AWM4

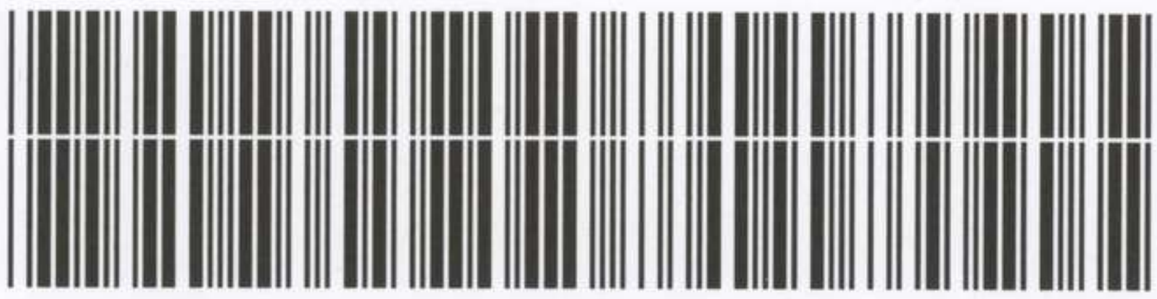
Australian Imperial Force unit war diaries, 1914-18 War

Infantry

Item number: 23/65/15

Title: 48th Infantry Battalion

April 1917



AWM4-23/65/15

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
BIEFVILLERS les. BAPAUME	1/4/17		Battalion moved here today from EAUCOURT L'ABBAYE. 2 officers & 6 under Full marching order and 1 Blanket carried on the march. The weather Cold and wet. 60 men fell out on the march	
	2/4/17		Village very much knocked about but good cover for men also Stables for Horses. All the Battalion employed on Fatigues	
"	5/4/17		Men Employed on Fatigue and Specialists doing bombing and Lewis Gun training a good number Gammon Grenades Issued and men trained in use of them. all Officers instructed in making road Houses and Plotting Zone.	
	6/4/17		Fatigue work carried out, Officers inspected Front line and Area NORGUIL and BULLECOURT.	
	7/4/17		Inspected Front line and arranged to relieve 52nd Bde, Left BIEFVILLERS at 6pm, Pack dumped at transport lines BOUQUATRE.	
NORGUIL	8/4/17		Relief of 52nd Bde completed at 2.35. Casualties 1 OR. Killed 3 wounded. ~~I Patrol~~ 3 OR come into our lines this morning, they were members of 5th DORSETS Battalion and were captured by the Boche last JANUARY escaped from prisoners Compound last night. Enemy shelled regularly through the day. weather fine.	
	9/4/17		Quiet all day. Special Patrols entered Enemy wire South East Corner of BULLECOURT advanced through 3 rows each about 5 yards in depth and found it in very strong condition, between that and the Parapet of the trench there was a space of 50 yards, strong wire Entanglement	

Appendix 1
Lt Col D.C.O.
C. Coy
Appendix 2

1875 Wt. W593/826 1,000,000 4/15 J.B.C. & A. A.D.S.S./Forms/C. 2118.

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NORIEUL 9/4	9/9/17		about 10 feet thick now up to forward. Patrol was fired on from U28 a 5.4. French appeared to be strongly held on this side.	
9/4	10/9/17		46th + 48th Bns were ordered to attack Enemy Trench U28 U29 on a frontage of about 600 yards. The Battalions were to be in position to attack at 4.30 am in conjunction with the Tanks; all were in position to time but the Tanks failed to appear, and orders were given to retire at about 5.30 am. This retirement had to be done in full view of the Boche at close range. He opened a heavy Barrage fire, but the retirement was successfully carried with slight casualties under the circumstances. Major Leane was killed. 4 OR. 17 OR wounded	
9/4	11/9/17		The attack on BULLECOURT was carried out this morning assisted by TANKS. The attack was timed to commence at 4.30 am. The TANKS were late getting away and slow in moving forward the consequence was that the attack was delayed and it was not until 6.19 that my men were able to penetrate the 2nd Position, as the Barrage lifted off the East edge of BULLECOURT at 5 am it meant that my men were exposed all this time to Rifle and Machine Gun fire. We suffered heavy casualties before reaching Trench. Casualties 14 officers. 421 OR.	

