. had effected an entrance at the junction of LOUPART ROAD, they had a strenuous hand to hand fight lasting for about 10 mins. before the enemy gave way. During this heavy fighting 3 of the 4 Officers of this Company were wounded.

The enemy gave ground & posts were established in front of the objective & the position consolidated.

VII

The 28th Battalion stated that they were held up by wire and I informed Col. Reid that we had gained the objective & that we had established a block up the MALT TRENCH. At this time I was under the impression that our block was above GAMP TRENCH. This was wrong & was due to the maps from which the attack was planned being incorrect - the C.T. (ENIMA ALLEY) does not meet MALT TRENCH at the junction with GAMP TRENCH as was thought but is some 70 yds towards the East.

Col. Reid then informed me he was going again at the same objective. I received word by phone from Col. Slane that his men had been driven out of their objective on the right of LOUPART ROAD. I immediately sent Major Robinson up with instructions to Lieut. Ward to refuse his right & swing back into MALT TRENCH. Ward put out a post along the road connecting his advance post to MALT TRENCH. Col. Slane organised another party & meanwhile I got into touch with the Stokes mortar officer & instructed him to get his gun on to MALT TRENCH to the right of LOUPART ROAD. I sent 20 men to Col. Slane's party and eventually his men gained their objective & linked up with the Bde. on our right.

Col. Reid in his second attempt was also hung up by our wire & Major Robinson who had just returned informed me of the error in the map. I at once informed Reid & offered to assist him if he would send a party to bomb up his objective. This operation was successful under cover of a few Stokes which were utilised in the preliminary stage.

The objectives were reached & finally consolidated at about 10.30 A.M. but this Battalion gained and consolidated its objective by 6.0 A.M.

Three light Trench Mortars and two Machine Guns were captured in addition to an officer and 40 O.R. prisoners. This total is doubtful as at least 50 prisoners passed through my hands, some however were taken by the other Battalions operating.

ENIMA ALLEY was opened up throughout by one platoon from the Reserve Coy. S.A.A. bombs, and tools were carried up into the captured positions as soon as possible & all casualties were evacuated (wounded) were quickly attended to by the P.M.O. The dead were buried before nightfall with the exception of one or two who have since been buried. Our casualties have already been notified you.

At 5.30 a.m. the enemy attempted a feeble counter attack. He came out into the new NO MAN'S LAND & lined up for the attack. Our Lewis Guns in the posts which had been pushed out opened on him & two officers state that not a single man got back to their trench, those few left alive were captured by us.

The officers N.C.O's and men fought throughout with great determination & heart the morale being splendid. Frequent and correct reports (on the whole) were sent to Batta. Hd. Qrs by the officers concerned. The reserve Coy. also worked splendidly when the situation changed in carrying & evacuating wounded to the R.A.P.

The wire had apparently been entombed by our bombardment only the lanes cut by the 2 in. mortar.

Co-operation between Stokes & Machine Gun (Vickers) would be better if liaison officers were attached to Battalion Head Quarters. If this could be arranged without lessening the efficiency of the weapons in an attack.

More initiative could have been shown in mopping the situation on the left flank but the Officer explained that he was afraid of weakening his flanks too much in detaching a party sufficiently strong enough to do it. I had a party told off to attend to this but Col Reid desired to complete the job he had set out to do.

The greatest harmony existed between the C.O's of the 24th & 25th Battalions and myself throughout the whole attack.

Better signal communication could have been arranged as all Bde., Batta., & Coy. lines appeared to be connected up, causing some annoyance & at times considerable inconvenience.

(Signed)

Lt Col.

C.O. 26th Bta

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Remarks and references to Appendices

Place 65 Days
Hottel

1

Appendix No 7

All. Companies.

- 1 The Battalion will move to ACID DROP camp tomorrow evening on being relieved by 25th Battalion
- 2 The advance party will consist of 1 N.C.O per company and 1 Sq. representative who will report to Lt. Lilly at 2 P.M. at GUN PIT ROAD
- 3 Guides in the proportion of 1 per Coy. and 1 for Btn. Std. Arts. will assemble under an officer detailed by Of C Coy. at Bde. Std. Arts MARTIN PUICH at 6 P.M. for the purpose of guiding relieving unit to their quarters - 2 Coys to GUN PIT ROAD and 2 to 21st AVENUE
- 4 Completion of relief will be notified to Std. Arts in the usual way. Units will move out independently when relieved.

Instructions.

- 1 Hot food and hot water will be provided at ACID DROP on evening of relief. Coy. C.O.s will arrange for full advantage to be taken of these and ensure that each man's feet are heated
- 2 The four Company organisation will recommence on reaching new camp
- 3 Coys. will parade at 10.30 A.M. on the 9th inst. on which parade every man will be clean shaven + smartly dressed. Box respirators, gas helmets, and LEWIS GUN Panniers will be thoroughly inspected and deficiencies noted. List of shortages to be submitted.
- 4 A muster parade of the Battalion will be held at 2 P.M. on the 9th inst.
- 5 The C.O. will meet all officers at 8 P.M. 9th inst. at this meeting Coy. C.O.s. will be prepared to make a statement re their strength of N.C.O.s. - and proposals for filling vacancies
- 6 Collection and stacking of bombs must receive due attention, likewise immediate drying of Socks and attention to boots

3. 3. 17From 26th Battalion.Report on Prisoners.

The majority of prisoners taken belonged to the 64th Res. Regt.

They stated that they had been in this area for four months, that their own particular Coy. only arrived in front line posts at 9 p.m. on the 1st inst.

Prisoners looked fairly clean & carried a quantity of apparently untouched rations which would tend to confirm this.

Other prisoners stated that they were on their way back to Breuillevesmes when they were called back to the line on the morning of the 2nd inst.

1 Cadet officer of 1st Guard Res. Regt. stated that they had instructions to hold on at all cost. He knew nothing about gas.

Several prisoners from different batches stated that they were relieved every four days.

Another man stated that they had plenty of rations including fresh meat, black bread, coffee, & rice & that it was only the civilians who had to go short of food.

Prisoners were also taken from 1st Pioneer Regt. & 6th Coy. Ambulance.

1 Frenchman was also taken & stated that he had escaped from a party engaged in works a short distance behind the line.

(Signed) J. H. Killey

19th Mar 1917

Advance Guard Order No. 15

Ref. Map 57° N.W. 1/10,000

1. 25th Battrn. will relieve 21st Battrn. on night of 20/21st Mar. in outpost line from B 16 Central to B 13 central B 14, central to 4 including road at B 15 Central

26th Battrn. will relieve 23rd Battrn on night of 20/21st Mar. in outpost line from road B. 15. Central B 21 Central along a line to I 4 Central

Relief to be completed by 8 a.m. 21st Inst.

2. The 27th Battrn. will occupy BEWENATRE as soon as vacated by 25th Battrn.

The 28th Battrn. H.Q. at H. 26. 6. 3. 3. will occupy trenches in that vicinity.

3. Details of relief will be arranged mutually between C.O.'s concerned & completion reported to this office when command of ADVANCED GUARD will pass to Brig. Gen. E. A. WISDON D.S.O.

4. Units of 6th A.I. Brig. on relief will return to tented camp. MALT Trench.

Brigade H.Q. at MALT SUPPORT.

5. ACKNOWLEDGE.

(Signed) G. C. Plant Major
B. M. 6. A. I. Brigade

7th Aust. Inf. BDE.

20th Mar 1917.

Operation Memorandum No 9.

The Brigade is now the advance Guard for the Division, but is at present held up by the enemy who occupy the village and line LONGATTE-NOREUIL-LAGNICOURT.

An attempt by Quail to penetrate failed under Shrapnel and Machine Gun fire.

The dispositions of the Brigade have therefore taken more the form of an outpost line. C. Co's must, however, be prepared at any moment to resume A. Co. formation.

The Brigade on our right has its left at MERICOURT WOOD. That on the left at B. 24 a. 8. 6., our support Bn. is at BEUGNATRE.

The boundaries between the Battn in the front line are as follows. between right C. A. & centre C. B. Bns. a line running from the CRUSIFIX C 26 a to road junction (inclusive) to B. B. tw at C. 23. b. 65. 60. between the centre Bn. (B) and the left Bn. (C) a line from cross Roads (inclusive to B. Bn.) at C. 19. d 00. 20. to road junction (inclusive to B. Bn.) at C. 16. b. 10. 60. The Brigade boundary on the Right from I. 4. Central (MERICOURT WOOD) to approx. C. 24. d. 95. 40.

The Brigade Boundary on left from B. 18. central to road junction at C. 8. b. 6. 8. Touch must be maintained with the nearest Bn. on our Right & left and between A. B. & C. Bns.

Constant touch will be maintained with the enemy by the Infantry, especially by Right. ~~A~~
The Light Horse will maintain touch by day.

The enemy may be expected to evacuate the line at any time and C.O.'s must be prepared to occupy, but isolated enterprise with that end in view will not take place.

Early and rapid formations is essential to the success of these operations so that advantage may be taken of any opening or target. C.O.'s should keep in touch with the artillery and notify them direct of any targets.

A Section of a cyclist boy is operating with us. These are under the orders of the Brigadier and are not to be used as orderlies.

In the event of the advance being resumed the advanced guard will be constituted as follows.

Vanguard C.O. Lt. Col. Slane

2 Sec. Cyclist boy.

1 Sec. Engineers

1 Bn. Infantry

2 Sects. M. G. boy.

Main Guard

1 Sqd. Light Horse

4 Sects. Cyclist boy.

1 Sec. Engineers

3 Bns. Infantry

1 Bde. Artillery

1 Bearer Sub Division Field Amb.

W. Wellington Capt.

Act. Bgde. Major.

7th Aus Inf. Bde.

BATAUME

20/3/17

Issued at 9.20 P.M.

7th Aust. Inf. Brig.
Operation Order No. 87. 21/3/17.

