

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

Artillery

**Item number:** 13/91/19

**Title:** 3rd Australian Divisional Trench  
Mortar Officer

May 1918



AWM4-13/91/19

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.)

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
LAHOUSOYE	1918 May 2		Expenditure of Ammunition for week. 65 rounds.	
	9		Moved from LAHOUSOYE owing to Enemy Shell fire and bivouaqued at I.2.d. 62:00 Sheet 62.D.	
FRECHENCOURT	14		Expenditure of Ammunition for week. 212 rounds. Relieved in the line by 2 <sup>nd</sup> Aust. D.T.M.O.	
			Expenditure of Amm. for week up to relief 170 rounds. Moved to FRECHENCOURT.	
BOURDON	15		Moved to BOURDON en route to Army R.A. Rest. Area.	
EAUCOURT	16		Moved to EAUCOURT (4 miles S.E. of Abbeville) where Bilib had been allotted to this unit during sojourn in Rest Area. Every facility was given all ranks during this period for a quiet restful time, and by the date orders were received to return to the line - 14 days after arrival - everybody was in the pink of condition, the result of an ideal rest for troops from the line.	
HANGEST	31		Moved from HALLENCOURT R.A. Rest Area to HANGEST. SUR. SOMME where bivouaqued for the night.	

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# WAR DIARY

OF

3<sup>rd</sup> Aust. Div. Trench Mortars

FOR

March 1918 to June 1918 (incl) 191

## LIST OF APPENDICES.

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APPENDIX

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TRENCH MORTAR  
HEADQUARTERS,  
3RD AUSTRALIAN DIV.

No. ....

Date. ....



THIRD AUSTRALIAN DIVISION

Divisional Headquarters,  
13th May, 1918. -

TO ALL UNITS: -

The Divisional Commander desires the following message to be promulgated to the whole of the troops of the Division. -

"The Field Marshal Commanding-in-Chief paid a special visit to the Division a couple of days ago in order personally to express to me his thanks for the valuable and decisive services rendered by the Division, from the date of its arrival in this theatre of war on March 27th. up to and inclusive of the offensive operations of May 6th. and 7th. - The Commander-in-Chief desired me to convey to all ranks, Services and Departments his keen appreciation and gratitude for the work they had done. -

JOHN MONASH, Major-General. "  
Commanding Third Australian Division.-

*Robt. G. Jackson*  
Lieut. Colonel. -

(R.E.J/R.M) :-

A. A. & Q.M.G., Third Australian Division.

PWP.

(Extract from "Le MATIN" Wednesday, 22nd. May, 1918).

TRENCH MORTAR  
HEADQUARTERS,  
3RD AUSTRALIAN DIV.THE BITE OF THE AUSTRALIANS.The retaking of VILLE-sur-ANCRE.

No. ....

Date. ....

In one month the Australians have captured 1,800  
prisoners and have taken part in numerous  
conflicts



(From our Special War Correspondent accredited to the British Army)  
Between the SOMME and the ANCRE - 21st May

The AUSTRALIANS are only happy when they are given plenty of hard work. It was an Australian Captain who, simply, emphasized this trait in their character, so often exemplified, and he seemed, on his part, quite satisfied. And quite justly too, for his company was one of those which, the day before yesterday, on Whitsun Eve, contributed towards the success which you know resulted in the re-taking of VILLE-sur-ANCRE. It was a splendid surprise blow, sturdily carried out and it is worth reporting in some detail.

The artillery preparation lasted barely an hour. At 2.0 a.m. the first AUSTRALIAN wave went over the top.

There was a splendid moon. It was a pleasure to go, the Captain tells us. Our lengthened shadows as we leapt from hole to hole running across the country, doubled, in the eyes of the enemy, the number of his assailants. His barrage was put up too late. The attack, made on a front of little more than three kilometres, developed right and left of the village, peat bogs preventing it being assaulted from the front.

Advanced posts and garrisons - in the neighbourhood of 1,000 men - found themselves surrounded ere they had a chance to retaliate. Nevertheless the battalion which held the village - men of the 117th Division, young classes mostly - notwithstanding the futility of all resistance, defended themselves valiantly. It took two hours searching the cellars to overcome, with the aid of bombs, the obstinacy of some of them. Four hundred prisoners, or but few less, remained in our hands, and at least as many dead lay on the field. I say enemy dead, for our own losses were negligible.