1875 Wt. W593/826 1,000,000 4/15 J.B.C. & A. A.D.S.S./Forms/C. 2118.

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NOREUIL	11/4/17		a full report is attached herewith. Both Officers and OR did splendid service.	
			Moved back to BAPAUME on night of 11th inst. being relieved by 45th Bde	
BAPAUME	12/4/17		Entrained at 8pm and moved back to ALBERT. Reached at 7 am 13th inst	
			Marched to FRICOURT and went into Huts. men rested during afternoon	
FRICOURT	14/4/17		Inspected by G.O.C 1st ANZAC this morning. Spent the rest of day	
			cleaning and inspecting Clothing and Equipment. tracing Casualties	
	15/4/17		Work of Reorganising the Battalion carried out. Weather wet, men	
			sent down to Baths for change of clothes and warm baths.	
	16/4/17		Training carried out and units reorganised. 3rd Reinforcement arrived	
HENEN COURT WOOD	17/4/17		moved from FRICOURT to HENEN COURT WOOD. Weather wet and cold, men marched	
			well and no one fell out on the march. Health and Spirit good.	
	18/4/17		Training started again this morning. Specialist Sergeant arrived from ANZAC	
			and took over the instruction of 16 men in Lewis Gunners; Special Class	
	19/4/17		opened for the instruction of men in Bayonet fighting, Bombing and marketry.	
			also Range firing. Weather damp. Much useful training carried out.	
	20/4/17		Training carried out as usual. Arrangement made to hold ANZAC DAY on	
			the 25th April. each Battalion to subscribe £25 towards prize money.	
			This Camp has not proved very healthy. Water has remained about	
			until it is green and smells badly. two fresh cases of Diphtheria.	

1875 Wt. W593/826 1,000,000 4/15 J.B.C. & A. A.D.S.S./Forms/C. 2118.

Copy of Leave Roster & Supplies

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
HENEN COURT WOOD	21/4/17		Single Parade held every morning. Men Isolated who were Contacts of the Diphtheria patients. Musketry Bombing & Lewis Gun training being Carried out. Reported Camp not fit for troops. Inspected by Major Jeffreys who Condemned it.	
MILLEN COURT	22/4/17		Moved to Millencourt this morning and went into Billets. This should prove more Satisfactory.	
	23/4/17		Route March Carried out this afternoon in full marching order. The men marched well no one fell out distance 7½ miles. Health of Battalion is very good, Single Parade held each morning. no fresh Cases of Diphtheria. Weather fine but cold. good training being Carried out.	
	24/4/17		Special Holiday granted for ANZAC Day. The Battalion marched to HENEN COURT WOOD where the Sports were held. £100 being given in Prize money. Events were very Satisfactory. The Battalion Secured a good number of the Prizes. including 1st & 3rd Prize for Cleanest and best turned out Cookers. Some very instructive events were Carried out.	
	25/4/17		Inoculation of Battalion started. all available men doing Specialist training. Every man in Battalion put through Course of Bombing. training going on Successfully, Rifle Shooting Lewis Gun. and Musketry Instructions. Health and Discipline very good.	

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
MILLENCOURT	28/4/17		Physical Training Carried out - under instructions from 1st Anzac Corps. New Inoculation during morning, afternoon spent in games. Battalion	
	29/4/17		Election voting carried out today; also Inoculation	
	30/4/17		Men wanted to attest for both, but were unable to procure change of clothes. This is most unsatisfactory. The men have now been a long time without a change. I returned the 2nd Garment in December with the promise that a change would always be available. It would have been better to have retained it and made arrangement locally for washing. Inspection of Boots carried out. Boots proved to be in good condition. Issue of small lot of 2nd Australian Boots. These are very popular and I consider a much better boot at the money. All Officers taken out and lecture given on the Ground. Subject The Out Post Company. Health of the Battalion good.	Lt Colonel Commanding 21st Bn

1875 Wt. W593/826 1,000,000 4/15 J.B.C. & A. A.D.S.S./Forms/C. 2118.

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APPENDIX

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE

48th Battalion Special order
by Lieut Col. R.L. Leane D.S.O, M.C
Commanding Officer

14th APRIL 1917

The Commanding Officer wishes to thank the 48th Battalion for the splendid work Officers N.C.Os and men did in the attack on the enemy trenches of BULLECOURT on the morning of the 11th inst

Under the best conditions the task set us was one that required the best of troops to carry it out successfully yet you did it and did it well despite the heavy barrage, rifle and machine gun fire that you had to face for over one hour from the time you were in position until you were able to penetrate his trenches. You successfully held the position for 8 hours d espite the fact that you were outnumbered, held on to the position for one hour and 10 minutes after the 46th Battalion in your rear and the 4th Brigade on your right had retired. And then retired in good order, Lewis Gunners carrying out their guns.