Reference.

1. The enemy was reported yesterday morning to be holding ECOUST LONGATTE NOREUIL and LAGNICOURT in strength.

Our reserve will be at BEUGNATRE.

2. The Brigade will hold the line MARICOURT WOOD C. 28. central. 2. 1. central 14 central 13 central B. 18. central as an outpost line.

3. The Outpost Mounted troops will closely watch the villages mentioned in para 1. and will occupy them immediately signs of them being vacated are apparent. The Mounted Troops will then follow the enemy closely and if possible secure prisoners. The O.C. will leave 1 Troop at FAVREUIL at the disposal of the Brigadier. One Orderly will be maintained at Bde. advanced H.Q.

4. Orders for Engineers and Cyclists Sections will be issued separately.

5. Orders for the Artillery will be issued by the O.C. 5th Artillery Brigade.

6. The line will be divided into 3 sections. The boundaries being those given in Operation Memo No. — of 20th Inst.

Constant touch will be kept on the enemy by night and early notice given of the evacuation by the enemy of any of the villages mentioned in para 1.

In the event of such evacuation Posts will be placed in occupation and supported, but the Outpost Companies will not advance without orders from Brig. H.Q.

7. The O. C. 7th M. G. Coy. will place 2 guns at the disposal of each of the Battn. Commanders in the front line & will dispose the remainder to cover the picket-line.

The 7th ALTM. Battery will remain in BAPAUME

The Bearer Sub Division will be stationed near the Cross Road in VAULX C. 26. C. 4.9.

The Brigade Sig. Officer will arrange for phone communication between Bde. forward H.Q. and each Bn. H.Q. with the M. G. Coy. The Light Horse and Cyclist Section is detached.

C. O.'s Bns. will establish phone communication with their Outpost boys. Visual Signalling will be arranged where practicable. On the longer runs relay stations will be established for runners.

1. Advanced Dressing Station is at BAPAUME WEST. H. 27. C. 2.5.

2. The Outpost troops will stand to an hour before dawn until daylight. During stand to mounted troops will stand to their horses but not saddle or ~~harness~~ ^{harness up}.

The following need not stand to. Brigade H.Q. and details Artillery Bde. H.Q. and details. Signallers and runners not on duty. Details in rear of the Reserve Bn. The Bearer Sub Division. During fog night-conditions will prevail.

4. Report centre of Forward Bde H.Q. at BEUGNATRE.

Copy No 2. 26th Battn.
Issued at 9.30 a.m.

M Wellington Capt.
Brigade Major.

1. The 27th Bn will take over portion of front line from the 25th Bn & 26th Bn. & will be centre Bn.
2. A. Coy will be RIGHT Coy.
B. Coy will be LEFT Coy.
C. Coy. Bn. Reserve in VAUX-VRAUCOURT.
3. Boundaries. LEFT Coy. from road junction at C. 19. D. 40. 65 (inclusive) to road junction C. 26. a. 90. 60 (inclusive) and forward to C. 17. central.
RIGHT Coy. road junction C. 26. a. 90. 60 (exclusive) to road junction C. 26. d. (crusifix) exclusive forward to road junction C. 23. b. 65. 45 (inclusive).
4. The Bn. will move in following order H. Qrs. A. Coy. B. Coy. D. Coy. H. Qrs. will leave at 6. 25 A. M. platoons to follow with 5 minutes intervals.
5. Lewis Guns & 4 panniers per gun to be drawn from Transport at 6. A. M.
6. Cookers will move with 1st Line Transport, which will move with Bn.
7. Watches will be synchronised at 5. a. m.
8. Wire Bn. H. Qrs in code when new position has been taken up.

21/3/17

Distribution
Copies to

- | | |
|-------|---------------------------------|
| No 1. | A. Coy. |
| " 2. | B. Coy. |
| " 3. | C. Coy. |
| " 4. | 7 th Aust. Inf. Bde. |
| " 5. | 25 th Bn. |
| " 6. | 26 th Bn. |
| " 7. | R. Q. M. & T. O. |
| " 8. | File |

XII

32A

SECRET.

7th Aust. Inf. Bde.

Appendix No 13, 28

Mar 24th 1917.

Operation Memorandum No 12.

Reference Bde. Order No 89.

The Balloon will ascend during the early morning of 26th Inst. at an hour to be notified later.

Please acknowledge.

W. Wellington Capt.

Brigade Major 7th Aust. Inf. Bde.

Issued at 6 P.M.

Distribution as per Order No 88.

plus 3rd Squadron R. F. C.

27th Aust. Inf. Battalion.

Operation Order No. 13.

1. At zero time on morning of 26th March the 26th Bn. plus 2 Coys. of 28th Bn. will operate on our Right and attack and envelope LAGNICOURT.

25th Bn. will remain in touch with our Left but will not take part unless specially ordered to do so.

2. Objectives. — The sunken portions of LAGNICOURT-NOREUIL Road C. 23, b. 55.75. inclusive to C. 17. c. 55.30.

3. Assaulting Troops.

Right Coy. — C. Coy.

Left Coy. — A. Coy.

1 gun of 7th M. G. Coy. will be attached to each Coy.

4. Preliminary Arrangements.

O. C.'s Coys. will see that each man has 100 rounds of extra ammunition and bombs as previously ordered, full water-bottles and 24 hours rations. Ground flares will be carried by Officers & Sergeants and will be well distributed in the Coys.

25th Bn. will relieve the advanced post of B. Coy. which in turn will relieve the Left post of C. Coy. (Platoon) The remainder of B. Coy will move round to positions now occupied by C. Coy.

C. and A. Coys. will be in position on the line C. 22. d. 55 — C. 22. a. 9.4. in 2 waves 15 minutes before zero. Their front and Left flank will be protected by a screen of scouts.

At zero time, the assaulting troops will move forward and attack the objective.

O. C. C. Coy will detail 1 Platoon to occupy the attacking C. 23. b. 55.75. C. 17. d. 64.

He will also establish a post at C. 17. d. 7.4.

O. C. A. Coy. will establish a post at C. 17. c. 55.3. He will also arrange a strong patrol to reconnoitre the road to NOREUIL.

B. Coy. will swing its Right Flank forward to C. 22. a. 8. 9. rising its left-post as a pivot.

O. C. B. Coy. will establish touch with A. Coy. on Right and 25th Battn on his Left; and will send forward a strong patrol with support to reconnoitre NOREUIL.

D. Coy. will occupy the cutting C. 26. d central.

Should NOREUIL be found evacuated O. C. A. Coy. will establish posts at C. 17. central C. 17. a. 1. 9. and B. Coy. at C. 10. c. 30. 99. and C. 10. a. 6. 3.

7. Contact Planes will fly over the line about 7 a.m. and will call for flares by Klaxton Horn or Very Lights.

Ground flares will be lit in groups of 3, about 2 yards between flares.

Aeroplane may call again about 9 a.m.

8. Bn. Reserve Ammunition will be at C. 27. a. 4. 8.

9. O. C.'s Coys. will each detail 4 extra stretcher bearers.

10. R. A. P. will be at C. 26. a. 85. 5. 5.

11. Watches will be synchronised at 2 a.m.

12. Zero Time and Artillery Arrangements will be notified later.

13. Acknowledge.

(Signed)

25/3/17

Distribution

No 1	Copy	A. Coy.
" 2	"	B "
" 3	"	C "
" 4	"	D "
" 5	"	7 th Bde.
" 6	"	26 th Battn.
" 7	"	25 th Battn.
" 8	"	28 th Battn.
" 9	"	File
" 10	"	Lieut. Hargraves

7th Aust. Inf. Bgde.
Operation Order No 10.

Appendix No 15 31
26/3/17.

The 27th Bn. will take over position of the front line from the 25th and 26th Batts. within the following boundaries which will constitute the inter-Battn Boundaries.

Left: Road Junction at C. 19. d. 40. 15' to Road Junction at C. 16. b. 05. 65' both inclusive to Centre Battn.

Right: Road Junction C. 26. d. (crucifix) inclusive to Right Bn. to Road Junction C. 23. b. 65. 45' inclusive to Centre Bn.

Mutual Arrangements will be made for the relief of the posts within the boundaries by the 27th Bn.

The 27th Bn. will be clear of BEUGNATRE by 7.30 a.m. to-morrow 27th inst.

The 28th Bn. will move up to BEUGNATRE to-morrow 27th inst. and will arrive at that place at 7.30 a.m.

All Bns. will report by wire in Code immediately these moves are completed.

The Brigade Signal Officer will arrange telephone communication between Bde. H.Q.^{rs} and the various Bn. H.Q.^{rs} by 9 a.m. to-morrow.

Bde. forward H.Q. will open at BEAUGNATRE at 9 a.m. to-morrow 27th inst.

M Wellington Capt.
act Bde. Major
7th Aust. Inf. Bde.

BAPAUME

26/3/17

Issued at 9.30 P.M.

21st 3. 17

26th Bn. relieved 23rd Bn. at 9 P.M. 20th 3. 17.

Hostile artillery active at irregular intervals on Road at about I. 4. b. 8.7. (4.7 shrapnel) apparently from direction of NOREUIL.

About 10. 5.9 shells fell in and around BOIS DE VAULX (C. 27. c+d)

Officer of Patrol got in touch with Officer on Left post of 59th Bn. who informed him that the next Bn on the Right (60th) had advanced this afternoon to the village of MORCHIES and that they were in possession of it.

Men have dug in at their respective posts & are keeping in touch by constant patrols at irregular intervals.

4 H.E. Shells of a large calibre fell in VAULX VRAUCOURT at 5:45. a.m.

26th Bn. Patrol Report

21/3/17.

Patrols worked along the whole front & got in touch with Coys. on Right & Left, and special patrols ordered to reconnoitre X Roads at C. 29. a. 4.2 & C. 22. b. 2.0, both met with opposition, the former with M.G.'s & the latter from rifle fire. The night was very dark but the enemy is apparently holding the road through C. 22 central & C. 29. a. as flares were coming up apparently from this neighbourhood.

