

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

Artillery

Item number: 13/107/3

Title: 3rd Australian Medium Trench Mortar
Battery

May 1918



AWM4-13/107/3

CONFIDENTIAL.

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

Australian Imperial Force.

WAR DIARY

OF

3RD A.M.F. Battery

FOR

May 1918

Signature of Officer compiling

L. G. Rivers 2nd Lieut

Signature of Officer Commanding

*Ernest A. Cairnes
Capt*

HP

3rd Aust. M. T. M. Bakery

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.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
BAIZIEUX.	MAY	1	Our Sector very quiet during the day Artillery fire increased during the night. Aerial activity nil. Strength of unit 5 officers 55 Grants. Working on alternate positions	
		2	O. C. Bty with D. J. M. O. 18" Gun inspected gun positions and dugouts.	
		1 P.M.	Fired 8 rounds on to enemy to M.G. position. All rounds burst well and carried to range. retaliation nil. 130 rounds of ammunition taken to gun pits 2 alternate gun position completed, & the third under construction. Aerial activity increased on the fine weather coming in. Shelling normal during the day but increased at night	
		3	10 Rank evacuated ^{evacuated} with trench fever. Reliefs of men in line took place today. Enemy shelled Biesle-Albert road opposite Bty HQs with 4.2. shells firing 1/2 Bty salvos. 20 rounds in all were fired. Aerial activity normal ^{Artillery} shelling normal during day but very active at night	
		4	130 rounds of ammunition taken to gun positions	
		6:30	registered two guns on enemy front line firing 14 rounds.	
		1 AM	engaged enemy front line trench and ^{Machine} gun positions with two guns firing 14 3 rounds using delay and instantaneous fuses alternately. Two rounds fell in "no man's land" but this must be expected when firing on front line trench. The Batt'n and company Commanders were interviewed after the shoot and reported everything as very satisfactory. and that the enemy trenches	

Original Messages Copy

3rd Aust M.T.M. Battery

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
BAIZIEUX	MAY 4		were severely damaged. No retaliation near pits	
	5		Front quiet during the day but artillery fire increased after dusk. A heavy bombardment started on night of our sector at midnight lasting for 15 minutes. Weather fine. Aerial activity increased during day. Artillery normal. Preparing to be relieved by 18 th Div 7.11.17. Bties.	
	6		Relieved by 18 th Div; handing over to them 3 guns in action 3 clinometers and necessary stores; also all telephone wires we had laid out. Relief completed by 9pm. Battery moved to Behencourt. for the night.	
Trochencourt	7	2PM	Battery marched from Behencourt to Trochencourt. when we went into billets. Remainder of day spent in cleaning & fixing up billets	
	8		Parade 10.11.17 & 2PM. Inspection of rifles & equipment. Fatigue duty. 3 new guns received together with necessary stores.	
	9		Parade 9AM and 2PM. Inspection of rifle and equipment. Guns cleaned and mounted. Having moved into a billet that had a piano, it was decided to hold a concert if the necessary number of artists could be got. Being only a small unit it was thought necessary to see if some assistance from other units could be got. consequently assistance from V.A.C and Americans was received	Royal Artillery Capt
	10		Parade 9AM and 2PM. Gun drill laying. Weather fine. Aerial & Artillery activity normal	2

3rd Aust M.T.M. Battery

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Trenchcourt	MAY 11		Parades & general fatigues. Platform erected in the open for the purpose of holding a concert as there were no rooms available. The weather being fine the concert lasted from 7.30 to 10.30 PM. many excellent items being rendered an American quartette being specially good.	
	12		6 hurch. Parade in the morning & a cricket match in the afternoon between 105 th How Bty & 2 nd Divn T.M. resulted in a win for T.M.s by 4 wickets. Aerial activity considerably increased after dusk & at daybreak.	
	13.		Lieut Arthur proceeded to line to inspect 3 rd Aust Divn T.M. positions prior to taking over.	
	14	8.30 AM	Moved from Trenchcourt to dugout at D.19.C.90.90. near Franvillers. 6 gun crew and 3 telephonists in charge of 2 officers moved on to forward area & took over 6 guns in action	
D.19.C.90.90	15		Aerial activity increased considerably, several enemy planes succeeded in crossing our line but were driven back by our H.A. fire. Artillery normal	
	16		Hostile M.G.'s very active otherwise situation normal. At 5 PM carried out registration shoot of 4 gun firing 51 rounds in all, an excellent registration was obtained on enemy trenches, M.G.'s & roads securing a direct hit on each target	
	17	1 AM	On receiving a call from the infantry to silence two hostile M.G.'s we fired 22 rounds & succeeded in achieving our object and received a report	