It was an achievement of the very highest order and is well worthy of the Battalion. Our casualties are heavy, hot h in officers and O/ranks but we proved again that we are more than a match for the Hun

To have successfully broken into and held the great HINDENBURG Line is something indeed to be proud of. We have all of us lost Comrades and Brothers yet we must not think the supreme sacrifice in vain, but rather let it make us firmer in our resolve to use every effort to beat him to his knees.

We are waiting now for the next round. Let it be a real Knock Out blow the next time we meet him. Words of mine cannot express the admiration and pride I feel in commanding such men. You are indeed a credit to our loved AUSTRALIA.

R.L. Leane Lieut
Adjutant 48th Battalion

The following are copies of messages received :-

From General Birdwood, Commander 1st Anzac Corps, dated 11/4/17

" The Army Commander fully appreciates the splendid effort made this morning bythe 4th Australian Division, which so nearly achieved a great and very important success. Even though we have not gained any ground locally, the Army Commander is satisfied that that effect upon the whole situation by the ANZAC Attack has been of great assistance

I am sure you all know how fully I appreciate the really good work done by every man who took part in this mornings operation. We have no cause to be disheartened at having failed to retain our footing in the face of overwhelming odds. Rather can we feel proud of the magnificent bravery displayed. Please convey my feelings of gratitude to all.

Signed L. Craig Capt
for Lieut-Col
GS 4t h Australian Division.

The following is a copy of wire from Commander-in-Chief to First ANZAC:-

"Please convey to the 4thAustralian Division my appreciation of the great gallantry shown by them in their operations on the 11th inst. Please convey this to all concerned."

Copy of letter received from G.O.C 4th Australian Division :-

" My Dear General Robertson.

Will you please accept yourself, and convey to the officers and other ranks of the Units under your command who took part in yesterdays operations, my sincere thanks for their gallant services, and my congratulations on the success achieved in breaking the formidable HINDENBURG Line, nothingx notwithstanding the failure of the Tanks from which so much was expected in the direction of preparing the way.

The fact that we could not "stick it" in the line, was dur to bad luck, and cannot be regarded in any way as a reflection

APPENDIX

on your Brigade, which fought magnificently and in my opinion performed, under all the circumstances a herculean task in getting there at all and staying as long as they did.

I deeply regret the loss of so many brave Officers and Men, but unfortunately in war this cannot be avoided.

The Brigade has well maintained its previous high reputation

Yours very sincerely
(Signed) WILLIAM HOBBS
Maj-Gen

Copy of letter received by Lieut-Col Lodge from Brig-General Robertson :-

FRICOURT CAMP
16th April 1917

"It was indeed cheering to hear your boys arrive this morning singing, its speaks volumes considering the terrible experiences they endured during the BULLECOURT operations.

I consider the effort made by the 46th Battalion truly magnificent, the failure of the Tanks upset all calculations and for them to have pushed on without Artillery support through the thick barb wire and finally to have stormed and taken the second Objective was wonderful, and that the position was held so long by the gallant garrison redounds to the credit of your Battalion and the State from which they come. The retirement had to take place and under the circumstances it was the correct course to take.

I am very sorry for the heavy l asses you have sustained. Such men cannot be replaced and we shall feel their loss very much. KIGHUT . We are in the corner now but may be we shall be in the centre of the ring again and our boys will not forget BULLECOURT.

My kindest regards Colonel to you and your brave lads of the 46th

Yours Sincerely
J.C.Robertson

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE **APPENDIX**

The following is a copy of a letter received by Major-General W. Holmes from Lieut-General W.R.Birdwood :-

You know well what my feelings are as regards the magnificent work done by your Division in the attack on the HINDENBURG LINE on the 11th, and I have already endeavoured to express these in the messages you sent out for me to the Brigades. Having heard, however, so many more details on the subject since then, I feel I must send you a line to again let you know my feelings of intense admiration for ad pride in, the Officers and men in their really magnificent and gallant work that morning. No words can, I think, describe the reckless bravery with which they tackled the wire before them and went through everything in going in-in the desperate fighting they had while in the trenches, and again in the necessary retirement, which in the hands of inferior and less detirmined troops might well have led to panic and disaster.

