

**AWM4**

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

Artillery

**Item number:** 13/33/18

**Title:** Headquarters, 5th Australian Field  
Artillery Brigade

May 1917



AWM4-13/33/18

**CONFIDENTIAL.**

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**Australian Imperial Force.**

**WAR DIARY**

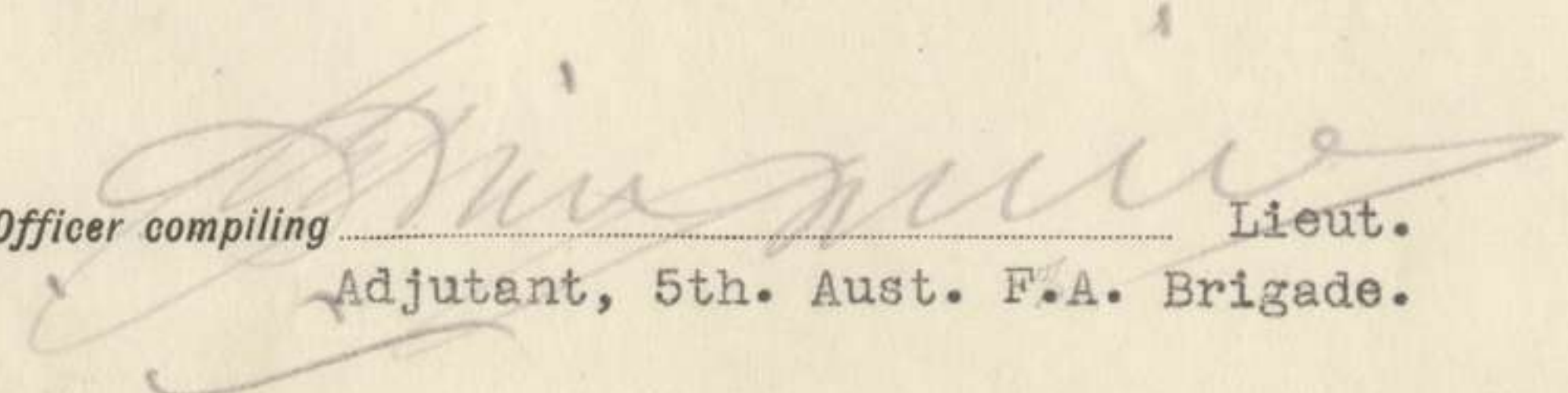
OF

FIFTH FIELD ARTILLERY BRIGADE

FOR

MAY 1917.

Signature of Officer compiling



Lieut.

Adjutant, 5th. Aust. F.A. Brigade.

Signature of Officer Commanding

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## 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.

## INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
VAULX-VRAUCOURT.	1.5.17		Nothing unusual to report.	
	2.5.17		Enemy's roads and approaches to front line were harassed during the night. Several working parties were engaged during the day. 10.45 a.m. Magazine exploded in BULLECOURT. 2nd.D.A.H.Q. established forward Headquarters at VAULX.	
	3.5.17		3.33 a.m. Enemy barrage opened on front about line of EMBANKMENT in C.5. 3.45 a.m. 2nd. Aust. Division attacked HINDENBURG LINE supported by our Artillery. Lieut.-Colonel H.W. LLOYD, DSO. reported for Liason duty with 5th. Aust. Inf. Brigade last evening. (5th. F.A. Brigade now under tactical control of 'Q' Group, Lieut.-Colonel R. RABETT C.M.G.) Very severe fighting continued throughout the day, our troops entered the HINDENBURG LINE and through strenuous hand to hand fighting (bombs and bayonets) maintained their hold of the line. (see 2nd. D.A.H.Q. War Diary for the 3rd. May 1917.)	
	4.5.17		4 a.m. Small feint bombardment carried out in co-operation with 7th. D.A. (B.E.F.) 5.45 a.m. Divisional morning report; stated HINDENBURG LINE held as follows:- O.g.1 from Road at U.29.a.90.70 to U.22.d.90.90.. O.G.2. from U.23.d.30.00 to U.22.d.90.40.. 3rd. Battalion hold from Road in U.29.a. to Left and are preparing to bomb towards BULLECOURT to join Brigade of 7th. Division. 2nd. Battalion on Right are attacking O.G.1 from Road in U.29.a. to U.29.b.80.60. 2.15 p.m. 105th. Battery took up new position at C.15.d.80.40.. Registrations proceeding. 3.3 p.m. White flares visible on our sector. 3.5 p.m. Infantry forcing forward and are already in both Lines as far East as a North and South line through U.23.d.30.00. 3.8 p.m. Heavy hostile barrage South of HINDENBURG LINE from BULLECOURT to U.30.c. 3.30 p.m. Bombing attack carried out by Infantry. 18-pounders and Hows. supported this operation. 4.30 p.m. Howitzers only continuing on barrage.	
	5.5.17		12.55 a.m. Two Batteries instructed to search back from their S.O.S. lines to a distance of 500 yards at a slow rate, on account of an S.O.S. on our neighbouring sector. 4.20 a.m. Enemy heavily shelling our forward area.	

