

AWM4

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

Artillery

Item number: 13/86/11

Title: 12th Australian Field Artillery Brigade
Ammunition Column

April 1918



AWM4-13/86/11

CONFIDENTIAL.

ORIGINAL.
~~DUPLICATE.~~
~~TRIPLICATE.~~

Australian Imperial Force.

WAR DIARY

OF

12th Army B.A.C. Aust 2 Arty

FOR

April

1918

Signature of Officer compiling

J.P. Beattie

Capt.

B. C. 12th (Army) A.F.A.B.A.C.

Signature of Officer Commanding

J.P. Beattie

Capt.

B. C. 12th (Army) A.F.A.B.A.C.

Original

REGIMENTAL COLUMN
12TH
ARMY BRIGADE
AUSTRALIAN F.A.
Date: April 1918

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Army Form C. 2118.

WAR DIARY
OR
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

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.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Olchain	1		Weather fine Nothing of Note	
	2		Weather dull do	
	3		do 10/R arrived from Hospital 10/R to Hospital	
	4		do + wet	
	5		Weather dull 10/R to Hospital	
	6		Weather fine	
	7		Weather dull. marched out at 10.30 AM arrived at FERANT CAPELLI @ 4.30 PM	
Jernant Capelle	8		do marched out at 9 AM arrived at NEVILLE ST. YASE at 3.30 PM.	
NEVILLE ST. YASE	9		Moved out at 2 P.M. arrived at at 8 P.M.	
	10		Weather fine moved out at 1 P.M. arriving at E' Charge 3.30 P.M.	
	11		Weather fine 240/Ranks arrived from Reims Lieut Holgate marched in	
	12		Marched out at 9 AM arrived here noon Shit 36 ^A V 7 a 5. 0	See Appendix
Contraigne	13		Weather fine Received. 2620 A 2754 AX 848 BX Delivered to Batteries 3194 2686	AX BX 1248
	14		Weather dull. Received 2472 A 1200 AX 1130 BX Delivered to Batteries 2424 1064	A BX 1064
	15		Marched out at 2.30 PM arriving 034 0 9 6 Reference Shit 36 ^A at 4 PM.	
			Received. 1593 A 1048 AX issued to Batteries 532 537 10/R evac to Field Amb.	A AX 532 537

D. J. & L., London, E.C.
(A783) Wt. W807/M1672 350,000 4/17 Sch. 52a Forms C/2118/14

Original

12TH
ARMY BRIGADE,
AUSTRALIAN F.A.
Date *April 1918*

322

Army Form C. 2118.

WAR DIARY
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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.
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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
La Hendria	16		Weather dull. Delivered to Batteries ^A 186 ^{AX} 114 ^{BX} 480 15 ^o R from Reinft	
			2 ^o R trans to B.H.Q. 8 ^o R trans 45 ^o Battery	
	17		Weather dull, wet 1 ^o R to Hospital (wounded) Received 1948 ^A 752 ^{AX} 578.	
			delivered to Batteries ^A 532 ^{AX} 552 ^{BX} 1232.	
	18		Weather dull. Received 4676 ^A 2132 ^{AX} 2680 ^{BX} delivered to Batteries ^A 1154 ^{AX} 1354 ^{BX} 400	
			3 ^o R to Hospital	
	19		Weather fine 1 ^o R (Phot by M.M.P.) to Hospital Issued to Batteries ^A 1200 ^{AX} 906 ^{BX} 576	
	20		Weather fine 2 ^o R evoc to Field Amb Received 580 ^A ^{AX} Issued to Batteries ^A 918 ^{AX} 666	
	21		Weather fine 1 ^o R to Field Amb. 1 L.D. Horse to M.Y.S Received ^A 1124 ^{AX} 372 ^{B.C.N} 62.	
			issued to Batteries 1086 ^A 770 ^{AX} 574 ^{BX} 286 ^{B.C.N}	
	22		Weather fine 2 ^o R from Reinft Issued to Batteries 1132 ^A 368 ^{AX} 588 ^{BX}	
	23		Weather fine Received 890 ^A Issued to Batteries 3000 ^A 76 ^{AX} 600 ^{BX}	
	24		Weather fine Received 1608 ^A 880 ^{AX} 500 ^{BX} Issued to Batteries ^A 1710 ^{AX} 814.	
	25		Weather fine 1 ^o R to Hospital Received 2236 ^A 380 ^{AX} 288 ^{BX} Issued to Batteries	
			388 ^A 76 ^{AX} 288 ^{BX} 11 ^o R arrived from Reinft.	
	26		Weather fine Received 600 ^A ^{AX} Issued to Batteries ^A 304 ^{AX} 196 ^{B.C.N} 120. 2 ^o R trans to 45 ^o Bty	
			2 ^o R to trans 47 ^o Bty 1 ^o R trans 46 ^o Bty 1 ^o R trans 112 ^o Bty	