We can no of us ever sufficiently regret the losses which we sustained, but we of course, every one of us, recognise that such are essential, when we are playing a part in the huge battlefield from Arras to Champagne.

I have been particularly struck with the way in which all company and platoon commanders conducted the most difficult retirement, seeing their men quietly through the wire as they did, and then following after they had seen all safely through. It is through doing their duty nobly like this that I am afraid we have lost so many valuable officers. That officers should have thus willingly sacrificed themselves for their men speaks for itself, and no episode in the annuls of the A.I.F will ever stand higher than the behaviour of the Officers and all others on this occasion.

I do hope that you will let your Brigadiers, Commanding Officers, and all others concerned know what I feel about this, though I trust they already do realise it.

I was so glad to be able to see the 4th and 12th Brigades directly they came out of the line, but I am afraid it was impossible then to tell them what I realy felt

I hope you will now have a good spell in which to re-equip, reorganise and train, and, as you know I am doing everything possible to get out all the reinforcements I can for you from England

With every good wish for you and the whole of the 4th Division for the future

Yours very sincerely

(Signed) W.R.BIRDWOOD.

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE APPENDIX

From, Commanding Officer
48th Bat talion

To Headquarters
12th Aust Inf Bde

Report on Operation 11th April 1917

The 48th and 46th Battalions were detailed to take part in an attack on the Hindenburg Line, the attack to take place at 4.30 a.m on the 11th inst.

First Objective, 46th Battalion. U 23 e 6.8 t o U 23 d 4.0
Second Objective 48th Battalion U 23 c 6.1 to U 22 d 5.3
The Battalion was in position to attack at 4 a.m. Receiving no word of the advance I wired to Company Commanders at 5 a.m thinking perhaps they might be waiting for signals from Tanks ("You do not wait for signal from Tanks. When the first objective is taken you go on and take the second") The tanks were slow in getting away. This proved very bad for us as it began to get light, and an ad vance of a 1000 yards had t o be made before 1st Objective was reached und er direct rifle fire from trenches East of BULLECOURT. Only two tanks reached anywhere near the enemy line and it was not until 6.18 that my men were able to reach 2nd Objetive. While the barrage remained on enemy trenches East of BULLE-COURT the fire was kept down, but this lifted at 5 a.m to allow the Tanks to operate on the flanks, consequently the enemy had every opportunity to snipe my men from 5 a.m to 6.18 a.m which he did inflicting great casualties. I wired Brigade pointing this out at 5.18 a.m as follows " On account of lateness of advance have arrangements been made to keep barrage longer on Flanks of BULLECOURT". On account of arrangements made with the tanks nothing could be done. No artillery barrage was on the trenches yet the men advanced despite all obst acles and made their way through the wire. This was necessarily slow work and many fell getting through it. Captain Leane was the only Company Commander who reached the 1st Objective. It was found that only a portion of the 46th Objective had been gained and my first line had to fight at the first trench to enable them to get through. It was not until 6.19 that 2nd Objective was gained. Bombers worked to right and established Block in trench at Sunken Road U 23 c 85.05 . On the left they could not advance further

than Sunken Road at U 23 B.4 . Here they found the Boche in strength, A block was established at this point and several attacks driven off with loss to the enemy. Lewis guns were pushed out in front and these did god work on supports advancing from REINCOURT. The tanks never attempted to do the work they were alloted. One Tank reported to me at Battalion Headquarters U 28 c 7.4 and I gave the officer orders to try and assist my left flank. He started out to do this but did not get far and the tank was hit returning. The crew promptly left the Tank and came to my Hd Qrs . I asked them could they not drive the Tank away as it was standing 20 yards from my Hd Qrs and was being heavily fired upon. The N.C.O declined to try, and the party left for the rear. This Tank caught on fire about 30 minuted afterwards. Had the Tanks shown more pluck and initiative I quite believe things would have been different The Enemy trench mortars were causing my men trouble and sent the following wire to O.C 12th A.L.T.M.Btty to the position given me by Brigade U 27 d 54, but although my runners searched everywhere, both right and left of this position they could not be found, and I have since been informed that the mortars never went forward. They would have assisted my line materially. Every effort was made to get in touch with 4th Bde but nothing could be done. From observation I should say that this Brigade was at least 400 yards to the right of the point they should have been. Between my Battalion and th is point the line was strongly held by the enemy and constant bombing attacks were made, all were driven off with considerable loss. At 9.30 a.m I instructed my Intelligence officer to go forward and send me a report of the position and the map reference of Right and Left. This officer reported that a body of men, approximately a battalion were marching from thedirection of HENDECOURT .Capt Leane reported Trenches on right and left strongly held and expects a counter attack. This information I telephoned to Brigade, and repeated by wire I asked that some support be given on left immediately, otherwise doubted if the trenches could be held. However this was not forthcoming At 11.15 a.m I wired that 4th Brigade and 12th Brigade were retiring. I could see this from my position. The 46th Bn never informed my Bn of their decision my men were placed with large numbers of the enemy on

