

AWM4

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

Machine Guns

Item number: 24/11/15

Title: 6th Australian Machine Gun
Company

May 1917



AWM4-24/11/15

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118.

368

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.

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

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6TH - Aust Machine Gun Coy

Summary of Events and Information

VOL. A10. PAGE. 1.

Remarks and references to Appendices

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices												
CALAIS	1917 MAY 1		<p>Company relieved 22nd Aust M G Coy. Relief completed by 2:30 AM.</p> <p>Disposition -</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>U. 27 D 54</td> <td>C 4 D 34</td> </tr> <tr> <td>W. 28 C 92</td> <td>C 4 D 64</td> </tr> <tr> <td>C. 5 A 06</td> <td>C 3 D 65</td> </tr> <tr> <td>C. 5 A 35</td> <td>C 3 C 32</td> </tr> <tr> <td>C. 4 A 64</td> <td>C 3 C 42</td> </tr> <tr> <td>C. 9 B 55</td> <td>C 9 D 69</td> </tr> </table> <p>4 Guns Reserve with Transport (HWA 25)</p> <p>Ad Ans C 10 C 79.</p> <p>Details + "Attacking" crews marched to Bde Concentration Camp H 20 A 75</p> <p>Transport + QM Store moved to Favreuil</p> <p>BEFORE DAWN Indirect fire was directed on gaps in enemy wire from Railway Embankment expenditure 2000 rounds.</p> <p>2 9 PM "Attacking" teams marched into positions in front wire, preparatory to attack</p> <p>DURING NIGHT Indirect fire on gaps in enemy wire from Railway Embankment expenditure 2000 Rounds</p>	U. 27 D 54	C 4 D 34	W. 28 C 92	C 4 D 64	C. 5 A 06	C 3 D 65	C. 5 A 35	C 3 C 32	C. 4 A 64	C 3 C 42	C. 9 B 55	C 9 D 69	
U. 27 D 54	C 4 D 34															
W. 28 C 92	C 4 D 64															
C. 5 A 06	C 3 D 65															
C. 5 A 35	C 3 C 32															
C. 4 A 64	C 3 C 42															
C. 9 B 55	C 9 D 69															

J.H. Drummond Capt

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68

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~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY~~

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6TH Aust Machine Gun Co

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices	
CALAIS.	1917 MAY 3	AM. 3-45	Company took part with 6 th Aust Inf Bde in attack on Hindenburg Line as per allotted objectives. This company's task resulted as follows:- Lt A.P. Earle with a half section went forward with 2 nd wave of 24 th Batt after hard fighting (bomb), the 2 guns were firmly established in support trench at 22 D 94 & 22 D 94 at 5 AM. Here Lt Earle was wounded & Sgt Hitchcock carried on excellently. The guns had good targets & accounted for 30 Germans in 16 D & 17 C. At night the guns were withdrawn to 22 D 93 & 22 D 83. At midnight this half section was relieved by Lt E.J. Bice & a fresh half section. Lt R.D. Desmond with a half section went forward with the 4 th wave of the 24 th Batt & successfully reached his objective - V 23 C 99, where he established his guns. Small parties of Germans in 17 C & 17 D were fired on & in half an hour all enemy movement was stopped, 45 of the enemy being accounted for. At 10 AM one gun was put out of action & at 11.30 AM the other. Lt Desmond & 2 men were killed & the remainder of team wounded, except one man who came out & reported. Lt A. Palling went forward, with a half section, with the 22 nd Batt as far as the wire in 28 B 77, where he was wounded & the crews hung up in shell holes, owing to intense MG fire. The enemy guns covered these shell holes all day & it was impossible to bring Lt Palling	VOL. A10. PAGE 2.	1 NCO & 5 Men per gun.
				1 NCO & 5 Men per GUN	
				1 NCO & 4 Men per GUN.	

J.H. Desmond

WAR DIARY

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6TH Aush Machine Gun Co

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
CALAIS	1917 MAY 3 CONT'D		<p>Summary of Events and Information VOL. A10. PAGE 2</p> <p>out or for the guns to go forward. He died about 1 pm. 5 men were casualties & the remainder were withdrawn to the railway at night</p> <p>At 11:30 pm 2 guns under Sgt Jeffrey went forward to U 23 C 70.05. & 23 C 80.05 where they were established with good fields of fire.</p> <p>Indirect fire was carried out according to programme by 6 guns in Railway Embankment.</p> <p>casualties - Killed 2 officers (Lt R B Desmond) (Lt A Pallung) 6 O.R.s.</p> <p>Wounded 1 officer (Lt A P Earle) 14 O.R.s.</p> <p>4 1.A.M Lt E Bice relieved Sgt Hitchcock & 2 teams. Lt Bice was wounded at day break but carried on, successfully driving back enemy attacks & accounting for many of the enemy until midnight, when he was relieved by 1st aush MG Co.</p> <p>Sgt Jeffrey with his 2 guns engaged small targets during the whole day. No good targets presented themselves. He was relieved at midnight.</p> <p>The Relief of the ^{whole} box by the fresh Co (1st aush MG) was complete at 12:25 AM on the 5th. casualties - Killed 1 O.R.</p> <p>5 The company then marched out - 8 guns to the Vault Line & 6 to the Corps Line. Four guns in Vault Line relieved by 2nd Aush M.G. Co at 2 AM.</p> <p>casualties - 1 O.R. Wnd.</p>	<p>See Report attached</p> <p>MARCHED TO H 18 A 25</p>