The Artillery were asked by messenger to Shrapnel position C. 29. a. 4.2. before dawn

J. H. Lilley Lt.
J. O. 26th Bn.

XVa

March 24th 1917.Operation Order No. 89.

Reference - Map France - 57 C. N. W. E. D. 5. A.

1. Advanced troops of the enemy supported by Artillery are holding the line LAGNICOURT-NOREUIL-LONGATTE. The 5th Aus. Div. is on our Right and has occupied BEAUMETZ & MONCHIES, The 7th Division on our Left occupies the line C. 7. central - ST. LEGER.

2. The Advanced Guard will attack LAGNICOURT, and establish a line of posts approximately on the line C. 24. d. 7. 7, C. 18. d. 9. 1, C. 18. C. 3. 7, C. 18. C. 35. 60, C. 17. D. 7. 4, C. 17. C. 5. 3, C. 22. a. 8. 9, connecting on the Right with the Left post of the Brigade on Right, and on the Left with the post at C. 15. D. 4. 0. All roads leading towards the enemy and to the flanks will be watched. The boundaries between Battalions will, when the objective is gained, be a prolongation of present boundaries.

3. The 5th Aus. Div. will simultaneously with the advance, advance to the line of the LAGNICOURT-BEAUMETZ Road, and will establish posts on the LAGNICOURT-DOIGNIES Road, their left post being about C. 24. d. 7. 7.

4. The objective is as follows: - The Sunken Road from C. 30. a. 5. 6. to LAGNICOURT. The village of LAGNICOURT and the Sunken Road from LAGNICOURT to C. 17. C. 55. 30.

5. The 26th Battn. plus 2 Coys. 28th Battn will attack from C. 30. a. 5. 6. to Road junction at C. 23. b. 55. 75. (exclusive.)

The 27th Battn. will attack from the Road junction at C. 23. b. 55. 75. inclusive to C. 17. C. 55. 30.

The 25th Battn. will take over the post at C. 15. C. 5. 3. together with its picquet and support from the 27th Battn.

The 28th Battn. less two coys. will be in Reserve in position at C. 26. d. 5. 5. at which place it will assemble one hour before ZERO time.

6. The Advanced Guard Light-Horse (less 1 troop) will assemble near Artillery Brigade H. Q. at I. 1. b. 7. 6. 1 hour before ZERO time, and will post a mounted orderly at those H. Q.'s. On the objective being gained, they will push out and gain touch along the Advanced Guard front with the enemy, and maintain touch till relieved by Infantry. One troop will report to Brigade Major at Brigade H. Q.'s 1 hour before ZERO time.

7. The O. C. Advanced Guard Engineers will detail a party to accompany the attack on LAGNICOURT. The O. C. will remain at Brigade Headquarters.

XVI

8. The Artillery action is shown in Appendix "A" and details will be given later.
9. The O. C. 7th Machine Gun Coy. will place two Machine Guns at the disposal of each of the C.O.'s 25th, 26th, 27th Batts. He will arrange to cover the attack by engaging enemy machine guns and by barrage fire. On the objective being gained, he will cover the picquet line.
10. The O. C. 4th A.L.T.M. Battery will move his personnel without guns, to VAULX, reporting arrival to Brigade Major 1 hour before ZERO time.
11. The $\frac{1}{2}$ (B) Coy. 1st Anzac Cyclist Corps will assemble at Brigade H.Q. 1 hour before ZERO time, the O.C. reporting to the Brigade Major.
12. Phone communication will be maintained if possible, with companies. The Brigade Signal Officer will arrange to maintain phone communication between Brigade Headquarters and Battalions. Visual signalling will be established where practicable. The following light signals will be fired on gaining the objective: -
LACNICOURT - - 4 White Very lights at intervals of 15 seconds between each light.
13. (A) RED GROUND FLARES will be burnt by attacking troops when contact aeroplanes sound KLAXON HORN or fire Very Lights.
(B) Aeroplane Signalling panels, Battn. ground sheets, and station calls (alphabetical letters) will be put out at Battn. H.Q.s. These will be kept open all the time contact planes are over, but will be covered immediately on approach of enemy planes.
(C) O. C. 3rd Squadron R.F.C. is arranging for a temporary landing stage for contact planes at about H. 17.9.0. No troops of any description will be allowed within a radius of 500 yards of this spot.
O.C. 28th Battn. will detail a guard to make the necessary arrangements for "policing" this area.
Forward Battle Dump to replenish expenditure of mobile echelon ammunition is at Advanced Guard H.Q. BEUGNAT
14. The Bearer Sub. Division less 1 Officer 10 P/privates will be stationed at VAULX at C. 26. C. 75.75. Forward Dressing Station will be at BEUGNATRE H. 11. C. 95.00. Zero.
15. Watches will be synchronised with Brigade Major Four Hours before ZERO date and time will be notified later in code.
16. Report to Forward Advanced Guard H.Q. L. 1. G. 55.65. VAULX.
17. This cancels order No. 88, issued at 5 A.M. 23rd March 1917.
18. Acknowledge by wire

M Wellington
Captain.
A/Brigade Major 7th Aust. Inf. Brigade

copy to 5

25.3.17

7th Aust. Machine Gun Coy.

1. The advance guard will attack LAGNICOURT & establish a line of posts approximately on the line C 24 d 7.7, C 18 d 9.1, C 18 d 3.7, C 18 c 35.60, C 17 d 7.5, C 17 c 5.3, C 22 a 8.9 connecting on the right with the left post of the Bde on the right & on the left at the post at C 15 d 4.0
2. The 5th Aust. Div will simultaneously with our advance, advance with the line to Lagnicourt - Beaumontz Road & will establish posts on the LAGNICOURT-DOIGNIES ROAD their left post being about C 24 d 7.7
3. The 20th Bde are attacking LONGBATTE simultaneously with our attack on Lagnicourt.
4. The objective is as follows. Sunken Road from C 30 a 5.6 to Lagnicourt. Village of Lagnicourt & sunken road from Lagnicourt to C 17 c 5.3
5. Disposition. The 26th Bn plus 2 coys of the 28th Bn will attack from C 30 a 5.6 to C 23 b 5.7
The 27th Bn will attack from C 23 b 5.7 to C 17 c 5.3
The 25th Bn will take over post at C 15 c 5.3
The 25th Bn will arrange to keep in close touch with the right of the 20th Bde.
6. One subsection is allotted to each of 25, 26th & 27th Bns as under:-
1 Sub Section under 2nd Lt Beaggs to be attached to 26th Bn
1 Sub Section under 2nd Lt Hargrave to be attached to 27th Bn
1 Sub - - - 2nd Lt Hunter to be attached to 25th Bn
These sub-sections will come under the immediate command of the respective CO's. Sub-section officers concerned will report to the respective Bn. Commanders for orders.
7. Supporting Guns. Lt Stearn with 1 sub section the Yelverton with 1 sub section will be in support of 27th Bn.
Lt Langton with 1 sub section will be in support of 26th Bn.
These officers will arrange to cover the attack by engaging suitable targets & will support by indirect fire on selected targets. The attack will be divided into 3 phases.
The 1st & 2nd phase will conform to the artillery programme.
(Full particulars will be indicated later)
3rd Phase. Upon the objective being obtained these guns will move forward to select positions to cover the picquet line XVIII & secure all commanding ground.

First Phase. The following are the targets + gun positions selected.

Left Sector No 1 gun. From positions at C 14 c 7.2 will fire on trench at C 15 b 9.9 + trench to C 16 a 0.9

Left Sector No 2 gun. From position a C 14 c 9.1 will fire on road at C 15 a 4.5 + trench to C 16 b 9.9.

Centre Sector No 1 Gun from a position at C 27 b 9.2 will fire on + traverse bunker road from C 17 c 5.3 to C 23 b 2.9.

Centre Sector No 2 Gun. from position at C 27 b 8.2 will fire on + traverse bunker road from C 23 b 2.9 to road junction at C 23 b 5.7

Right Sector No 1 Gun. From position at C 27 d 9.9 will fire on cross roads from at C 23 b 5.8 + traverse to C 23 b 6.1

No 2 Gun. From position at C 27 d 9.8 will traverse road from C 23 b 6.1 to C 23 d 6.8

No 3 Gun. From position a C 28 c 0.8 will march road from C 23 d 9.8 to C 24 c 0.8

No 4 Gun. From position at C 28 c 1.7 will march road from C 24 c 0.8 to C 24 a 3.2. All guns will commence firing at ZERO + will fire continuously (with ¹⁰repia) until 0.20

Second Phase

At 0.20 all guns will lift to their second targets as follows

Left Sector
No 1 Gun will lift to road junction at C 10 d 1.2
No 2 " " " " C 16 b 9.9

Centre Sector.
No 1 Gun will lift 5° 5' to valley at C 18 c 4.5
No 2 " " " 3° 13' " " C 18 d 0.6

Right Sector
All guns will lift 5° 30' + create a barrage from C 18 d 2.9 to C 18 d 6.7 each gun traversing in 100 yards.
Fire will be continued for 10 mins.

All guns will cease indirect fire at 0.30 + prepare to take up positions laid down in 3rd Phase

Third Phase.

Left Sector. Both guns of this sector will push forward to command the approaches from LONGATTE to position C 14 b approx. + the protect left flank of 25th Bn.

In the event of the parties not being able to capture MOREUIL 1 gun will be detailed to watch the valley + the other will watch the approaches from Longatte

Centre Sector

The guns will be responsible should Hovemi not be captured for the protection of all approaches from that village will take up a position approx. C 22 a to C 17 c

In the event of the attack on NOREUIL being successful positions at C 17 c will command all approaches to the present line in that sector

Right Sector. The section commander will take up position for his guns so as to command all approaches to Lagnicourt etc. to be in a position to protect the present line

Advance Dumps. Supplies of Ammunition, water, glycerine etc. have been established at the following points

Left Sector. C 14 c 7.2 C 14 d 2.6

Centre Sector C 20 b 9.9 C 27 a 3.7 C 27 d 6.9

Reports.