One comic incident - which always exists in every drama - was the finding, amongst the small fry (wastrels) captured, of a civilian from BERLIN - rara avis - whose sole baggage consisted of a register of subscriptions, for he was a Collector of War Savings, charged with receiving on the spot the mites of the combatants. It would appear on glancing at his notebook, that the liberality of the contributions was not very considerable.

Another incident, this time of a dramatic nature: we had taken an officer who, according to custom, had advanced to meet us hands up. Seizing a moment to drop them, he hastily snatched his revolver from the pocket of his tunic and fired it point-blank at the stomach of the guard who was marching at his side. This example of Hunnish perfidy earned the end it merited.

The taking of VILLE-sur-ANCRE - known by some as VILLE-sous-CORBIE - has the advantage of securing for us valuable observation direct on MORLANCOURT, and, amongst other things, on four roads and on the enemy flank towards ALBERT.

P. T. O.

A run of successes.

This success, furthermore, is the last in point of date of a whole series of fortunate operations which, in the course of a month, have meant the capture by the AUSTRALIAN CORPS of 1,800 prisoners, of whom half are to the credit of the two brigades which retook VILLERS-BRETONNEUX.

Hereunder, unembellished but how eloquent, is a statement of their feats of arms during the past fortnight :-

Night 30th Apl/1st May.

Line advanced 400 metres in depth on a front of 800. Post established East of the village of TREUX.

Night of 1st/2nd May.

Further advance - total gain of 600 metres in depth on a front of 1400 metres.

Morning 6th May.

Capture of the whole German second line of defence S.W. of MORLANCOURT. The occupants and their ration-carriers killed or captured. Prisoners 163, including 4 officers.

Morning 8th May.

Three local operations - all successful. Line advanced 500 metres on 600 metres of front East of SAILLY-le-SEC and of 300 metres on 500 metres West of MORLANCOURT. About 20 prisoners and heavy enemy casualties.

9th. May.

Return of enemy offensive. They secured a footing for an instant in Australian trenches North-west of ALBERT but were immediately thrown out again.

14th. May.

Two German Companies belonging to 18th and 199th Divisions attempted to regain the trenches lost by them South-west of MORLANCOURT. At one point they broke into the Australian lines. A spirited counter-attack not only re-established the position, but lost country to the enemy and left 52 prisoners in our hands as a result of the encounter.

Fr 8th. May.

The Australians attacked, at full midday, a strong post advanced towards MORLANCOURT, captured the whole garrison - 22 men and 1 officer - and withdrew, having suffered no casualties.

R.2 When the Germans think of attacking, this is the kind of adversary he will have to reckon with.

3<sup>rd</sup> DTMO.

Passed to you

30/5/18.

W. J. P. H. H. H.  
For CO 3<sup>rd</sup> DACCAIF.

No.....  
Date.....

SPECIAL ORDER

by

Major-General Sir JOHN MONASH, K.C.B., V.D.

Commanding, Third Australian Division. -

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TO ALL RANKS OF THE THIRD AUSTRALIAN DIVISION:-

As I am about to take up other duties, the time has come when I must relinquish the command of the Division. -

Closely associated with you as I have been, since the days of your first assembly and War Training in ENGLAND, and, later, throughout all your magnificent work during the past nineteen months in the war zone, it is naturally a severe wrench for me to part from you. -

I find it quite impossible to give adequate expression to my feelings of gratitude towards all ranks for the splendid and loyal support which you all have, at all times, accorded to me. - I am deeply indebted to my staff, to all Commanders and to the Officers and troops of all Arms and Services for a wholehearted co-operation upon which, more than upon any other factor, the success of the Division has depended. -

It is my earnest hope, and also my sincere conviction, that the fine spirit and the high efficiency of the Division will be maintained under the leadership of my successor, Brigadier-General GELLIBRAND; and if the men of the Division feel, as I trust they do, an obligation to perpetuate for my sake the traditions built up by them during the period of my command, they can do so in no better way than by rendering to him a service as thorough and a support as loyal, as I have been privileged to enjoy at their hands. -

In formally wishing the Division good-bye and good-luck, I wish simply, but none the less sincerely, to thank each and all of you, for all that you have done. -

Divisional Headquarters,  
30th. May 1918. -

*John Monash*  
Major-General. -