their right and left, and the trench in rear evacuated by the 46th Battalion was promptly regained by the Boche. Bombing parties under officers moved down communication trench and bombed out the Boche, working on both flanks, and the both trenches were again in our hands, but on account of the few men left and no communication possible except by runner, Captain Leane decided to evacuate the 2nd Objective and fall back and hold the 1st Objective. He knew by this time that the 46th Had retired and could see the 4th Brigade going back but decided to hold on to the one trench hoping for assistance later. At 12.5 he despatched a wire "Our Artillery is making trench untenable" and at 12.25 he had to retire. The officers and a few bayonet men remaining to cover the retirement. My Battalion held the trenches 1 hour 10 minuted after the rest had retired. No words of mine can express the pride and admiration I feel for these brave men, officers and men alike did wonderful work and I feel that had troops came up on the left of BULLECOURT and captured the trench we would still be in the position. The failure in my opinion was due to :-

(1) Tanks not carrying out their work.

(2) Failure of British to attack left of BULLECOURT.

I am forwarding names of officers and O/ranks whom I consider worthy of special recognition. During the afternoon and evening volunteers from the Battalion worked over "No Man's Land" to the enemy wire, rescuing and bringing in the wounded, despite the fact that they were sniped at and fired on with machine guns. A great number of our wounded, also 46th and 47th were brought in.

In the Field
13/4/17

Raymond L. Leane
----------Lieut-Co
Commanding 48th Battalion.

APPENDIX

Lieut Challen At about 3 a.m on the morning of April 11th "C" Coy 48th Bn prepared to advance to the "jumping off" position-on the railway line.Each man carried 200 rounds of S.A.A, two "Mill" grenades and two sandbags in addition 14 shovels, 6 picks and 2 mats for laying on the wire were taken into position.

The men took up a position about 300 yards in front of the railway line in two waves. The first being composed of Bombers and Bayonet men. The second wave consisted of Lewis Gunners ,rifle grenadiers, carrying party with tools, mats etc.

"B" Coy was on the left of the Coy, Lieut Shadwick and 2/Lieut Sheldon were in the first wave on left and right flanks respectively .Lieut Caldwell was in second wave and took up a position near the right flank. The Coy was in position by 4.15 a.m

At 4.30 a.m the barrage opened and the Tanks began to advance but it was nearly 5 a.m when the latter reached

our Position and stayed there for about 15 minutes firing continuously towards the Coy Objective. By this time the enemy artillery retaliated and "straafed" the area near the tanks very considerably causing heavy casualties in the Coy ranks. The Tanks afterwards moved towards the right flank.

About 5.30 am the word to advance was given and the lads got up quickly and advanced at a quick pace almost at a run. The enemy barrage was thick both with H.E and Shrapnel and was supported by M.G fire which caused heavycasualties.

The 48th Battalion lost no time geting over the ~~First~~ First Objective and took possession of the enemy second line trenches As our troops advanced the enemy fell back so that on reaching the objective very little individual opposition was met with. Only a few snipers remained to oppose our advance.

The Lewis Gunners took up positions to cover the consolidating party who commenced work reversing the trenches. Where posible the guns took up positions in front of the objective. The Objective gained was from the road on right flank t o the entrance of SUNKEN ROAD on left flank.

The enemy took up position in the SUNKEN ROAD on our left and in a previously prepared position in the valley about 1500 yards in the direction of HENDECOURT. It appeared to me that the enemy had steel traps prepared which he let down after jumping into the position. The Sunken roads lead to BULLECOURT, HENDECOURT, and REINCOURT.