All reports will be sent to Coy. HQ at C 25 b 8.9

Changes in gun position to be notified

All watches will be synchronised at 1 a 26th inst.

(Signed)

P. Radford

Major

C. O. 7th Coy. AMG Coy.

Avancao Guara - 2nd Aust Div.

Addendum to Operation order No 89

Ref Maps 57c NW 2 VAULX-VRAUCOURT 1/10000
57c NW 2a 1/20000

- (1) To Map Ref. in Operation Order No 89 add
57c NW 2 VAULX-VRAUCOURT 1/10000
- (2) Care will be taken that summer time is adopted in reckoning Zero Time.
- (3) The 20th Bde is attacking Hongath simultaneously with our attack on Hagnicourt.
- (4) The CO 25th Bn will arrange to keep in close touch with the right of 20th Bde.
- (5) After the capture of Hagnicourt & after the posts mentioned in para 2 of Operation order No 89 have been established the CO 27th Bn will send strong patrols to reconnoitre Noreuil & if it is unoccupied they will push through it.
Posts will then be established on the general line
C 17 d 7.4 C 17 central C 10 c 2.9
If 20th Bde attack has succeeded line will be carried to C 3 central. If this attack fails the line will be established along the line C 9 d 5.9
C 9 c 7.5 C 8 d 1.6 when touch will be established with the nearest post of the 20th Bde.
- (6) For the purpose of the operation the boundary between 20th Bde & 9th Aust. Bde. will be the road C 13 b 7.2, C 8 b 6.8
C 3 central
- (7) On the 20th Bde gaining Hongath the 25th Bn will push forward patrols to establish posts linking up the right of the 20th Bde & the left of 27th Bn.
Should NOREUIL be unoccupied the 25th Bn posts will be established on the line C 10 c 6.9 - C 3 central at which points it will be in touch with 27th Bn & 20th Bde respectively.
- (8) A contact plane will fly over the line at about 7 am (new time)
- (9) Order No 89 Para 2 line 3 for C 18 c 3.7 read
C 18 d 3.7

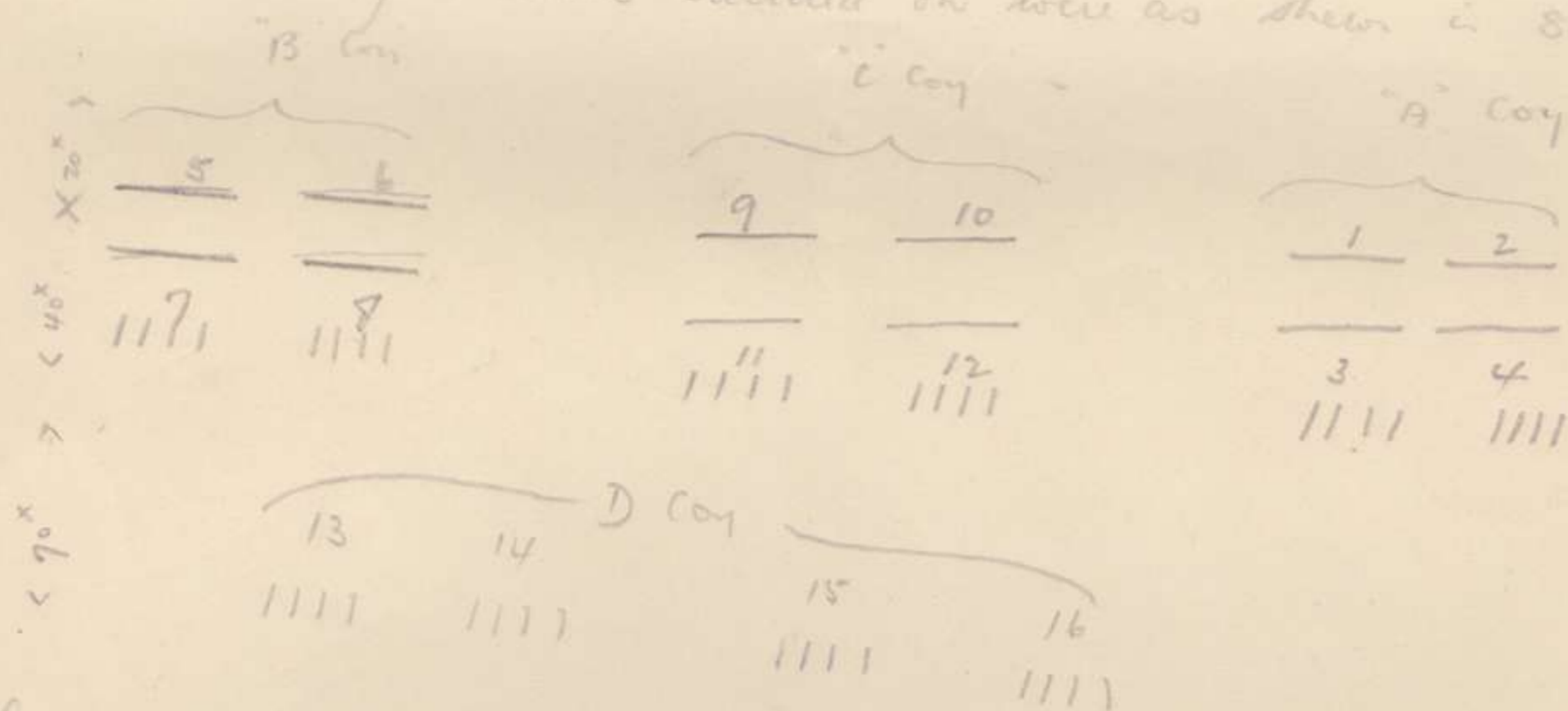
Signed N. Wellington Capt.
9th Aust Div Bde.

XVIII ①

Report on attack of Lagnicourt.

- The Bn plus 2 Coys of the 28th Bn. was ordered to attack the village of LAGNICOURT on the morning of the 26th inst zero time being 5.15 am. The attack took place under cover of artillery fire & the 27th Bn were cooperating on our left, the 15 A.I. Bde on our right. The preliminary disposition for attack are as shown in Bn Operation Order.
- The patrols as ordered in para 5 in order were in position by 9.30pm in the 25th remaining out until the attacking Corps advanced through them when they withdrew to the line held, & took through C 29 a, C 28 b as previously arranged.
- The assembly on the jumping off line was a most difficult operation owing to the night which was a particularly dark one & one Coy for a time was lost. 2 Coy Commanders, & myself were lost for 2 hours earlier in the evening: it was impossible to see 5 yards ahead.

3. The actual formations decided on were as shown in sketch.



Owing to "B" Coy not being present when forming up 13 & 14 platoons, actually formed the wave on the left of C Coy. Both reference to the right flank considerable trouble would have been saved had the original arrangements been adhered to. I understood that the 60 Bn A.I.F were cooperating on our right & I had made all arrangements with the C.O (Lt Davies) His left Coy Comd. also went over the ground with my right Coy Comd. It was not until 4am on the 26th inst that I understood the 58th Bn had been substituted. I did not know what arrangements had been made at all.

My right Coy Comd stated that the people on his right XIX ①

- were not on the pumping off line aqua on so he extended his right went over as one wave (1 2 3 or platoons) in one wave in 2 lines. There was insufficient time to warn me of his intention & alteration of plan - Extension to 5 paces.
4. The artillery opened at zero time & the attacking troops also commenced to advance at that hour. The barrage was good but a little slow the attacking party got well up to the edge of the village before the lift. The men however much prefer this & are well to take the risk of casualties from our own artillery.
5. The actual advance to the edge of the village was good. We had several casualties in the first wave from Machine Gun fire but the men were not to be deterred & went straight ahead. A searchlight played on the right Coy. advancing across the open, for a moment the men all stopped but the officer cheered them on & one of our Lewis Guns firing from the hip put the light out of action (It is now in our possession).
6. The left & right Coys had no determined opposition & advanced rapidly to their objective as laid down in the operation order with the exception of the right who were compelled to place posts well to the right to protect their flanks. Posts were put out at c 14 & 6.6 (approx). The centre Coy 'C' had some very hard fighting just at the edge of the village, south side, & later in the village itself. Many hand to hand encounters took place but the Coy reinforced by 2 platoons of D Coy fought with great dash, gallantly led by Capt Cherry. 3 of the 4 officers were casualties before 6 am. Capt Cherry was later killed by a shell at about 4 pm. I cannot speak in sufficiently glowing terms of this brave & gallant officer, his loss to the Bn. & the A.I.F. is an enormous one indeed.
- The enemy were forced gradually out of the village & in this respect I would like to mention the splendid cooperation of Lewis Gunners, Bombers & Rifle Grenadiers. The firing of the Lewis Gun from the hip was a great success. The Gun swept the roads & under cover of it (2)

fire bombs on each side of the road cleared the houses.
 At one point the advance was held up by an enemy strong point. Capt Cherry asked for a Stokes but before it arrived he attacked it by holding in front with a Lewis Gun & sending bombs around each flank & these rushed the point under cover of Lewis Guns & Rifle bombs. All the men in the strong point were killed. The Lewis Guns used were red hot & the No 1 of one gun states that he was unable to touch the gun with his hand but had to hold the grip & the strap only.

C Coy eventually reached the northern edge of the village & were greeted with cheers by the men who were already dug in in front. It was not until about 12 noon however that the village was mopped up by D Coy. A few snipers still held out. One platoon of the 28th Bn was sent up to assist.

7. The actual position taken up at 8 am is shown on attached map. The Bn. on our right were not in the position & had not gained their objective.