D.19.C.90.90

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3rd Aust M.T.M. Battery

WAR DIARY

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	17		from the infantry officers on duty to the effect that the shooting was excellent. I.O. Rank evacuated with trench fires. Weather very warm Aircraft active. Artillery normal 180 rounds ammunition taken to pits	Summary of Events and Information
	18		120 rounds ammunition taken to pits. Pits overhauled as we are to participate in an attack that the infantry are making to take the village of Ville-SUR-ANCRE. The attack is to take place at an early hour on the morning of the 19th 6 guns will be in action from this Battery.	
	19	2 AM	The barrage opened well & on time, at the commencement of the bombardment green flares were sent up by the enemy & 10 minutes later red flares, a slight barrage was put on our posts at 2.5. Enemy machine guns opened but were silenced by our T.M's. with the exception of one but this was silenced later. At 3 AM no flares in front of attack also no M.G's firing. From 2 AM to 2.40 AM. 6" T.M's fired accurately & well & succeeded in silencing enemy M.G's. and from reports received from the infantry it was undoubtedly due to the good work of T.M's in silencing M.G. that the attackers had so few casualties. They also reported large numbers of enemy dead in the village. This advance placed our T.M's out of range. The officers who took part in the above action were Capt Cairnes Lt Arthur La Beeres. O.B. S.D.Y. M.O. proceeded to Ville-SUR-ANCRE today to pick out new positions while inspecting a bar they found a wounded german whom	
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Summary of Events and Information

3rd Aust M.T.M. Battery

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118.

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	MAY 20		They promptly took prisoner and after removing his arms and papers sent him on to a field dressing station to be attended to. Reliefs in line took place today. Enemy shelled the villages of TRIEUX & BUIRE heavily from 9am to 3 pm with 4.2 & 5.9 shells also gas shells. Concentrated on road & railway line. Back areas also shelled. Weather warm Aerial activity normal.	
	21		Positions for 4 guns being prepared in VILLE-SUR-ANCRE. Beds taken up. Aircraft active. Artillery normal during day, but very active in BUIRE & TRIEUX at night.	
	22		Gun Bed taken to new position. Pit & ammunition recesses complete in two positions. Ammunition cleaned & stacked ready to be taken up. ^{his} Lt & Batman transferred to 3 rd Div. Artillery.	
	23		4 Gun positions completed & sixty rounds of ammunition taken to pits. Artillery activity normal. Aerial activity increased during night.	
	24		Four gun positions completed & guns ready mounted for action. The remaining two will be completed by tonight. Weather rainy. Aerial activity nil. Artillery quiet during day but very active at night.	
	25		Artillery & Aircraft very quiet during day but increased in activity after dusk. Working on gun positions & carrying ammunition.	
	26		Situation normal enemy artillery very quiet. Opened fire from No. 5 & 6 pits for registration purposes at 4 PM. 12 rounds in all were fired. Reliefs took place today.	

Bryant & Co. Ltd.

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WAR DIARY

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

Army Form C. 2118.

3rd A-T. M. Coy
May 1918

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
	MAY 27		Two ranks evacuated suffering from the effects of gas. Two reinforcements received. Enemy aircraft very active, one enemy machine brought down in flames. Four guns registered during the afternoon & 4 rounds in all fired. While firing on the Quarry the enemy were observed in all directions. A Barrage was placed on them & 2 attempted to run back, one was observed to fall apparently killed or wounded. The infantry also observed this & a good deal of sniping took place.	
	28		1 rank evacuated suffering from gas. Artillery very quiet, aerial activity normal. A light mine sweeper was found in a cellar together with 300 rounds of ammunition. About 200 more rounds were salvaged. It is proposed to fire these rounds into the back areas of Dernancourt. No. 7 Position in course of preparation. The bed of one our 9.45 Heavy Trench Mortar was also found in Ville-sur-Orne but the gun had not been mounted.	Bayard Thomas Capt
	29	5-8 PM	Two guns were registered on different enemy positions 13 rounds in all were fired. At 3 AM 6 guns opened fire on sunken roads & enemy trenches. 109 rounds in all were fired. No retaliation, all rounds burst well & carried to range. While in action a photograph was taken ^{by} of Lieut. W. Dyson of the news. Artillery normal, aircraft active.	
	30		4 gun beds taken up & new ones laid down. At 9.30 pm two guns	

A7092. Wt. W128/9/M1293 750,000 1/17. D. D. & L. Ltd. Forms/C2118/14.