Between 8 and 9 a.m things were quiet, but about 9 a.m the enemy opened up on our position with Trench mortars, "plum puddings" , artillery and M.G. fire. The Trench mortar caused the bmost casualties and considerable damaged the trenches . It was fired from BULLECOURT from the rear of our position.

During the early morning I went to the 46th line and found they were being driven in by bombing party owing to scarcity of bombs, but before returning to the front line a supply of bombs came up and the enemyw were driven out.

About 11.30 a.m our position became more serious , the 46th Bn had retied and the enemy attempt ed to cut off our communication Bombing parties were organised and succeeded in driving the enemy out of the trench.

The enemy artillery and trench mortars were still causing heavy casualties so the S.O.S signal was sent up. Our artillery didx open up but played havoc with our position, so that it was decided to hold the Fisrt Objective . Bombing parties held the flanks while the movement was carried out and this position was held until 13.35 p.m when the order to withdraw was given..

_____Lieut

2/Lieut Sheldon In the attack on the enemy lines on right of BULLECOURT by 46th and 48th Battalions I was in charge of No 9 Platoon "C" Coy 48th Battalion on the extreme right flank of the attacking line . Advancing across "No Man's Land" we passed through the enemy barrage of shell, machine gun and rifle fire and had very heavy casualties.

When we arrived at our objective, the German support line we found that the enemy had already evacuated and we occupied the trench without opposition. Our right flank was established at the road which runs through the enemy line at U 23 c 85 05. Lewis Guns were placed to cover our flank and one gun was sent forward in front of our line ~~xxxxxxxx~~ about 30 yards to infilade the enemy support line on our right . A bombing post was established at U 23 c 85 05 on the road to prevent enemy bombing parties entering the trench. The riflemen dug a fire step on the reverse side of the trench, and our consolidation was complete within half an hour of our occupation of the t rench.

Our Lewis ~~Gunners~~ Guns and rifles were very effectively employed in dispersing enemy working part ies, and bodies of men which could be seen behind his lines. At 9.30 a.m a count was made and a total of 9 officers and 21 8 o/ranks was reached.

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Between 8 a.m and 0 a.m the situation was quiet. After 0 a.m the enemy fired Trench Mortar Bombs into the line held by the 46th Bn and into the communication trench between the two lines. A battery of Field Guns which was situat ed in or near the village of BULLECOURT enfiladed our line with H.E and "Whiz-bangs" doing considerable damage to the trench.

Between 11 and 11.30 a.m the 46th Battalion evacuated their line without informing us of their intention to do so until they had gone, when a runner from the 47th Bn reported to Captain Leane that the 46th Bn had evacuated.

Immediately a bomb ing part y was organised and the trench evacuated by the 46t h Battalion was cleared of the enemy At 12.35 a.m finding that the positiom was untenable, we retired leaving our wounded in the trench owing to our inability to remove them. Bombs were found in the line which had been occupied by the 46th, and I am of the firm opinion that they were not justified in leaving the line, and that they could have held on.

The enemy trenches are about 5 ft wide at bottom and 8 ft at top, with a depth of 8 ft. They have a fire step and are in first class order. The support line occupied by us had four dug-out entrances all of them being in the course of construction No tunnels have been dug. Had the attack on the left of the village been successful we should have had no difficulty in holding our position, and eventually in capturing the village.

Enemy working parties were ob served const ructing wir entanglements about 1800 yards in front of the village of HENDECOURT -LES-CAGNICOURT.

E Sheldon 2/Lieut

Lieut ~~MENZIES~~ McKENZIE All ranks were in their positions by 4.30 a.m and ready to advance, but the advance of the second wave of the 48th Battalion did not commence till 5 a.m. We advanced in the rear of "C" Coy passed through the enemy front line entanglements with ease and entered the enemy second line trench which had already been occup

ied by "B" and "C" Coys and was at that time clear of the enemy.

Under the orders of Captain Leane I took charge of the left flank of "C" and "D" Coys and proceeded to make a fire step while Lieut Jones on the right flank organised a bombing party to work in the direction of the 4th Brigade . A block was established on this flank at the SUNKEN ROAD .