8. At about 8 am the enemy were observed massing for a counter attack on road in C 13 b. This attack developed rapidly but very carefully & eventually reached our position. Three of our posts were captured. They were all on forward slopes & had a good view. These 3 posts at approx C 24 b 6.2 C 24 b 5.4 & C 24 b 6.7 were subjected to heavy shelling by 8.9 guns under which the counter attack advanced. Two men from the post at C 24 b 6.7 retired to state that the Lewis Gun had been blown out & all the remaining men casualties. The Corporal (a most reliable man) states that he saw the men in post at C 24 b 5.4 stand up meet an overwhelming force of the enemy with the bayonet, the Lewis Gunner clubbing one man with the gun. The post at C 24 b 5.7 also confirm this. The officer Lt Nolley decided to withdraw to the factory corner C 24 b 3.4 after sending across to B Coy's right post telling them to hold on as he was only straightening his line. The post at C 24 b 6.7 held out under Lt Stapleton but at one time the enemy were within 30 yards of it. The officer states that the enemy were on 3 sides of him & that the men had great trouble with their rifles being put out of action with mud. The Lewis gun also failed for the same reason.

At 10 am the enemy who were well held commenced to withdraw eventually commenced to dig in a line about 200 yards from our posts.

The position at 12 noon was unaltered on the left but on the right as shown on map.

The enemy when advancing to the counter attack used yellow flares to denote his position.

Capt Cherry with great forethought discovered some German flares & fired them from his position at c 20 to 2.1 & the barrage ceased for some time.

9. The communications from the front line were bad owing to enemy shelling & runners were used. Bn. HQ during the counter attack were too far back. Mumbo orderlies were asked for & received but they did not prove satisfactory being timid when the village was being shelled.

The messages re the counter attack were received by one about 45 mins after being written & artillery targets could not be then definitely given.

10. The Light Horse cooperation could have been more active & pushing & earlier details of the counter attack might then have been received.

11. The Victoria Gun on the right flank ordered to proceed to C 24 b. 3.5 did not arrive. I should like enquiry to be made re this as I feel certain the counter attack would have been stopped earlier had this gun arrived.

12. The enemy shelled the bunkers & roads heavily & they should as far as possible be avoided.

13. I desire to express my admiration of the 28th Bn. The officers NCOs & men all fought with great dash & gallantry & without their assistance the position would have been almost untenable.

14. The 58th Bn during the afternoon filed down the road being held by our troops in C 24 d & eventually got into position at about 4.35 pm on our right.

15. Our casualties were not so heavy as was at first thought. They are appended.

16. The enemy suffered heavily, 2 Machine guns, two French Mortars & 70 prisoners were taken & it is estimated

that at least 200 were killed, considerable telephone gear, bicycles etc were also taken.

17. In conclusion I desire to say that the morale of the men is excellent & the experience gained should prove of great value to the Bns.

I cannot speak too highly of their fighting qualities & while regretting the casualties feel certain that the men are more confident than ever that they are more than a match for the enemy when they are led by such dashing officers as Capt Cherry, Hts, Haysa, Stapleton & others.

(Signed) J. Inman

Ht Col

26th Bn

Second Aust. Division

Attack on Lagnicourt 26th March 1917

1. Orders. Preliminary orders for advancing to the line LAGNICOURT—NOREUIL were issued on March 21st. Orders for the attack & capture of LAGNICOURT & its flanks from C30 a 3.7 to the crest line in C17. A line of posts was to be established at least 3 or 400 yards beyond the village.

2. Composition of Advance Guard.

Commander G.O.C 7th Aust Inf Bde.
Troops. B Squadron 13th Light Horse.
 $\frac{1}{2}$ Coy 1st Angus Cyclist Bn.
4th & 5th A.F.A. Bdes.
2 Batteries 12 Army Bde ~~12~~ F.A.
2 Section 6th Field Coy Engineers
7th Aust Inf Bde.
Bn. Sub-division 5th Field Amb.

In addition 2 batteries 60-pdr. &
1 " 6" howitzers
were available to give assistance.

Two Bns. 19th & 20th ^{5th A.F.A. Bde} were also at the call
of the G.O.C. Advance Guard. 6 Vickers Guns of the
5th M.G. Coy were added after the attack.

The 26th & 27th & 28th Bns were relieved on the
night of the 26/27th March in the front line by the 19th
& 20th Bns.

3. Artillery

Copy of barrage time table is attached.
The artillery opened fire at zero which was
at 5.15 am. The attacking troops began to
move forward at that hour
Being about 1000 yards from the objective
20 min. stationary barrage was maintained
on the western edge of the village & defence
N. & S. of the village.

The Infantry closed up under it & at +20 it XX
commenced to lift back at 100 yards in 2 min. (1)
through the village. The infantry moved the western
outskirts & flanks of the village following the

barage through to the eastern side & beyond.

The enemy's artillery reply to this attack was not at first heavy nor did he fire much on our support or back lines.

During the day both the eastern & western portions of the village were heavily shelled & considerable casualties were suffered in this way.

For a time the O.C. of the Centre Coy of the Right Bn (Capt Cherry 26th Bn) - since killed) succeeded in stopping this hostile artillery fire on his front at the east end of the village by using the German yellow signal light which he had noticed the Germans use to stop fire when advancing to counter attack.

4. Action of Infantry.

The 26th Bn with A & C Coys of 28th Bn as a reserve, attacked the line from C 30 a 5.6 to the road junction at C 23 b 5.7

The operation of assembling on the jumping off line was particularly difficult owing to the exceptional darkness of the night.

In consequence B Coy 26th Bn was lost for a time & was not in position by zero hour. Its place was taken by Nos 13 & 14 platoons of D Coy

The Companies were told off as follows :-

Assaulting line A, C & B Coys (from Right to left)

Moppers up D Coy

A Coy was to form up on the MORCHIES - NOREUIL ROAD with their left on the cross roads at C 29 a 4.2

C Coy on their left the road to LAGNICOURT being inclusive to C Coy

B Coy on the left of C Coy

D Coy to follow

Owing to the great cover afforded by the hollow road all the Coys, except B actually formed up in the road

In the case of A Coy the last wave was composed of Nos 1 & 2 platoons with Rifle men, Bombardier & Lewis (2) Gun section all in one line on a front of about 200 yards. Nos 3 & 4 platoons were in 2 lines (Hamel formation) about 40 or 50 yards behind when the advance took place.

At first the Coy Comd. had brought No 3 + 4 up on the right of No 1 + 2 platoons because he could find no indication of any troops of the division on the right. Subsequently in order to have two waves he drew them back again & extended Nos 1 + 2 further to the right by opening out to 5 paces interval.

C Coy + No 13 + 14 platoons of D Coy formed up in normal attack formation with 2 waves.

As soon as the Artillery barrage commenced B Coy appears to have found its direction because as No 13 + 14 platoons found themselves engaged on the western edge of the village, they discovered B Coy advancing with them on their left & joining them with 27th Bn.

The assaulting infantry had ample time to close up under the barrage before it began to lift off the western edge of the village.

A Coy followed the spine south of the village & the southern outposts went rather ahead of C Coy which worked through the centre.

B. Coy worked through the northern edge.

Both A & B Coys reached their objective & joined hands on the far side of the village & established posts at about 6 am.

C Coy with D Coy assaulting were engaged in clearing up the village until after midday.

Subsequently those who had not been drawn into the fighting about 9 to 11 am when the enemy counter attacked collected as a support in the western edge of the village in an old German trench.

The repaired strong point in the village has been found to consist of M. Co with detachment & bombers who had taken cover in a ruin with loopholed walls.

They held up the attack from the front but the troops on the flanks quickly encircled the place & disposed of all the defenders soon after 6 am.

Other individual snipers however caused much trouble in the village for several hours.

The 27th Bn. attacked from C 23 to 5.7 R
C 17 C 4.3

The attack was made by C & A Coys (C Coy on the right)

B. Coy held its position, joining the assaulting troops to the 25th Bn. on the left.

D Coy was in reserve C 26 d

B Coy moving its left as a pivot moving its right

forward or extended it to keep touch with the assaulting troops.

C Coy formed up to the north of the cross roads in C 22 t 2.0 - its right section only (bombers) being on the south side of the road to Hagnicourt. This Coy was the directing Coy.

A. Coy formed up on the left of C Coy

Both formed in two waves of 2 lines each - Normal attack formation. Extension was 4 paces each Coy covered a front of 200 yards

Arrangements had been made for scouts to act as guides & stakes in the ground had been put out in advance to act as markers on which to form.

This Bn. was fortunate in having a well defined road by which to advance to its jumping off line.

The troops were ready to move & under cover of the Artillery barrage advanced & reached their objectives without loss. They then proceeded to push on & establish posts beyond the objective & to gain touch with the 26th Bn posts on their right. This was done.

The 28th Bn assisted the 26th Bn

- (a) By putting out the scouts behind which the 26th Bn formed up. The scouts also assisted the 26th Bn to keep direction.
- (b) By carrying up ammunition & supplying the threatened flank on the south at the critical moment. (1 platoon A. Coy)
- (c) By forming a new right flank on the south & moving back through C 24 d & C 30 a from about 10 am until the troops of the 15th A.I. Bde arrived. They later reached C 30 a about midday & the road about C 24 d 9.5 at 3.30 pm
- (d) By helping the stretcher bearers of the 26th Bn
- (e) By supplying some of the posts in need of help.

The 25th Bn held line of posts on either left.

5. Enemy Counter attack.

The enemy appears to have made two distinct counter attacks.

- (i) One from the east on posts C 24 t & rd
 - (ii) One from the village of NOREUIL
- (1) was more serious & sustained the attacks for (a) it was preceded by a heavy artillery bombardment chiefly on the three roads leading into Hagnicourt from the east in C 24 b.
- (b) It was made in considerable strength for the German lines appeared to extend round the locality attacked not only on the east front but on the south east & south as far as C 30 t.