3rd Aust M.T.M. Battery

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118.

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	MAY 30		opened fire on enemy M.G's & trenches. firing 20 rounds; no retaliation Light munitionweeper placed in position & now ready for action one enemy aeroplane driven down by our machines & captured undamaged.	
	31		Fired 19 rounds at 4.20 pm. on to Quarry. At 7 pm. On receiving a call from the infantry to silence some hostile M.G's. at 7 pm. 16 rounds were fired. Observation was carried out from front line and several direct hits were observed. Aircraft & artillery activity normal. While on this sector we have placed 7 guns in position and fired 548 rounds. Strength of unit 4 officers 58 ORants.	Benjamin H. Evans Capt

WAR DIARY

OF

3RD A. M. F. M. Battery

FOR

May. 1918

LIST OF APPENDICES.

No.

Subject.

/

*Operation Order for attack on
VILLE-SUR-ANCRE. on night of 19th May 18.*

SECOND AUSTRALIAN DIVISIONAL ARTILLERY

SECRET

Copy No. 30

ORDER No. 105.

Ref. Map:- Sheet 62D N.E. 1/20,000.

Headquarters, 18th May 1918.

1. (a) On a date and at an hour to be notified, an operation is to be carried out with the object of capturing VILLE-SUR-ANCRE and straightening our line.

(b) The operation is to be carried out in two stages:-

(i) 5th A.I. Brigade on the right and 6th A.I. Brigade on the left to advance to capture and consolidate on the line shown in green on Barrage Diagram *, pushing forward a line of posts in advance of this (shown in green dots).

(ii) The 6th A.I. Brigade subsequently to mop up VILLE-SUR-ANCRE and establish a line of posts East of the village from K.1.b.6.6. to E.25.b.7.4, joining up the Northern & Southern portions of their new line. This stage of the attack is to be carried out as soon as possible after the first stage on plans prepared by the G.O.C. 6th A.I. Brigade. C.O. Left Group will arrange for any covering fire required.

(c) Jumping-off Lines are shown in brown on Barrage Diagram. Posts in advance of the barrage start line are being withdrawn 20 minutes before Zero Hour.

2. The attack will be supported as follows:-

(a) 18-pounders.

(i) An 18-pdr. Creeping barrage by the Right Group and Left Group (including batteries of 5th Army Bde. A.F.A.) of "O" Div. Arty. in accordance with Barrage Diagram. This barrage will open on the barrage start line, dwelling there for two minutes then creeping forward in lifts of 100 yards, except for a pause of 10 minutes on the line 200 yards in advance of the main objective, till arrival on the protective barrage line. Fire will be maintained on the protective line until Zero plus 2 hours, alternate guns searching forward and backward in irregular jumps to a depth of 500 yards East of the protective line.

Unless specially asked for during the operation all 18-pdrs. will cease fire at plus 2 hours.

(ii) The Superimposed Brigade will put down a standing 18-pdr. barrage by 3 batteries on the western edge of VILLE-SUR-ANCRE from Zero to plus 5 minutes, one Battery lifting to the Eastern edge of the town at plus 5 minutes, remainder continuing on Western edge and the whole ceasing fire at plus 2 hours.

(iii) One F.A. Brigade of the 18th D.A. is covering the operation north of the River ANCRE by putting down a standing barrage from Zero to plus 1 hour.

P.T.O.

(1)

(ii)

(d)

SECOND AUSTRALIAN DIV. ARTY. ORDER No. 105 (CONT'D).

2. (b)

4.5" Howitzers. - In accordance with Table "A" attached.

(c)

Heavy Artillery are assisting by bombarding selected targets beyond the 18-pdr. protective barrage line and exits from MORLANGCOURT and DERNANCOURT.

Counter Batteries are engaging hostile batteries from Zero onwards.

3. (a)

From Plus 1 hour to plus 2 hours a smoke barrage will be put down in K.2. (shown in yellow on Diagram). For this barrage the Left Group will detail two 18-pdr. batteries and 1 4.5" How. Battery. Smoke shell will be fired whatever conditions of weather exist. If the wind is between N.E. and

[the] S.E. smoke barrage will be put down 200 yards further East than the line given in Diagram.