WAR DIARY

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68

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6TH Aust Machine Gun Co

VOL. A10. PAGE 3.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	1917			
CALAIS	MAY 6	2 AM	6 Guns in position Line relieved by 2nd Aust M.G. Co.	
	7		Repairing Guns Evacuated 1 Officer Sick (Lt 2nd Robinson)	
	8	3 AM	4 Guns in position Line relieved by 1st Aust M.G. Co	
SOMME		AM	Company (less Transport + Q.M. Store at Lavrent) assembled at H 18 A 25.	
		8-30	Company left Lavrent + Marched to Hookaburna Camp	
		AM 9-30	Company left Hookaburna Camp + Marched to Mairitz Camp	
	10		Overhauling Guns + Gear	
	11		Resting. Bathing parade. 2 ORs Evacuated Sick	
	12		day	
	13		Church parade 11 AM. Company Inoculated $\frac{TAB}{1}$	
	14		day 1 OR Evacuated (Sick)	
	15		day	
	16		day	

J.H. Dunscombe
Capt.

4

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6th Aust Machine Gun Coy

VOL. A10. PAGE 4.

Place	Date 1917	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
SOMME.	MAY.			
	17	9 AM	Left Mametz camp & marched to Milencourt via Neault & Buire. Arrived 3.30 PM.	
	18		Overhauling guns & guns & gear. Training (Koppager mechanism etc)	1. OR. Evacuated - Sick
	19		Training: - Gun Drill etc.	
	20	10 AM	Left Milencourt & marched to Warloy. Arrived at 11 AM.	
	21		Training as per syllabus.	
	22		do (bathing parade) Contay.	
	23		do	1. OR. Evacuated (Sick)
	24		do	
	25		do	
	26		do	1 officer Lt F. J. Bentham Evac. (Sick) 1 OR do do
	27	11 AM	Church parade	
	28		Training as per syllabus	
	29		do	
	30		Brigade Sports at Milencourt Wood.	
	31		Training as per syllabus	

J. H. Munro
Capt.

Operations of 6th Aust Machine Gun Co during
 attack on the Hindenburg Line in neighbourhood
 of BULLECOURT, 1st May - 4th May 1917

As one of the preliminary moves in connection with these operations the 6th A.M.G. Co relieved the 22nd A.M.G. Co on the night of 30th April - 1st May, moving up via Vaux & Mareuil from the vicinity of Beny-matre (H 18 A 25) & completing the relief by 2.30 A.M.

The Disposition of the guns were as follows: -

4 on Railway Embankment at C 5 A 35.

C 5 A 00.45.

W 29 C 97.

W 27 D 54.

8 along the Longatte - Mareuil Roads at

C 4 A 64.

C 9 B 55

C 4 D 34

C 4 D 64

C 3 D 65

C 3 C 37

C 3 C 47

C 9 D 69.

4 in reserve with the transport &
16 company HQ established in Sunken Road
 at C 10 C 79.

The 25% who were to remain in Concentration Camp at H 20 A 75 during the attack, manned front line guns & made gun positions, local ammunition dumps & complete arrangements for the Machine Gun Barrage. Attacking crews (6) & the crews for the barrage guns marched to Concentration Camp, while the Transport & R.M. Store moved to Favreuil.

Fire from embankment directed on to gaps in enemy wire from 2.30 am till 4.30 am

No change in dispositions of guns & crews was made during night May 1st. Work of preparation & attention to details being completed & enemy were intermittently fired on from embankment. No casualties - enemy at times used a few gas shells & right hand 2 guns on embankment were troubled by occasional mine-thrower bombs.

May 2nd At 9 pm the crews of the barrage guns relieved the 25% (Details) crews on the embankment. The Details returned without casualties to the Concentration Camp.

Serjt & P. Rice moved 2 guns up to the embankment

& they were placed in positions at C 5 A 14. & U 28 D 01.
 & the left hand gun moved to the right to U 28 C 87.
 The 6 Attacking teams moved up during the night, crossed
 the embankment & were in their allotted places on
 the jumping off tape by 3:15 am on 3rd.
 Fire on the wire ceased this night on account of
 activity of 6th Brigade patrols
 2 guns & teams under Sgt Mackley remained in
 reserve at C 4 C 59 & 2 other guns & teams under the
 flight were also in reserve at C 4 d 15.
 Company H Os were moved to a prepared position at
 C 5 C 15 45 & connected by phone with Lt Callister at
 the right embankment. This line was cut 30 mins
 after zero & at 7 am Coy H Os moved to the right
 embankment.