(c) It was carried out with considerable bolamos on the southern flank the attackers closing in to within 40 or 50 yards in one place. Two posts a C 24 d 6.8 + C 24 d 6.3 were overcome partly owing to the rifles + Lewis Guns getting choked with mud + partly due to the numbers of the enemy. The determined stand made by the remaining posts + by the supporting troops held the attackers of the enemy fell back slightly, but did not really draw off until about 3 pm when driven out of the village in the morning the Germans did not go back altogether but left snipers in holes within a few hundred yards of posts established by us.

(11) The Northern counter attack was not so sustained nor was it made in great strength. It was procured by artillery fire on the post in the spur in C 17 c + was chiefly deflected by the enfilade fire of our Artillery + a M. Gun from the west. The M.G. was a C 15 d 00.

6. Lewis Guns

"Hosing" was carried out (a) while advancing on the village. By this means a searchlight working in conjunction with a machine gun was put out of action - the detachment being destroyed. (b) While advancing through the village. It was fired down the street while bombs went through the houses on each side.

So much was the Lewis guns used in this way that they became too hot to hold + the men had to direct the fire by holding the supporting sling with the left hand. In this battalion the slings were attached by a copper wire round round the radiator.

The Lewis Gun was as much of the greatest value in holding the line of posts pushed out in front + the counter-attacks could not have been stopped without them.

The guns were on some occasions put out of action by mud, due to men falling + dropping the gun.

7. The rifle grenades were freely used in the village in overcoming odd snipers.

8. Vickers Guns. Two guns were attached to each attacking Bn. It is doubtful whether this is the best method of employment. The guns are liable to be forgotten in view of the number of things the Bn. + Coy. Comdros. have to attend to + they are also liable to be used when Lewis Guns should be used.

It would be better for a Machine Gun officer to (5) keep in close touch with each Bn. Commander to ascertain his wishes + then carry them out as well as he can -

Choosing his own positions & number of guns in the area. This day the guns not attached to Inf. Bns carried out the programme of Barrage fire both on the objective to be assaulted & on the ground behind when the artillery lifted.

There does not appear to be any value in having M.G.s firing on trenches under barrage fire. The enemy have their heads down.

It could be more usefully employed in sweeping approaches. Plans should be previously worked out for the advance of M.G. to selected positions from which a counter attack can be met by concentrated & if possible enfilade or oblique fire & as soon as the assault has taken place the guns should be moved into position.

In spite of the above remarks it is only fair to place on record that good work was done by those guns which did move up with the assaulting infantry.

9. Communications Telephone communication was kept open between the Bde & the Battalions. It was frequently broken between Bns. & Coy. - Runners were the main visual was not used but might have been. The wireless set was not used. It was not practicable in the shell area in or near the village. In this case it was not necessary between Bns. & Bde. as telephone wires held.

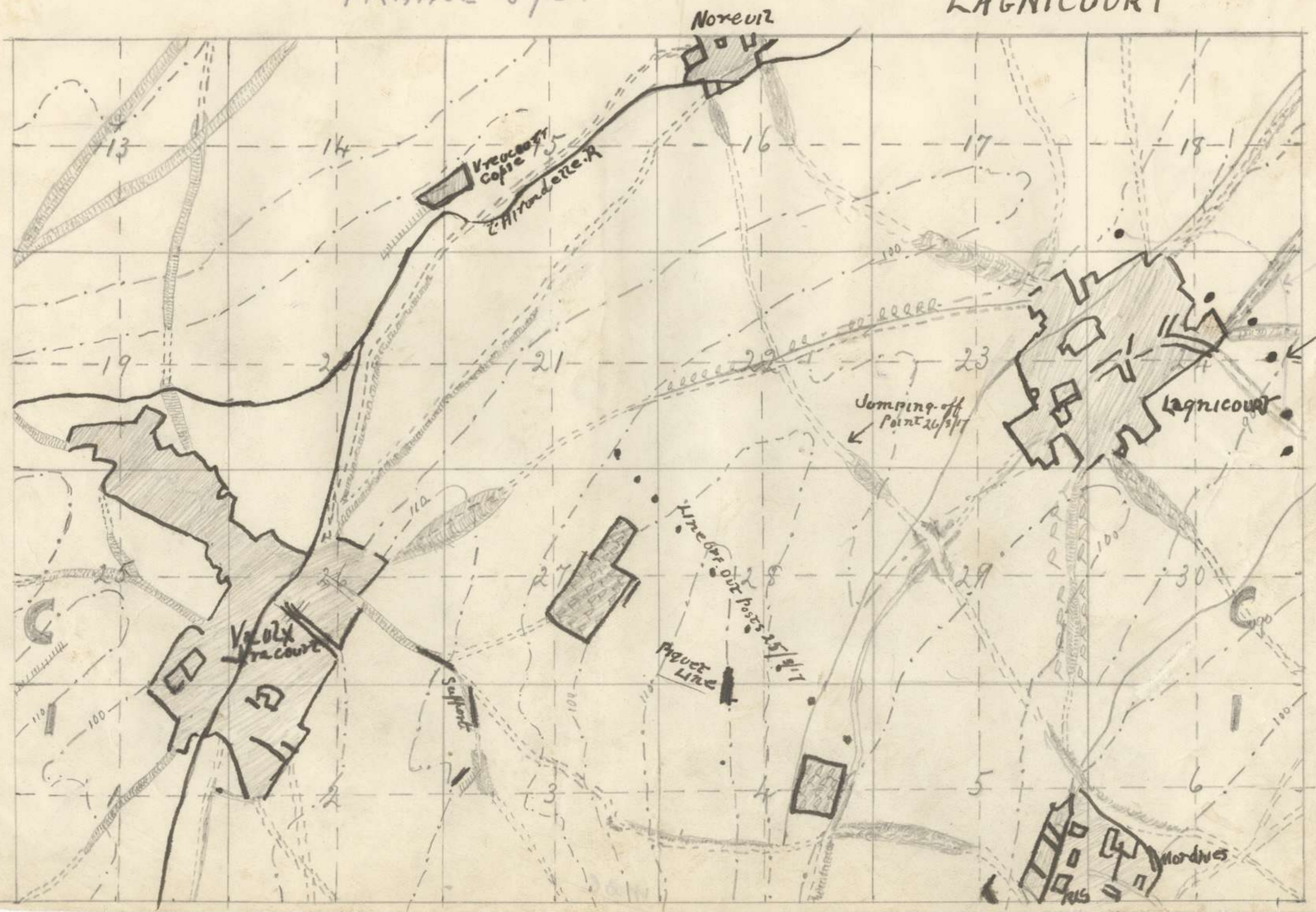
10. Lessons The most important lessons are:-
- (a) Platoons & Section Commanders. The success of such a fight as that at Hagricourt depends to a great extent on the initiative, energy & determination & tactical sense of platoon & section cmdrs. Therefore these cmdrs. must be trained & must have opportunity to learn.
 - (b) Guiding Troops. The importance is further practised in guiding troops at night & forming up in a previously selected line. The continuous use of a compass while moving at night is not really understood by many officers.
 - (c) Flank Protection. In all operations it is essential to have a plan for securing both flanks even though other troops may be expected to cover those flanks.
 - (d) Use of Reserves. A reserve must always be kept in hand & reserves are not to be employed so much in reinforcing a line already in action as in making counter attacks.

- (e) Lewis Guns. The value of the Lewis gun in the hands of well trained men is of value in attack viz village fighting. The sling must be attached by a metal fastening. The proposal in this division is an eye socket on the tripod band just clear of the line of sight. Covers are necessary to save the Lewis gun from mud, in case of an accidental fall.
- (f) More practice in visual signalling, day light lamps & wireless is essential until all commanders & the signal service get familiar with both. At present the importance & value of both are unknown to most officers who have not had actual experience of the use of these in action. During part of the day a portion of the village was being shelled by our own artillery. It took the F.O.O. a long time to remedy this. A Coloured flag or rocket would have had the same effect immediately. It is therefore recommended that a code of light signals to meet such cases be introduced.
- (g.) Light Trench Mortars. The necessity for making L.T.M. Batteries mobile was emphasized in the operation in the village. A few sticks bombs at the right moment & in the right place would often save men's lives. Instead of having to rush a hostile M.G. it could be destroyed at a distance a proposal with regard to this has already been submitted viz. that two of the guns should be carried on pack animals with about 60 rounds of ammunition each.
- (h) Light Horse. Considering the limited opportunities the action of the light horse was of value but the nature of the warfare necessitated their keeping very close to the infantry.
- (i) Cyclists. The cyclists were also of value although often unable to use their bicycles they assisted in carrying messages through on foot & took part in outpost work.

ENLARGEMENT of part of MAP
FRANCE 57C.

LAGNICOURT

824



out post line
Moon 26/3/17

Out. Post. Line
Moon 26/3/17

Appendix No. 20
51

LAMICOURT

MOREL

COLE

MARK

Outpost
Moon

LAMICOURT

Water

Water

WBC

22/3/17

Two companies in Front Line
Two companies in Reserves.

Right Front Coy.

Coy H.Q. I. 4. a. 4. 6.

Coy front extends from C. 27. b. 85. to I 4. b. 24.

No 1. Post	I. 4. b. 2. 4.	1 N.C.O. & 7 O.R.
" 2 "	I. 4. a. 9. 4.	2 N.C.O. 7 O.R.
" 3 "	I. 4. a. 8. 5.	L.G. Team & 2 O.R.
" 4 "	C. 28. c. 9. 5.	1 N.C.O. & L.G. Team.
" 5 "	C. 28. c. 6. 5.	2 " " " & 8 O.R.
Picquet Line	C. 28. c. 3. 7.	2 " " " & 7 " "
" 6 post.	C. 28. a. 5. 2.	L.G. Team & 2 " "
" 7 "	C. 28. a. 3. 4.	2 N.C.O. & 8 " "
Picquet line	C. 28. a. 1. 4.	1 N.C.O. & 5 O.R.