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VAULZ-VRAUCOURT.	5.5.17		<p>5.3 a.m. Opened on S.O.S. lines for 15 minutes.                      7.37 a.m. Searching in rear of S.O.S. lines for 10 minutes.                      10.4 p.m. Opened on S.O.S. lines.                      11 p.m. Gradually slackening fire and will eventually cease.                      Supporting fire carried out at frequent intervals throughout the day.</p>	
	6.5.17		<p>3.35 a.m. Opened on S.O.S. lines at 3 rounds per gun per min. at request of 3rd. A.I. Brigade. Heavy hostile bombardment in progress.                      3.50 a.m. Liason Officer instructed us to cease fire.                      6.25 a.m. Again in action on S.O.S. lines at 2 rounds p.g.p.m.                      6.37 a.m. Rate increased to 4 rounds p.g.p.m., 50% searching.                      7.5 a.m. Owing to ammunition getting low rate reduced to 2 rounds p.g.p.m.                      7.25 a.m. 2nd. D.A.H.Q. instructed us to reduce rate to 1 round p.g.p.m. and cease at own discretion.                      7.27 a.m. Ceased fire.                      7.35 a.m. Brigade Liason Officer reported situation satisfactory.                      8.2 a.m. Report from Division stated that at 6.30 a.m. after heavy shell fire along our front in U.29.a. and b. enemy attacked 1st. A.I. Brigade at U.22.d.70.40 but was driven off. Another attack penetrated O.g.2. East of road in U.29.a. on 3rd. A.I. Brigade Sector. Counter attack by 3rd. A.I. Brigade drove enemy out again. Our Artillery co-operated with an effective barrage.                      1.55 p.m. 5.9 from direction of QUEANT reported enfilading RAILWAY EMBANKMENT in C.5.a.</p>	
	7.5.17		<p>3.30 a.m. "CHINESE" bombardment carried out on front line South West of QUEANT.                      3.45 a.m. Attack by 7th. Div.(B.E.F.) on BULLECOURT commenced. Brigadeco-operated vide 2nd. D.A.H.Q. Order No. 13 (2nd. D.A.H.Q. War Diary May 1917 type pages 54 and 55).                      5.28 a.m. 2nd. objective taken and in touch with 2nd. Aust. Division on right.                      5.40 a.m. Large body of enemy seen moving towards BULLECOURT down road from HENDEGOURT.                      6.20 a.m. Slackened fire.                      10.45 a.m. Batteries in NOREUIL VALLEY heavily shelled.                      10.55 a.m. Batteries instructed to cease fire during heavy shelling.                      7.30 p.m. Hostile shelling of NOREUIL VALLEY which had been heavy throughout the day has now ceased.</p>	