Zero time was 3:45 am 3/5/17. The Brigade objectives
 were the Hindenburg line from the road through
 U 29 A & C to U 22 D 60 & beyond, to the gap
 between Rieuxcourt & Hendecourt.

The attacking teams were in 3 half sections under
 Lieuts Desmond Palling & Earle.

Lt Desmond went forward with the right half of the
 4th wave of the 24th Batt A.I.F. & successfully reached
 his objective in U 23 C 99 where he successfully estab^l
 his guns. Small parties of Germans in U 17 C & D were
 fired on & nearly all movement was stopped, 45 of
 the enemy being accounted for. At 10 am one gun was
 put out of action by a bullet which struck & bent
 the breech casing & broke the rear cross piece. The
 other gun engaged & silenced an enemy machine gun
 at a range of 400 yards & fired on scattered parties
 at 1100 yards in U 18 a & c & at 11:30 am this gun
 also was put out of action by a piece of H.E. shell.
 These teams consisted of 1 NCO & 5 men per gun & were
 assisted by 16 carriers. 18 of the 20 belt boxes, some of
 the S.A.A. & all the gun gear they set out with reached
 their objective. The officer Lt Desmond & 2 men
 were killed & the remainder of the teams wounded
 except Pte A McDonald who came out with the
 damaged gun & reported.

Lieut A. P. Earle with a half section + gun teams of 1 NCO + 4 men per gun, assisted by 16 carriers, went forward with the left-half company of the 2nd wave of the 24th Bath. Just before entering the trench Lt Earle was wounded. Sgt Hitchcock carried on excellently + after hard bodily fighting the 2 guns were established in O.G. 2 - U 22 D 84 + V 22 D 94 at 5 AM. The guns had good targets + accounted for 30 Germans in U 16 D & C. At night the guns were withdrawn to U 22 D 93 + U 22 D 83. At midnight (May 3) this half section was relieved by Lt E. Bice + the half section left in reserve under Sgt Mackley. 2/3 of the 20 belt boxes + no S.A.A. got through. Besides Lt Earle 3 ORs were wounded.

Lieut A. Palling with a half section + gun teams of 1 NCO + 4 men per gun unassisted by carriers went forward with the 4th wave of the 22nd Bath with O.G. 2 in U 22 D 63 as his objective. He got as far as the wire in U 28 B 77 where he was mortally wounded + the teams hung up in shell holes owing to intense MG fire. The evening guns covered these shell holes all day + it was impossible to get Lt Palling out or for the guns to go forward. Lt Palling died about 12 noon. 1 man was killed + 4 others wounded. The remainder were withdrawn to railway embankment at night.

At 11.30 pm 2 guns + teams from left embankment under Sgt Jeffrey went forward to U 23 C 70.05 + U 23 C 80.05 where they were established with good fields of fire.

The 6 guns at the embankment carried out their programme of placing a barrage from zero till + 1 hr 15 min - from the factory, U 22 B 07 to the 6 Cross roads in U 23 D.

+ 1 hr 15 min to + 2 hrs, from U 16 D 65. to U 23 B 55.
+ 2 hrs to 2 hrs 20 min from U 17 A 52 to U 17 D 53.

Total casualties 3/5/17. Killed 2 officers + 10 ORs
" 5 ORs " 12 ORs

May 4th - After relieving Sgt Hitchcock, Lt Bice carried on till morning, when he was wounded, but continued to carry on, successfully driving back German attacks (supported by Flammenwerfer) & accounting for many of the enemy. He was relieved by 2 guns & teams of 1st Aust M.G. Co. at midnight.

Sgt Jeffrey with his 2 guns engaged small targets during the whole day & also operated a captured German maxim. He was relieved by 2 guns & teams of 1st Aust M.G. Co. at midnight.

The 6 guns at the sub-battery & the 2 in reserve were also relieved by the 1st Aust M.G. Co. The 6th Co was completely relieved by 12.25 am May 5th.
6 casualties 4/5/17 1 OR Killed
1 OR Wounded.

May 5th - On relief the Co. marched out & established 8 guns in the strong posts of the Vauls line & 6 in the Corps line (Bengary - Ytres line).

May 6th - at 2 am the 4 guns (right group) in the Vauls line were relieved by the 2nd Aust M.G. Co. & marched to H 18 A 25.

The 6 guns in the Corps line were relieved at 3 am by the 2nd Aust M.G. Co.

May 7th - Cleaned guns & gear.
1 officer evacuated sick

May 8th - The 4 guns in the Vauls line were relieved at 3 am by the 1st Aust M.G. Co.

J. D. Drummond Capt.
Ob. 6 M.G. Coy.