Supports 4 N.C.O.'s & 24 men at I. 4. a. 5. 6.

Left post of 59th Bn is at I. 4. b. 3. 3.Left Front Coy.

No 8 Post	C. 27. b. 7. 7.
Outposts	C. 28. a. 8. 6.
" "	C. 22. c. 5. 2.
Picquet	C. 21. d. 1. 8.
Out Posts	C. 21. d. 9. 5.
" "	C. 21. b. 9. 8.
Picquet	C. 15. c. 1. 1.
Post	C. 15. c. 9. 4.
Post.	C. 15. c. 9. 5.
Supports	C. 27. a. 7. 9. (1 Platoon)
Coy H.Q.	C. 27. a. 2. 6.

Right Support Coy.

Coy H.Q.	I 3. d. 3. 1.
1 Platoon	I 3. d. 4. 0.
1 Platoon	I 3. d. 2. 5.
2 Platoons in Road	I. 3. b. 2. 2. to I. 4. c. 3. 7. with 2 Officers

Left Support Coy.

Coy H.Q.	C. 26. b. 9. 3.
1 Platoon	C. 26. d. 3. 6.
2 Platoons	C. 26. b. 8. 3.
1 Platoon	C. 26. a. 9. 3.

26th Battalion

5. 3. 17

Intelligence Report

For 24 hrs. ending 6 a.m. 5. 3. 17

Enemy artillery rather quiet today. Positions shelled were Bapaume Road through Le Sars and batteries in rear of WARLENCOURT.

10 a.m. Enemy shelled GAMP TRENCH with 5. 9 (9 shells) direction 6° T. B.

1. 20 P.m. Enemy T. M. active behind front line (22 shells).

Hostile movement

Weather clear but very little seen of the enemy

7. 0 A.M. Considerable movement in LOUPART WOOD

10. 30 A.M. Enemy balloon up also hostile planes.

1. 20 P.m. } Enemy planes over our lines shelled by our
1. 30 P.m. } A.A. guns.

Our artillery

Our 18 pdrs. + Howitzers shelled GREVILLERS TRENCH + wire throughout the day. (left of our sector)

A number of our planes were up through the day flying low over enemy lines + were fired on by hostile A.A. guns.

Works Report

The work of digging a jumping off trench is being pushed on as fast as possible. Every available man is employed on the job. New posts were also constructed during the night.

A party was also engaged in demolishing wire on this side of MALT TRENCH + completed from LOUPART ROAD to a point slightly to the left of strong point. In no place were any long stretches of wire left.

about 200 yds. of trench were also completed in front of right Coy. leaving about 80 yds. to join up with left Coy.

This was done to a depth of 3 ft. 6 in. Work of deepening posts was also carried on with.

26th BattalionIntelligence Report

6.3.17

54

for
24 hours ending 6 am. 6.3.17.Enemy Shelling

Enemy artillery, chiefly of small calibre, was active throughout the day. M 10 & received most attention and PYS and GALLWITZ were shelled at intervals with 5.9's.

About 12.30 pm. enemy put up a fairly stiff barrage about main trench behind posts but did no damage.

About 2 am. enemy put up four green flares which brought a barrage on parts of his own wire in front of MALT TRENCH. On reds being fired barrage slackened. Most of the shelling came from the direction of Bapaume, a light battery was firing from the direction of the right of LOUPART WOOD.

Our Artillery

Our artillery was active throughout the day playing on wire in front of GREVILLERS line where it appeared to be doing excellent work.

While heavies were bombarding enemy's line they appear to have got into something on the right as this part was lit up for some time afterwards.

An S.O.S. was fired on the left of our line which brought down an artillery barrage inside five minutes. Nothing further occurred except hostile artillery retaliation.

Movement

9.40 A.M. 2 enemy observed on Road near GREVILLERS line 20 T.B. from O.P. Except for short intervals the weather was too misty to observe much.

Signals

About 11.30 P.M. flares were fired from our planes which were flying overhead. Immediately the enemy fired 13 green rockets which seemed to consist of a number of green balls on one long string. Flares put up by enemy at 2 a.m. burst into 4 greens & appeared to be his S.O.S.

The line to the right as far as LAYTON ALLEY was taken over from the 25th Bn. Disposition report shows detached Post on LAYTON ALLEY was not taken over as 6th Bde 8th. who were occupying it had no orders to give it up & refused to do so.

26th Battalion6.3.17Works ReportRight Company

All the garrison were engaged in working on their post and in putting in fire steps.

Centre Company

Jumping off trench was continued for a distance of 100 yds. from M5 a $9\frac{3}{4}$ 1 to M4 b $9\frac{1}{2}$ $\frac{1}{2}$
 Depth of trench 3' 6"

Right Company

The work of constructing jumping off trench is being pushed ahead as fast as possible & ceased only for a short while when enemy artillery was very heavy.

26th Battalion6.3.17Patrol Report

A patrol of 1 Sgt. and 5 men left M5 a $3\frac{1}{2}$ and moved along LOUPART ROAD for a distance of 150 yds. & then worked across the Coy. front coming in at M4 b $9\frac{1}{2}$ $\frac{1}{2}$.

No hostile patrols were encountered.

Enemy Movement.

Trains were seen frequently moving out of NOREUIL.
Also a good deal of movement was observed there.

Enemy Artillery

About 50 H.F. & Shrapnel fell around cross roads at C. 29. a.
between 3 & 5:30 P.M.

20. 77 Shrapnel fell in sunken road C. 29. d during
the same period. approx. direction Lagnicourt.

Aerial Activity

3 P.M. 3 enemy balloons up at 13° 16' & 21° from I 4. a. 5. 7.
German planes flew over our posts at about 4 P.M. They
were attacked by 4 of our planes and 1 German was
eventually forced to descend at approx. C. 28. d. 5. 7.

The airman (who afterwards proved to be Prince
Fredrick Charles of Prussia) attempted to escape but
was wounded and taken prisoner by men from our post.

Airman made statement which is attached.

As the plane lies in No mans land it is being
removed (with knowledge of R.F.C. officer who has arrived
to vicinity of I. 3. a. 6. 5.

Enemy used a few shells on Left Coy Sector. All
precautions were taken & nothing resulted.

Movement (continued)

Considerable movement of troops & transport
in LAGNICOURT also about 7 a.m. men were noticed
moving towards cross roads at C. 29. a.

Our Snipers fired at and hit a Uhlan who was
riding towards X roads from LAGNICOURT. He
wheeled about and rode back to village. Time 9 a.m.

Trains were also frequently observed in LAGNICOURT.

Explosions were heard in NOREUIL during the day.

A party of Germans was observed cutting down
telegraph poles near NOREUIL & were dispersed by rifle
fire at 1200 yards range.

Late in the day fires were observed in NOREUIL
& LAGNICOURT.

Movement

Cross roads at C. 29. a. 4. 2. have been occupied by us by a standing patrol with Lewis Gun

Party of Light Horse with Hotchkiss Gun are also in occupation.

In the event of the Light Horse withdrawing their gun another L. G. will be sent up.

VAULX + VRAUCOURT were shelled intermittently throughout the day with 5.9 H.E. from direction of LAGNICOURT. Practically no casualties occurred.

During the day the 27th Bn. took over a portion of Left Sector and we also took over posts from 59th Bn. (see disposition report).

Since alteration in dispositions men have been engaged in digging & improving posts.

26th Bn.Patrol Report

23.3.17.

Left Patrol

In accordance with instructions received I took out a party of 1 N. C. O. & 10 men to ascertain if the village of LAGNICOURT was still occupied.

Before leaving point C. 22. d. 8. 0. I posted a standing patrol of 1 N. C. O. & 6 men. On leaving the above post I got close to the sunken road (which has trees only on the near side which were all cut down & a high bank on the far side) I pushed along to within 50 yds of point C. 23. b. 3. 4. when the enemy challenged. Receiving no reply he immediately fired 3 shots which splashed dirt in the faces of the 3 leading men. This post also called on & ran to a post at C. 23. b. 5. 2 which is evidently a M. G. post. We kept still for a while when a flare was sent up from first post. After withdrawing about 50 yds. another shot was fired. The junction of the 2 roads is in my opinion manned strongly by snipers supported by M. G. on the latter post where a small light was seen moving about. The patrol left at 9.30 P.M. & returned

at midnight - 22/23

C. 22. b. 5. 2. appears to be a small wood.

(Signed) F Brand_{2d}

B. Coy.

22/3/17

In company with Corp. Adrieson I went on Patrol at 9 P.M. last night. We went on the LAGNICOURT ROAD as far as C. 22. central & then down road to right as far as C. 28. b. 9. 9. then turned N.E. & came out on LAGNICOURT ROAD at about C. 23. a. 5. 4.

Proceeding down the road we struck an enemy post at about C. 23. b. 3. 5. They opened fire on us at a range of about 15 yds. & we returned it and ran.

The post is on the South side of the road along the hedge

Signed R.A. Wills
2nd Lt.

N.B. This officer was wounded in the back and walked in and wrote report before proceeding to dressing station

Enemy Artillery

During the day enemy artillery was fairly active most of the guns concerned being of light calibre and all firing from a N.E. direction.

Balloons (Hostile)

8.25 Hostile balloon up at T.B. 110 from 14 a.s. 7
2. P.M. " " " " T.B. 810 " "

Enemy movement etc.

9 a.m. Large column of smoke rising from C 24 C 4.5
12.20 P.M. Hostile train near NOREUIL moving East
2.50 P.M. 5 or 6 men seen coming out of building C 23 b towards NOREUIL
4.50 P.M. Hostile train moving from NOREUIL (about 5 trucks) travelling East.

Our artillery etc

During the day our artillery fired shells falling just short of LAGNICOURT and also Road C 18. a from N.E. direction.