Shortly after this it was reported that the left flank of the 46th Bn was being driven out behind us, so Capt ain Leane sent me to find out how matters stood . The officer in charge of that flank said that the enemy had attacked his flank out ,as they (the 46th) had got some more bombs they would be able to hold against the enemy

On my returning fromthe left flank of the 46th I met Lieut Imlay with a party carrying ammunition for Lewis Guns.I guided this party back to Coy Hd Qrs. There was a lull in the action at this time for about an hour after which (at 9 a.m) the enemy opened a bombardment with light field guns causing many casualties . These guns appeared to be firing from the direction og BULLECOURT .

Shortly after 11a.m the 46th Bn were seen retiring from their position on our right. Shortly after this the enemy renewed their attack on the 48th Bn on the left who retired.

This informatiom was brought in by a man from the 47th Bn who came over when the 46th Bn retired.

Captain Leane thenordered an attack on the German front line which was entered by means of the communication trench. About 250 yards of this trench was cleared up after the evacuation by the 46th Bn,but owing to the shortage of bombs on the right the 48t hBn retired on receipt of orders from the O.C at about 12.30 p.m.

S McKenzie 2/Lieut

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE **APPENDIX**

From Commanding Officer
48th Battalion

To Headquarters
12th Aust Inf Bde.

G 2/13

Report on Operations of TANKS, April 11th 1917

(1) The Tanks on the left Sector were not in position at 4 a.m ,in fact at that time I saw several behind Railway Embankment. All the Tanks did not advance on out front,only two reached SUNKEN ROAD near "Jumping Off" Trench. These went forward to about U 28 d 2.1,U 28 d 8.1 and opened machine gun fire six pounder fire on the Boche Trenches. They did not arrive at this point until after 5 a.m and remained there for some time firing.

(2) Our advance commenced with out any assistance from the Tanks and the men were exposed to heavy Flank fire from BULLECOURT.

(3) The two Tanks mentioned only went forward about 100 yards and stopped again about U 29 c 2.6,at this point the infantry left them and they were not seen again on our Front by the attackers. They certainly did not reach the HINDENBURG LINE for the stakes were still standing and the wire strong.In fact my opinion is that they did not try to do so.

(4) The statement that they captured the HINDENBURG Line front and Support Trench is not correct. They were never near it on the left Sector. The only Tank to go near his lines was the one that went into the South East Corner of BULLECOURT but that was some hours after.

(5) At about 6.30 a.m I saw a Tank near my Head quarters on Railway Track, and told the Officer in Charge of it to go to the North East Corner of BULLECOURT and assist my Battalion to clear up their left. We were being strongly counter attacked at this time.It was a male Tank and went forward firing its six pounders as it moved .I watched this Tank and after going about 300 yards it turned,and returned .When about 20 yards from my Headquarters the crew left it and rushed to the Embankment. I enquired from the N.C.O, why he had left it,and he said they had a direct hit, and I be-

lieve one man was slightly wou nd ed by the door blowing in. He said it was going all right and could b e driven away but declined to ~~x~~ try and the crew left for the rear. The enemy put a heavy fire on to the Tank and about 7.30 a.m it caught on fire. I believe this Tank could have been salved h ad the crew possessed the necessary pluck. They were absolutely panic stricken when they reached my Headquarters.

(6) The men would have gon e forward and successfully occupied the Objective under an artillery barrage without suffering such heavy casualities whic h undoubtly resulted by the failure of the Tanks to start in time an d their not ad-vancing beyond the first "Jumping Off " Trench .

(7) Why the Tanks stoppe d and opene d fire from the "Jumping Off" Trench perh aps is best known to the O.C.Tanks. It was certainly b ad tactics because it promptly brought a barrage right on to the men waiting to advance.

(8) I am of the opinion that the tanks absolutely failed to carry out their part in the attack.I consider had they shown more dash and initiative things would have been better and perhaps we might have been still holding the line captured today

In the Field

Raymond P. Leane
----------Lieut-Col
Commanding 48 th Battalion

"C" Form

Army Form C. 2123
(In books of 100.)

MESSAGES AND SIGNALS. No. of Message.....

Prefix..... Code..... Words.....	Received	Sent, or sent out	Office Stamp
£ s. d.	From.....	At..... m.	
Charges to collect	By.....	To.....	
Service Instructions.		By.....	

Handed in at..... Office..... m. Received 4.8 pm m.

TO La Boe

*Sender's Number	Day of Month	In reply to Number	AAA
B 23	"	C 129	

a/ proximately 300
officers & men
10 - officers

FROM La Boe

PLACE & TIME 3.50 pm

* This line should be erased if not required.

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