

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

Artillery

Item number: 13/50/25

Title: 2nd Australian Siege Battery

February 1919



AWM4-13/50/25

Confidential

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118.

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.

or
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

2nd Aust. Siege Bty. 351

| Place | Date | Hour | Summary of Events and Information | Remarks and references to Appendices |
|-----------|--------|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| TOURCOING | 1/2/19 | | The Battery Personnel billeted at 47 Rue de CONDITIONNEMENT 6 guns parked in RUE SOUFFLOT | J.M. |
| | 3/2/19 | | The Brigade Concert Party commenced a series of 4 performances at the Municipal Theatre TOURCOING. A Farewell Smoke Concert was held at the billets in the evening as a send off to the draft of 44 1915 men proceeding to HAVRE for demobilisation. | J.M. |
| | 4/2/19 | | 2 nd Lieut. S. S. Downey marched in from H.A. Reinforcements and was taken on Battery strength. | J.M. |
| | 6/2/19 | | The draft for demobilisation left TOURCOING by rail for HAVRE. | J.M. |
| | | | A lecture entitled the 'Rise of Prussianism' was given by Mr. Hilaire Belloc in the Cirque Theatre ROUBAIX, 2 nd night about 30 men from the battery were present. | J.M. |

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| TOURCOING | 7/2/19 | | 12 men were present at a lecture in the Cirque Theatre ROUBAIX entitled "Our escape from Prussian Domination", by the Earl of Denbigh. | J.M. |
| | 9/1/19 | | Major H.C. Sunders proceeded on leave. | J.M. |
| | 10/2/19 | | A Draft of 30 men marched in from A.G.B.D. & were taken on Battery strength. | J.M. |
| | 11/2/19 | | Lt Britnell proceeded on leave to U.K. | J.M. |
| | 14/2/19 | | 2 nd Lieut. S.G. Downey attached for temporary duty at The HALTE REPAS BAISIEUX. between LILLE & TOURNAI. | J.M. |
| | 16/2/19 | | Church Parade. | J.M. |
| | 17/2/19 | | Thaw precautions come into force. 0600 | J.M. |
| | 17/2/19 | | Lieut. G.H. Adams attached temporarily to Ammunition demobilisation depot Linselles. | J.M. |
| | 17/2/19 | | Thaw precautions remain | J.M. |

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Gen. West. Lige Battery 357

| Place | Date | Hour | Summary of Events and Information | Remarks and references to Appendices |
|-----------|---------|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| TURCOING. | 18/2/18 | | These precautions remain in force. 2/Lt. R. W. Scott of this battery returned to duty from hospital. | J |
| do. | 19/2/18 | | These precautions remain in force till 23.59 hours. R.A. Band played at TURCOING. Officers & men attended dismounted gun which had been mounted for drill purposes at Gun Park. | J J |
| | 20/2/18 | | R.A. Band gave concert at TURCOING. OC Battery attended Conference at P. S.A.P. re new arrangements for rations. | J |
| do. | 21/2/18 | | Drawing fuel by lorry. OC Battery again visited P. S.A.P. re ration supply by Pde. in bulk. | J |

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| TURCOING. | 21.2.19 | 22.00 | Notification that Capt. P. W. Dobson, R.A.M.C. will leave with Quota No 15. | R.D.B. |
| " | 23.2.19 | | Major H.C. Bandock D.S.O. returned from leave and resumed command of the Brigade. | H.H.S. |
| | 24.2.19. | | A kit inspection was held by the C.O. at 10.30 A.M. | J. |
| | 25.2.19 | | Board assembled to check stores. In a Rugby match between the two Batteries for a football presented by the Swansea Football Club we had an easy victory. 8 to nil. | R.D.B. |
| | 26.2.19 | | Lieut H.H. Downey proceeded to U.K. to attend M.C. Course at Woolwich. Lieut J.E. Britnell also to attend same course commencing 28.2.19 | R.W.S. |
| | 28.2.19 | | won final of XV Corps Rugby Championship played 1st A.S.B. 17. nil. Summer term adopted. O.C. at COURTRAI. President of F.B.G.M. | R.D.B. |

Departure Major Roe
O.C. and Lieut Baker

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| | | | <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Review of the Month.</u></p> <p>The Battery remained at rest at TURCOING FRANCE. The general health & condition of the unit was excellent. Educational training with sport of various kinds including football, ^{and} skating &c. & several dances were held which were much appreciated by all ranks, as well as by Civilians. The departure of the first quota for return to Australia was the most important feature of the month. Songs & speeches were indulged in & the remaining troops gave the "old hands" a fitting send off. The R.A. Band was much appreciated by military & civilians. Church Parades were held each Sunday under the brigade padre. Large numbers of men visited the neighbouring towns & battlefields to obtain photos of historical places from the Comrades &c. Dries & food billets with a full ration each day contributed largely to the comfort of all ranks.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">J. H. Mansfield Major R.A. oc no ASD</p> <p style="text-align: center;">28/2/19</p> | |

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WAR DIARY. Feb. 1919.

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TURCOING.
FRANCE

2nd Australian Siege Battery Ammunition Column (M.T.) 4 Tractor Drivers

2nd Australian Siege Battery Ammunition Column
Touring France Xmas 1918.

Ammunition Column consists of:
2 Officers. 102 other Ranks.
34 - 3 Ton Albion Lorries.
6 - 75 HP. Holt. Caterpillar
Tractors.

To Major Manchester
and the officers
of
2nd Australian Siege Battery R.A.A.
with compliments of
Sgt. Lieut.
O/C. 2nd Aust S-B. A-C.
Xmas 1918.