(b)

Rates of Fire (Smoke Batteries only)
Zero to plus 5 minutes :- 18-pdrs. 3, 4.5" Hows. 2, rounds per gun per minute.
Thereafter :- 18-pdrs. 1, 4.5" Hows. $\frac{1}{2}$, round per gun per minute with two minute bursts at plus 75 minutes, plus 90 minutes and plus 105 minutes at the original rate.

4.

Three 6" Newton T.M's will co-operate under orders of the D.T.M.O. as follows:-

(a)

Zero to plus 5 minutes :- One on E.25.c.80.75, one on E.25.c.7.6, one on E.25.c.35.25.

Plus 5 minutes to plus 40 minutes :- One each on Road junctions at E.25.c.80.28, K.1.e.90.95. and E.25.d.35.45.

(b)

Rates of Fire :- Zero to plus 10 minutes - 2 rounds per mortar per minute.

Plus 10 minutes to plus 40 minutes - 1 round per mortar per minute.

(c)

Only delay fuzes will be used.

5.

5th Aust. Div. Arty. are arranging to cover from Zero to plus 2 hours that portion of the Divisional front from K.13.d.3.2. to the Southern boundary in case of S.O.S on that portion. At plus 2 hours Groups will be responsible for their own original fronts. The S.O.S. line will be the protective barrage line until receipt of information allows of an alteration.

6. Rates of Fire (except for Smoke barrage for which see para. 3 (b))

(a)

18-pdrs.

(i)

In creeping barrages N. of an E. and W. line through K.7.c.0.6. - 3 rds. per gun per minute.

In creeping barrages S. of a line as above :-

Zero to plus 16 minutes. - 2 rds. per gun per minute.

Plus 16 to plus 18 mins. - 4 " " " " "

Plus 18 onwards - 3 " " " " "

(ii)

Standing barrage by 18th D.A. -

Zero to plus 15 mins. - 3 rds. per gun per minute.

Plus 15 mins. to Plus 1 hour. - 1 round per gun per min.

(iii)

Other Standing and protective barrages : 1 rd. p.g.p.m.

(b)

4.5" Howitzers.

Firing H.E.: 1 round per How. per minute throughout.

(3) S E C R E T.
SECOND AUSTRALIAN DIV. ARTY. ORDER No. 105 (CONT'D).

7. Nature of ammunition.
 (a) 18-pounders will fire all T.S. throughout except Superimposed Group which will use all H.E. with non-instantaneous fuzes.
 (b) 4.5" Hows. (except those firing smoke shell) will fire all H.E. Non-instantaneous fuzes will be used except by 106th How. Battery from plus 13 minutes to plus 2 hours, when all 106 fuzes will be used.
8. Liaison officers will be provided by Right and Left Groups with attacking battalions of respective Infantry Brigades. Alternative means of communication will be arranged between Battalion Headquarters and Groups.
9. A succession of GREEN Very Lights is to be used by each Company of the 3th A.I. Brigade to indicate that their objective has been captured.
10. Arrangements for synchronization of watches will be as follows:-
 An officer from 2nd D.A. H.Q. will call at Right and Left Group Headquarters at 3 p.m and 9 p.m on the evening preceding the attack and will synchronize with Right Group, Left Group, Superimposed Group, and D.T.M.O. O.C. Left Group will arrange to synchronize with the Right Group 18th D.A. Synchronization will not be done over the telephone.
11. AOKNOWLEDGE by wire.

Ca. Crowe

Major,
 Brigade Major,
 2nd Aust. Div. Arty.

Issued at 7 a.m to		
Right Group copies	1	- 10
Left Group	11	- 24
Super. Group.	25	- 29
D.T.M.O	30	- 31
6th Army Bde. A.F.A.		32
2nd Aust. D.A.C.		33
2nd Aust. Div.		34
5th A.I. Bde.		35
6th A.I. Bde.		36
7th A.I. Bde.		37
R.A. Aust. Corps.		38
H.A. Aust. Corps		39
C.B.S.O. Aust. Corps.		40
"X" Group R.G.A.		41
18th D.A.	42	- 47
5th Aust. D.A.	48	- 49
3rd Squadron A.F.C.		50
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NOTE * Diagrams to follow.