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VAULX-VRAUCOURT.	7.5.17		9.15 p.m. Batteries instructed to carry out harassing fire during the night.	
	8.5.17		<p>4 a.m. Batteries instructed to maintain repeated bursts on all approaches till daylight especially near communication trenches.</p> <p>3 p.m. 105th. Battery to fire on U.23.a.00.40 to U.23.d.central at rate of 100 rounds per hour for 3 hours.</p> <p>6 p.m. Heavy enemy barrage on our front line in U.28.a. and b. and U.29.a. Batteries instructed to get into action at slow rates of fire.</p> <p>6.12 p.m. Enemy bombardment slackening. Batteries cease fire.</p> <p>9.23 p.m. On account of enemy bombardment Batteries opened on S.O.S. at one round p.g.p.m. increasing to 2 rounds at 9.26 p.m.</p> <p>10.40 p.m. Slackened rate to <math>\frac{1}{2}</math> round p.g.p.m.</p> <p>10.30 p.m. Ceased fire.</p> <p>10.40 p.m. L.O. 1st. A.I. Brigade reported hostile attack had taken place on left portion of our front but had been beaten off. Harassing fire carried out throughout the night.</p>	
	9.5.17		<p>8.41 a.m. NOREUIL VALLEY bombarded by 5.9's.</p> <p>noon. Assistance given 7th. Div. (B.E.F.) for 55 minutes.</p> <p>3.50 p.m. Again assisted 7th. Div. at 3 round p.g.p.m. gradually slackening to 1 round p.g.p.m. and then ceasing.</p> <p>8.50 p.m. Opened on S.O.S. lines at slow rate.</p> <p>9.7 p.m. Ceased fire. All quiet.</p>	
	10.5.17		<p>Trench Mortar at D.l.c.30.40 engaged by our Heavy Artillery. Several Zone calls were intercepted and targets engaged. Registrations also carried out. Hostile planes fairly active.</p>	
	11.5.17		<p>2.50 p.m. Large explosion observed in REINCOURT.</p> <p>6.15pm. Heavy enemy bombardment on front between BULLECOURT and REINCOURT. (OG.1. and O.G.2) Batteries instructed to search front in rear of S.O.S. lines.</p> <p>The Command of 'Q' Group passed to Lieut.-Colonel H.W. LLOYD DSO. at 2 p.m. 10th.inst.</p>	

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VAULX-VRAUCOURT.	11.5.17		<p>9.13 a.m. S.O.S. Signal observed and Batteries opened fire.                      9.52 a.m. Hostile bombardment considerably slackened and Batteries instructed to cease.</p>	
	12.5.17		<p>3.40 a.m. 7th. Division again attacked BULLECOURT.                      12.50 p.m. Heavy hostile shelling on O.G.1 and O.G.2 in U.28. and U.29. also on BULLECOURT, C.4 and C.5.                      2.44 p.m. Situation quiet except for a few 5.9's in C.28.d.</p>	
	13.5.17		<p>4.55 a.m. Opened fire on S.O.S. lines at 2 rounds p.g.p.m. at request of Infantry, but will soon slacken.                      1.55 p.m. Enemy shelling Valley in U.29.a and c and C.4.                      2.20 p.m. Above shelling ceased.                      6.35 p.m. Shells observed bursting on west edge of BULLECOURT with no appreciable detonation, but thick white smoke and crashes came from them. On enquiry 7th. D.A. stated they had been using Smoke Shell there.                      7.45 p.m. Heavy bombardment on our front commenced.                      7.51 p.m. Barrage increasing in intensity and spreading.                      7.55 p.m. S.O.S. Signal received; Batteries opened fire.                      8.10 p.m. Enemy barrage slackening but still shelling Railway Embankment.                      8.55 p.m. Ceased fire, but maintained intermittent bursts on back approaches not S. of and E. and W. line through U.18.c.O.O. until 11.30 p.m., after that time normal night firing will be continued.</p>	
	14.5.17		<p>2.55 a.m. Heavy hostile bombardment commenced on our front.                      3.3.a.m. Shelling distributed over large area but chiefly in BULLECOURT Sector. Many German lights visible.                      3.19 a.m. 7th. D.A. reported receiving S.O.S. Signals. Heavy hostile shelling on their front and now slackening on ours.                      3.25 a.m. Quiet on our front, Bombardment still proceeding on our left (7th. D.A.) front.                      8.18 a.m. Double Red and Single Red flares going up all along our front.                      8.29 a.m. Infantry asked 'Q' Group to place a barrage in front of our trenches for 10 minutes at 2 rounds p.g.p.m.                      1.7 p.m. Trenches in U.29.a and b. being shelled from direction of INCHY by 15 cm and 10.5 cm. Howitzers &amp; C.</p>	