Our planes were active throughout day & were continually fired on by A.A. guns from a N.E. direction.

General

I also observed from C 29. a 5.2 and C 22. d 9.2 between the hours of 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. It was impossible to definitely locate posts although there appeared to be a line of posts in front of village. 3 or 4 men were observed moving casually about in village and also three strolled up on to ridge about C 24 C. 8. 6 & back again into village.

Well has been discovered near church in VAULX C 26 C 5. 5 and tested & found to be good for drinking

(Signed) J H Kelley Lt
26th Batta

Works Report

23. 3. 17

Improving posts and shelters for support Coy 5.
Also a party of 75 men supplied to Eng 15. for improving roads in VAULX.

J H Kelley Lt.
for Co. 26th Batta

329 rom
26th Battn.

Special Report

23. 3. 17. 60
Appendix N^o 22

About 5 a.m. Hostile artillery barraged front on our Right & Left. Later a report was received that village of BEAUMETZ had been recaptured by the enemy & following this a message was received from Bn. on our Right asking for assistance to protect their left flank in order that they could withdraw troops for a counter attack.

One Platoon was accordingly sent. At 8 a.m. a message was received that we were again occupying BEAUMETZ & that our platoon was being returned to us.

Two prisoners reported to be taken at BEAUMETZ. Identification 95th Regt. 1st M. G. Coy.?

J. Travers

Lt Col
26th Battn A.I.F.

26th Battn.

Disposition Report

23/3/17

Bn. H.Q. C. 26. C. 7. 8.

Post	I. 4. b. 8. 3.	1 Sgt. & L. G. Team.
"	I. 4. b. 4. 5.	1 " & 6 men
"	I. 4. b. 1. 5.	1 Cpl. " 6 "
"	C. 28. d. 5. 4.	1 Cpl. " 8 "
Picquet	I. 4. b. 2. 3.	1 Sgt. " 7 "
"	C. 28. C. 6. 1.	2 N.C.O. " 17 "
Standing.		
Patrol	C. 28. a. 5. 2.	1 Sgt. & 10 men
	C. 29. a. 4. 2.	1 Cpl. L. G. Team. & 2 Bombers.
Picquet	C. 28. C. 4. 5.	1 N.C.O. & 5 men
Post	C. 28. C. 7. 5.	1 " " 4 "
"	C. 28. C. 4. 2.	1 " " 4 "
Picquet	C. 27. b. 7. 4.	1 " " 2 "
Post	C. 28. a. 3. 2.	1 " " 7 "
"	C. 28. a. 4. 5.	1 " " 2 men & L. G. Team
Coy H.Q. I. 4. a. 6. 7.		

Support Boys (3) (B Coy)

Coy H.Q. & 1 platoon C.27. b. 7.3. 2 officers & 25 O.R.
 1 platoon Sunken Rd. C.27. c. 0.2. 25 ..
 2 platoons I.4. a. 5.6. 1 officer & 55 ..

(C. Coy)

Coy H.Q. & 4 platoons in sunken road between
 Cussifix & C.26. a. 9. 2. 4 officers & 102 O.R.

(A Coy)

Coy H.Q. & 2 platoons at I.3. a. 2.2. 58 men & 2
 officers
 2 platoons between I.3. a. 4.3. & I.3. a. 6.0.
 2 officers & 68 men.

R. A. P. C.26. c. 7.8.

J. H. Lilley
 for C.O. 26th Bn.

26th Battalion23.3.17Patrol Report.Centre Patrol

A patrol from this Coy. consisting of 1 Sgt. 1 Corpl. and 15 men left Coy Head Qrts for the purpose of reconnoitering ground on our front.

Sgt's Report

We proceeded as far as the Sunken Rd. C2869.1 where Lt. Hamilton remained. From there we proceeded in a body to a distance some 400 yds on the left hand side of the gully when we crossed same at the end of some excavations made in the bank.

Crossing almost in a direct line we came to a shallow line of trenches on the right hand side of the gully C23 C5.0. From this point I sent the Corporal + ten men ahead three of which went in front acting as a screen + myself remained behind with 5 men. The Corporal proceeded a distance of some 300 yds + sent a runner back reporting 'all clear'. We proceeded in this manner over the brow of the hill on the right of the gully + continued on towards the village a distance of about 500 yds. We ultimately worked our way to the edge of the village taking up a position with men in front of and behind a hedge on the edge of the village C23d 15.80. Here there was a hedge stretching for about 100 yds. on our right + about 50 yds on our left. The distance between the two last named hedges being about 100 yds.

We had just taken up the position when a flare was sent up from the end of the hedge on our right rear followed at intervals by two more. When there I observed a man walk from the end of the hedge on our left rear to the extreme end of the hedge on our right where we lost sight of him. While here we could plainly hear the rumble of the waggons on the roads.

I then sent the Corporal and 10 men back the way we had come and I myself + the remaining 5 men taking a different route + following round the edge of the hedge on our right I crossed the gully at a point a good deal higher than the point at which we had crossed it going up but saw nothing to report. I joined up with the corporal + his party about 200 yds. from the point where I had left Lt. Hamilton. Patrol lasted 5 hours.

(Signed) M. D. Brown

Patrol Sgt.

23. 3. 17Patrol ReportNight Patrol

At 7 P.M. with Capt. C. H. Robinson and 12 men left Cay. Hd. Qrs. & proceeded to cross roads. From there crossed the plain road to sunken road on left of cross roads to see if standing patrol had been established but could not see same but met Lt. Hamilton.

Left cross roads and proceeded towards Lagmicoart. adopting two pointers followed by screen of scouts consisting of 6 men Capt. Robinson on right flank and self in centre Party of four men in extended order as covering party. Discovered barbed wire fence of four wires running at right angles to road about 200 yds from starting point. From here we worked left crossing a dished trench 30 x 9 ft approx. with earth heaped up on top side. Left flank crossed shallow dummy trenches distant about 100 yds from corner barbed wire fence & direction half-left. We then worked back to road & 3 men were detected moving in file between embankment on top of road. Heard challenges and answers. We immediately lined an embankment intending to investigate. Two of our men on right flank near embankment tripped over low wire about 6 inches from ground.

A German flare was fired immediately. We noticed what looked like a wooden frame with earth spread round & levelled.

We remained there about 30 mins & another flare was fired and two men were seen observing. Embankment was about 35 yds from road and parallel to it. Flare was fired about 300 yds ahead of wire fence. We moved up about 60 yds under cover of embankment & heard four shots fired. Further forward was able to hear picking on road to right. Another flare was fired to our right & about 30 yds distant. We then noticed a dim light in village. The last flare was fired 150 yds on village side of first flare. Could hear transports on right of village.

On our way back four more shots were fired towards road. Lt. Hamilton whom we met at starting point went out with two men and verified this.

We then returned to Png Lt. Cay. Past & reached Png. Cay. Hd. Qrs. at 12.31 A.M. Actual time on patrol 3 hours.

Signed J. R. Stickling Sgt

Patrol Sgt

24 hrs. ending 6 a.m. 24. 3. 17

Hostile Artillery Our O.P. at I 4 a 2. 6

Hostile artillery active at intervals during the whole of the day.

Miscellaneous

6. 20 A.M. Hostile balloon up at 26° T. B. from O.P. (only up 10 mins.)
 9. 10 A.M. Large column of smoke coming from LAGNICOURT C 24 a 5. 4. believed to be village burning
 9. 30 a.m. Enemy train at 6° from O.P. moving out of NOREUIL travelling N.E.
 5. 50 P.M. Enemy train in rear of LAGNICOURT travelling N.E. 31° T. B. from O.P.

Our Artillery

From 1. 45 to 2. 30 P.M. our artillery shelled LAGNICOURT + slightly in front of same.

Hostile movement

From position C 22 d 7. 2 4 men were seen moving across from C 23 b. 8. 8 + disappeared at C 17 d 7. 0

Sgt in charge post at C 29 a 5. 2 reports that a working party were out on the right of LAGNICOURT. Sentry states he heard tapping noise similar to those made in erecting wire. An enemy patrol was also observed presumably acting as a covering party. This was in the early part of the night.

Our planes were very active throughout the day and drew very little A.A. fire.

Hostile M. G. + rifle fire during the day Nil.

Enemy have rather a large patrol working along the high ground at C 29 c 9. 9. The sound of hammering in stakes was heard somewhere in the vicinity of C 29 b 6. 5. Apparently this patrol is acting as a guard for working party at last named point.

32A
from
26th Bn.

Intelligence Summary

25.3.17⁶⁵

O.P. I. 4. 9. 2. 6.

Appendix No. 22

Hostile Artillery.

Intermittant searching fire by enemy all day.

Hostile Aircraft.

Enemy planes active. Occasionally over our lines. Fired on by our A. A. C. Guns. No damage done.

Hostile Movement

Considerable movement noticed on roads in rear of LAGNICOURT.

Light Train seen going to & from NOREUIL.

Our Aircraft

Planes active. Frequently over enemy lines. Fired on by A. A. C. Guns M. G. & rifle fire.

Our Artillery

Our Artillery was fairly active, 18 Pz firing on LAGNICOURT & NOREUIL also on enemy parties. Our L. G. fired on patrol in C. 23. C. 8. 2.

Works Report

25.3.17.

from
26th Bn.

Men engaged in improving posts & shelters

J. H. Lilley 2nd Lt.
for C.O. 26th Bn.

Patrol Report

25th 3. 17.

from
26th Bn.

A double patrol advanced to outskirts of LAGNICOURT. Found enemy had dismantled M. G. in C. 23. d. 4. 1. Left patrol saw light in what appeared to be a trench near brick wall C. 23. d. 4. 3. Careful reconnaissance convinced patrol that this post is strongly held. They next proceeded to come in touch with patrol on right; and, after forming screen, began to return. Reached Camp H.Q. after 4 hrs reconnaissance

Signed Percy H. Cherry
Capt.