TASK TABLE "A" (issued with 2nd Aust.D.A.order No.105 of 18/5/18.)

(Serial 4.5in. HOW. TASKS.)

SER-IAL No.	GROUP.	BATTERY.	TIMES AND TASKS.		REMARKS.	
1.	Right.	D/189	Zero to plus 16 minutes Sunken Road from K.1.d.1.2 to K.1.b.08.40.	Plus 16 mins.to plus 2 hrs. Works from K.13.b.95.90 to K.8.c.30.45.	Cease firing unless otherwise ordered at plus 2 hours.	
2.	do.	D/108	do.	Plus 16 mins.to plus 2 hrs. Bank from K.8.a.00.75. to 20.95.	do.	
3.	Left.	106th	Zero to plus 5 minutes. Sunken Road from K.1.c.35.90.to K.1.a.65.30.	Plus 5 mins.to plus 16 mins. Sunken Road from K.1.d.1.2. to K.1.b.08.40.	Plus 16 mins. to plus 2 hrs. Road Junctions at E.26.c.5.1. and 7.1.and road between E.26.c.7.1. & E.27.a.0.3.	From plus 2 hours onwards the Hows.of the Left Group will keep up a slow rate of fire on VILLE-SUR-ANCRE, but there will be no fire on the village between - (a) from plus 2 hrs.15 mins.to plus 2 hrs.30 mins.(b) from plus 3 hrs.15 mins.to plus 3 hrs.45 th mins.(c) from plus 4 hrs.30 mins. to plus 5 hrs.30 mins.
4.	do.	105th	Zero to plus 23 mins. Creeping barrage through VILLE-SUR-ANCRE as in Diagram.	Plus 23 mins.to plus 2 hrs. Search VILLE-SUR-ANCRE from barrage start line to plus 23 line.	Fire on VILLE-SUR-ANCRE after plus 2 hrs.will be regulated by the Group Commdr.in conjunction with Left Inf.Brigade.	
5.	do.	104th	do.	Plus 23 mins.to plus 58 minutes. As for Serial 4 above.	Plus 60 mins. to plus 2 hrs. Smoke the line in K.2. as shown in Yellow on Diagram.	

P.T.O.

APPENDIX.

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TASK TABLE "A" (Continued).

4.5in. HOW. TASKS.

SERIAL No.	GROUP.	BATTERY.	TIMES AND TASKS		REMARKS.
6.	Super-imposed.	103rd	Zero to plus 23 mins. <u>Creeping barrage</u> through VILLE-SUR-ANCRE as in Diagram. (Superimposed over whole frontage allotted to the howitzer creeping barrage.)	Plus 23 mins to plus 2 hrs. <u>Search VILLE-SUR-ANCRE</u> from barrage start line to the plus 23 line.	Cease firing unless otherwise ordered at plus 2 hours.
7.	Right Group 18th D.A.	Cne	Zero to plus 5 mins. <u>2 hows. on Bridge at</u> E.25.b.5.3; 2 on Cemetery at E.20.b.0.3; one each on E.20.b.55.45 and E.20.d.25.25.	Plus 5 mins. to plus 1 hour. <u>As before, except that the</u> 2 hows. on Bridge lift, one on each of E.20.b.55.45. & E.20.d.25.25.	Cease Firing unless otherwise ordered at plus 2 hours.

APPENDIX

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2nd Aust Divisional French Mortar **APPENDIX.** /14
Headquarters.
18-5-18.

Tasks table for 6" inch Newton French mortars

No. 3 Gun : From Zero to Zero plus 5, 3 rounds
per minute on E 25. C. 35. 25.

No. 4 Gun I From Zero to Zero plus 5 minutes, 3 rounds
per minute on machine gun positions at
E 25. B. 3. 1. and E 25. B. 20. 15.

II From Zero plus 5 to Zero plus 40 on road
junction at E 25. D. 35. 45

No. 5 Gun : From Zero to Zero plus 5 minutes on E 25
C. 80. 75.

II From Zero plus 5 to Zero plus 40 on
E 25. C. 80. 28.

No. 6 Gun : From Zero to Zero plus 5 minutes on
E 25. C. 7. 6.

II From Plus 5 to Plus 40 on K. I. A. 90. 95.

Rates of Fire:-

Zero to Zero plus 10 minutes, 3 rounds
per mortar per minute, from plus
10 to Plus 40, 1 round per mortar per
minute

Depony - Capt
D. L. S.