51

2nd Australian Siege Battery (formerly 55 S.B. R.G.A.)

The 9.2" B.L. Howitzer MK.I. originally manufactured by Vickers, Son & Maxims, unlike our field guns & smaller howitzers, fires from a semi-permanent mounting, consisting of a bed plate supported on heavy wooden or iron beams, to the front end of which is fixed a square earth base containing about 10 tons of earth, the object of which is to prevent the beams jumping up in front on the discharge of the howitzer.

The mounting allows an arc of fire of 60°, which with a range of 10,000 yards at an elevation of 45° represents a space triangular in shape with a side of 10,000 yards.

The weight of the shell is 290 lbs.

There are four (4) charges with this Mark; the full charge being 10 lbs of oxy-bardite or 13 lbs 12 oz of N.C.T.

The fuse used during the war was of the percussion variety of which there are several types.

Gas shell, shrapnel & time fuzes have not been used with these guns.

The normal rate of fire is 1 round per gun per two (2) minutes, but 9 rounds have been fired from one gun by this battery in 3 minutes and 15 rounds from 3 guns in 2½ minutes.

In 24 hours 4 guns fired 960 rounds, i.e. 125 tons of metal.

This Howitzer with its quick traversing gear, rapid rate of fire and weight of metal is a most valuable weapon for counter-battery work as well as for fleeting opportunity targets. Its great accuracy & the high bursting effect of the shell has made it an excellent destroyer of strong points, pill boxes, machine gun nests etc.

When travelling on the road this howitzer travels on three transporting vehicles, each fourwheeled, the total load amounting to about 15 tons; drawn by a 75 H.P. Holt Caterpillar tractor, capable of moving over broken or swampy ground.

Mounting & dismounting these howitzers presents many difficulties, especially in the swampy ground in which the battery has operated in Belgium & France, from St Jean (near PASSCHENDAELE) to CAMBRAI.

Positions occupied by the Battery are as follows, during which time over 75000 rounds have been fired weighing nearly 10,000 tons costing roughly £2,000,000:-

(see next page)

²
9.2" B.L. Howitzer Mark I

2nd Australian Siege Battery (formerly 55 S.B. RGA.)

Positions occupied by the Battery in France

| | Date | | Date |
|----------------|-----------|----------------------------|------------|
| MONT STÉLOI | 14. 3. 16 | SAINT JEAN | 30. 9. 17 |
| BRAY WOOD | 27. 3. 16 | RAT FARM | 11. 10. 17 |
| MAILLY-MAILLET | 14. 6. 16 | ANGRES | 23. 10. 17 |
| BOUZINCOURT | 5. 7. 16 | VILLERS PLOUICH | 17. 11. 17 |
| FRICOURT | 19. 7. 16 | HINDENBURG LINE (R26) | 30. 11. 17 |
| CONTRAL MAISON | 21. 9. 16 | PLEEGSTEERT WOOD | 22. 2. 18 |
| CHALK PIT | 6. 10. 16 | NEUVE EGLISE | 4. 4. 18 |
| ARRAS MOAT | 2. 2. 17 | BOESCHEPE | 27. 4. 18 |
| ST. NICHOLAS | 14. 4. 17 | THIESHOEK | 16. 6. 18 |
| RAILWAY ARCH | 27. 4. 17 | LE BEURRE | 18. 8. 18 |
| BATTERY VALLEY | 2. 5. 17 | WESTHOF ROAD | 6. 9. 18 |
| DICKE BUSCH | 25. 5. 17 | ZOUAVE SIDING (near Ypres) | 25. 9. 18 |
| VIER STRATT | 2. 7. 17 | LA POMME D'OR (near Ypres) | 7. 11. 18 |
| VOORME ZEELE | 8. 9. 17 | | |

These howitzers are usually mounted about 3,500 yards from the enemy front line but at VILLERS PLOUICH near CAMBRAI they fired from a position 800 yards from the enemy front line.

The Battery has served during the above period in the following Corps in France:-

II Corps (three times); III Corps; IV Corps (twice) V Corps; VI Corps; VII Corps; VIII Corps; IX Corps; X Corps; XIII Corps; XV Corps (twice); XVII Corps (twice); XXII Corps (twice); Australian Corps (twice); and Canadian Corps (twice), also with the II French Cavalry Corps and XVI French Corps. Total 17 Corps, one three times and 6 twice.

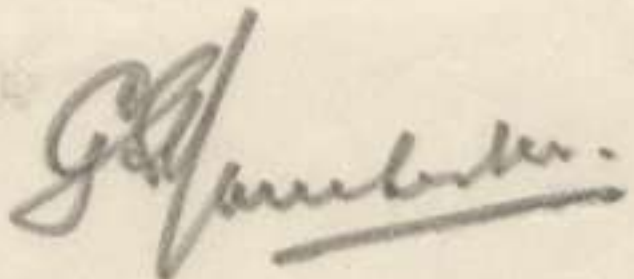
The last 6 months of the war was spent in the XV Corps H. Art. (Brig-Gen G.W. Collingwood. C.M.G., D.S.O.).

This battery together with 1st Aust. Siege Bty was formed and brought to England & subsequently to France by Brig. Gen. W. Hoxen. C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O. (F) - subsequently G.O.C. R.A. Australian Corps; formerly Inspector of Coast Defence in Australia.

Lieut. Col. J.H. Hurst (F) (then Major) was the first O.C.

of the Battery. It subsequently served under his command in 36 (Aust.) H.A. Brigade RGA from December 1917 to the cessation of hostilities & also in 1916.

Total days the battery was in action 860.


 Major Gen
 O.C. 2 Aust Siege Battery.

Loosening, France
28/1/19.