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VAULX-VRAUCOURT.	14.	5.17	<p>Enemy continued shelling throughout the afternoon.                      9.20 p.m. Carried out searching bombardment of Valley East of REINCOURT from RED LINE U.30.a,b,c and d to Sunken Road running E. and W. in U.18.d. 100 rounds fired by Brigade at 3 rounds p.g.p.m. 'Q' Group to take North half.                      10 p.m. C.15 shelled by 4.2 gas shell and 5.9's.                      10.45 to 11.15 p.m. Carried out gas shell bombardment firing 100 rounds on Roads in U.17.d.</p>	
	15.	5.17	<p>2.50 a.m. Enemy heavily shelling front and support lines and NOREUIL VALLEY. Batteries opened at slow rate on S.O.S. lines                      3.55 a.m. S.O.S. received, fire continuing on S.O.S. lines.                      4.20 a.m. Slackened to 1 round p.g.p.m. and searching back 800 yards.                      4.53 a.m. Batteries instructed to slow down and stop.                      7.45 p.m. Ammunition allotment for night firing increased; 18-pounders 800 rounds                      4.5 How. 200 rounds.</p>	
	16.	5.17	<p>6.30 p.m. Heavy hostile bombardment commenced on neighbouring front.                      6.45 p.m. Liason Officer, 14th. A.I. Brigade stated that O.G.2 and Railway Line were being bombarded.                      6.50 p.m. Opened at slow rate on S.O.S. lines.                      7.5 p.m. Ceased firing, all quiet.</p>	
	17.	5.17	<p>Quiet during day and night.</p>	
	18.	5.17	<p>Quiet during morning. Enemy artillery active on NOREUIL and Valley during afternoon.</p>	
	19.	5.17	<p>Quiet during day.                      9 p.m. Heavy bombardment commenced well North of our front, 58th. D.A. stated it was North of FONTAINE.</p>	
	20.	5.17	<p>10.35 a.m. 3 smoke signals were dropped over the enemy's lines by our planes.                      Enemy working parties observed putting up new barbed wire on wooden stakes on from D.2.d.90.50 to D.9.a.00.90. to D.9.a.40.10. NOREUIL Valley shelled at intervals during the day.</p>	

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WAR DIARY

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VAULX-VRAUCOURT.	21.	5.17	<p>Quiet during day.                      9.21 p.m. Enemy heavily bombarding HINDENBURG LINE.                      9.23 p.m. Received S.O.S. Signal and opened fire.                      9.26 p.m. Fourth F.A. Brigade instructed by 'Q' Group to superimpose 5th. Brigade S.O.S. Lines and search back 300 yards at 2 rounds p.g.p.m.                      9.45 p.m. Hostile fire almost ceased; Batteries slackened to 1 round p.g.p.m.                      9.55 p.m. Batteries instructed to maintain fire on S.O.S. lines for 5 minutes more at 2 rounds p.g.p.m. when fire ceased.</p>	
	22.	5.17	<p>Quiet all day.                      8.54 p.m. 14th. A.I. Brigade asked for <del>fire</del> S.O.S. lines on left to run up road in U.23.d. to STARFISH CROSS ROADS then down road to U.23.c.70.60. Necessary alterations made.</p>	
	23.	5.17	<p>Quiet throughout the day.</p>	
	24.	5.17	<p>2 a.m. Operation carried out by 4th. and 14th. A.F.A. Brigades (see 1st. Anzac Arty. Order No. 16, type page 91 of 2nd. D.A.H.Q. War Diary for May 1917.).</p>	
	25.	5.17	<p>During the night roads, tracks and trenches were harassed by our Artillery.                      8 p.m. Enemy planes active.                      Several enemy balloons observed during early morning.</p>	
	26.	5.17	<p>Harassing fire maintained during hours of darkness. Quiet during day.                      Enemy planes very active between 7.30 p.m. and 9 p.m. also from 7.30 a.m. to 11 a.m.</p>	
	27.	5.17	<p>Night firing maintained on road, tracks and trenches in Brigade Sector. Quiet.</p>	
	28.	5.17	<p>Harassing fire carried out at night. Quiet during day. Several active trench mortars (enemy) were engaged and silenced. One Section per Battery relieved by 92nd. Brigade R.F.A. vide 1st. Anzac Instruction No.19, 2nd. D.A.H.Q. War Diary for May 1917 type pages 114,115 &amp; 116.</p>	
	29.	5.17	<p>Remaining two sections of Batteries relieved. Brigade proceeded to Wagon Lines.</p>	
to	31.	5.17	<p>Brigade marched to AVELUY near ALBERT for rest and training (vide 1st. Anzac Arty. Instructions No.19, 2nd. D.A.H.Q. War Diary for May 1917 type pages 114,115 and 116.).</p>	

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