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18,000-12/17-8723.

WAR DIARY

OF

12th Army B.A.C. AUST. F. ARTY

FOR

April 1918

Reference Sheet
36 40,000

~~LIST OF APPENDICES.~~

No.

Subject.

Open Warfare

The Brigade arrived by route march from ARRAS on the 11th of April moved into position crossing the LA-BASSEE canal near ROBECQ, the Batteries coming into action between ROBECQ and CALONNE. The B.A.C. moved up to a position near the canal P 35 C. Ammunition for the Batteries was drawn from 15th D.A.C. dump on ROBECQ-STYENANT road P. 16 B.A. At 12.30 P.M. the C.O. ordered all S.A.A. on hand to be sent forward to the 153rd Infantry Brigade Q 27 a, Lieut R.C. Smith going in charge. Lieuts E.L. BIGGS & H. HOLGATE with six limbered & 9 G.S. Wagons respectively were engaged all night carting ammunition to the gun positions.

About 7 A.M. LIEUT BIGG reported to me that the enemy were advancing & that our Infantry with parties of Machine Gunners were falling back along the Canal. I immediately ordered all teams to be harnessed & vehicles to be loaded. LIEUT. HOLGATE coming in shortly after with his nine G.S. Wagons, six of which contained Gas Shells intended for the 112th Howitzer Battery but seeing that a retirement was taking place he reported back with his teams.

The roads were now fast becoming choked & I ordered LIEUT C.S.D. HAY M.C. to report to Pde Hd Qtrs for instructions or orders concerning this Unit.

WAR DIARY

OF

12th Army B.A.C. AUST. PARTY

FOR

April 1918

LIST OF APPENDICES.

No.

Subject.

Open Warfare (continued)

At 7.30 AM I marched out with the B.A.C. complete proceeding along the ROBECQ-ECLEEME-BUSNES road with LIEUT'S SMITH, BIGG, & HOLGATE in charge of the right, centre & left sections respectively. After proceeding about a mile along the road I then instructed LIEUT BIGG to fall out & to keep in touch with the Battery Commanders and to advise me from time to time of any changes in the Battery positions. On reaching a spot v. 11 a on BUSNES-LILLERS road, I halted the Column & gave instructions to LIEUT SMITH to take charge of all the Lumbered Ammunition Wagons, to water & feed & to be ready to send forward Ammunition as required. The remainder of the transport consisting of supply & G.P. Wagons to move off under LIEUT HOLGATE. I took the French Interpreter (M^r PREVOST) & B.S.M. Thompson with me to interview the Town Mayor at LILLERS with a view to procuring a suitable field in which to park up & establish a refilling point. The Town Mayor informed me that his Belching Area was full & recommended me to the Area Commandant at HAM-EN-ARTOIS. I then proceeded to the latter place, distant about 3 Kilos. saw the Area Commandant who had only two small paddocks available and these were partly submerged and not being able to assist me any further I then decided to take possession of the first suitable field I could find. The district hereabouts being very fertile & under cultivation & no one to give authority to enter on to private property.

WAR DIARY

OF

12th Army B.A.C. AUST. FARTY

FOR

April

1918

LIST OF APPENDICES.

No.

Subject.

Open Warfare (continued)

I proceeded but a short distance when I chose a suitable paddock & sent back for a party of men with picks & shovels to effect a crossing over a ditch leading into same. Just then LIEUT. HAY arrived with a message from the C.O. containing instructions to select a position on the MILLERS-BORECK road. ^{V.B.C.} Again the difficulty arose of trespassing on growing crop & I was reluctantly compelled to move on to a clover field, here I parked the transport & sent back for LIEUT SMITH & the limbered wagons to join me, meanwhile LIEUT SMITH had been busy supplying the needs of the Batteries. All teams were unharnessed watered & fed & the men had breakfast which was now 5.30 P.M. I then sent out LIEUT. HULGATE on a bicycle to search for an ammunition dump from which to refill. I was then fortunate enough to find the 12th Army Bde Amm. Sub. Park Section (LIEUT NOALL in charge). I asked him to assist me to obtain Ammunition at once. He set out at once from the XI Corps dump at NORRENFONTS & was back with six lorry loads within an hour & delivered another load the same evening thus giving me sufficient for all requirements, by this time LIEUT HULGATE had reported back & informed me of a small dump at HAM-EN-ARTOIS belonging to 51st D.A.C. This position proved very suitable & ammunition was sent up to Batteries all the night. At no time during the action was there any shortage of Ammunition at the Gun positions. As this was the first time the B.A.C. was engaged in open warfare & during our hurried

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APPENDIX

18,000-12/17-8723.

WAR DIARY

OF

12th Army B. A. C. AUST. F. ARTY

FOR

April

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LIST OF APPENDICES.

No.

Subject.

exit that morning no stores were left behind, the Column moved out as if on ordinary parade strict march discipline being observed & notwithstanding the amount of traffic on the road the teams were kept locked up & the whole Column intact & never at any period ^{were} any of our vehicles cut off. The following day (13th) I moved the Column to a position V 7 a at CONTRAINE this position was nearer to the Batteries & off the main road thus avoiding traffic caused by refugees moving back the Amm. Sub. Park still supplying ammunition. Three days later I moved to a position within the Bde Area situated between the dump at HAM-EN-ARTOIS & the Batteries (O 34 09 6). This was a disadvantage not foreseen at the time being situated on second class roads thus precluding Motor Transport. This however was got over by Ammunition Officer at 11th Corps sending forward his lorries with Ammunition to a point on the VILLERS-BUSNES road (V 6 6) where a refilling point was established & Ammunition sent forward by animal transport. A few days later the S. C. 5th Div. established a dump about 200 yards from my present position the Motor Transport being no longer required. The assistance so promptly rendered by the 12th Army Motor Transport Sub. Park at a critical period proved invaluable saving much hardship for transport animals. The cheerfulness & devotion to duty shown by Drivers & men of the Column in delivering Ammunition to Battery positions, at times under heavy shell fire & finding their way along improvised roads and tracks on dark & rainy nights is beyond praise.

Animals.

The Right & Centre Section of B.A.C. had Mule transport & limbered Ammunition Wagons, the Left Section had horse transport & G.S. Wagons.

Before leaving NEUVE-EGLISE on 23/3/18 the horses were in good condition but when subjected to continuous marching they fell away appreciably notwithstanding that they ^{were} getting more than their allowance of feed by saving a portion from the Mules.

It particularly noticed that on the 12th April when under abnormal conditions the horses showed signs of being distressed whereas the Mules were quite fit.

At a subsequent inspection by A.O.V.S. who was accompanied by the Horse Master of 11th Corps they were particularly pleased at the condition of the animals especially the mules which are a really fine lot.

I informed him that I wished to replace the horses of the Left Section with Mules & a few days later this was effected obtaining 40 Mules from 16th D.A.C. with the approval of the C.O. the horses being handed over to replace casualties in the Batteries.

The Mules excel in the following points:
 Their ordinary walking pace is faster than any horse.
 They go longer distances with the same loading than horses.
 They are ~~more~~ steadier than horses under fire & better for packing ammunition to Guns. Under ordinary treatment they keep their condition much better.

On the 15th inst the Column was inspected by the Horse Master of the Division who remarked
 "They are the best kept Mules that I have seen in France"

J. Beattie
 Capt.
 O. C. 12th (Army) A.F.A.B.A.C.