AWM4

Australian Imperial Force unit war diaries, 1914-18 War

Infantry

Item number: 23/38/21

Title: 21st Infantry Battalion

May 1917

AWM4-23/38/21

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL
AWM4 23/38/21

Army Form C. 2118. 79

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Sheet 1

WAR DIARY
or
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.
(Erase heading not required.)

Lt Col J.G.S. Jones D.S.O.
Commanding 21st Batn A.I.F.

Place	Date 1917	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	May 1st		Ref Maps Ecoust — St Mein Edition 3 1/10.000 Relieved 26th Bn in front line C4 b5.8 to U28C4.3 opposite REINCOURT with 2 Companies whilst 2 Companies garrisoned Sunken Road in C4 c+d	J.J.
		AM 4.40	Relief complete. Heavy enemy barrage from Enemy artillery on our front Casualties Killed OR 1 Wounded OR 5	
			Reinforcements reported for duty at Detail Camp. O. 7 OR 42 The names of the Officers are 2/Lts B Bissemers, J A Macdonald, A Walmsley, E.A. Edmanson, E R Brandon, E Hansen & C B. Atkinson	
	2nd		Heavy shelling during day Casualties Killed OR 1 Wounded OR 8 Final preparations made for attack on Hindenberg Line Lt Watt + 4 runners report to 186 Bde then 2/7th Duke of Wellingtons on left for liaison duty. Sgt Wms Stanley + 4 runners report to 23rd Bn on right for similar duty. Lt Jones Adjutant of 2/7th Duke of Wellingtons reports to C.O. for liaison duty	J.J. J.J.
	3rd	AM 2.30	16 Markers placed in NO MANS LAND to enable waves to form up	J.J.

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Lt Col J & D Jolles D.S.O
Commanding 21st Bn A.I.F

Place	Date 1917	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	May 3rd	AM 3.15	Battalion move from front line on 4 markers in 4 waves numbered 5 6 7 8 as part of the 6th Bde operation the 22nd Battn supplying waves 1 to 4	
FRONT LINE		AM 3.30	Enemy placed artillery 77 & 4.2 & minenwerfer barrage on NO MANS LAND & front line	
		AM 3.45	Our artillery barrage opened & attack on HINDENBERG LINE launched	
			Heavy shelling by enemy & numerous various colored flares fired by him	
		AM 4.25	OG1 trench taken with little operation other than shelling	
		AM 4.45	25th Battn garrison our original front line	
		AM 5.5	English attack on BULLECOURT (on immediate left) appears to have failed left flank of original front line protected by 3 Vickers guns	
		AM 5.30	Report received that 6th wave is in OG2 trench. Many officers casualties Successfully bombed enemy down trenches in spite of fierce opposition	
		AM 5.35	Enemy machine guns still active from BULLECOURT playing on original front line	
		AM 5.36	Orders issued to reorganize & push on to 2nd objective	
		AM 5.47	Battalion of 185th Bde seen withdrawing from BULLECOURT and enquiries showed that their attack had failed	

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Army Form C. 2118.

Lt Col H W D Forbes D.S.O
Commanding 21st Batt AIF

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Place	Date 1917	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	May 3rd		A wounded Signalling NCO reported that Brigade attack on right of 6th Brigade appears	
	a.m. 7.30		to have failed owing to heavy casualties amongst Officers NCOs & men	
			Shelling by enemy at this stage very light but many casualties caused by	
			Snipers & Machine gun fire from direction of BULLECOURT & REINCOURT	
	a.m. 7.28		Lt Hunt reported that he had reached 2nd objective & was pushing on	
			Severe fighting in progress against enemy Machine Guns in Strong parts	
			at 22/3 95.00. Casualties very severe on both sides	
	a.m. 7.35		English troops on left still withdrawing & 3 Tanks in distance are returning	
			26th Batt attack BULLECOURT from 28C 7.3 but forced to withdraw after	
			losing a platoon from Machine gun fire.	
	A.M. 8.45		Severe barrage by enemy artillery along original front line	
			Casualties to date Officers Killed 3 Wounded 4	
			O R (estimated) 200	
			Telephonic communication impossible owing to breakages by enemy fire but	
			communication maintained by runners	
	NOON 12		Party at 2nd objective forced to withdraw to O.G.2. As far as possible	

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Lt Col J Inles DSO
Commanding 21st Batn

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Place	Date 1917	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	May 3rd		under very severe Machine Gun fire men from Shell holes and all wounded are collected and brought back. About 100 men under Capt Bland & Lt Duncan are holding O 5 2 from U 22 d 85.45 to U 22 C 30.30 with 2 Vickers Guns in U 23 C 04 A composite party from all Battalions hold O 5 1 from 22 d 90 to 29 A 20 95 24th Batn hold O 5 2 from 23 C 35.30 to SUNKEN ROAD on right Much Enemy movement in 23 D & 29 D. bombing proceeding	
		5 pm	Enemy counter attacking on right and left with bombs but driven off	
		PM 5.30	Left Liaison reported that 7th English Division was attacking BULLECOURT	
		PM 7.30	OR 30 with 1 Lewis Machine Gun sent up to reinforce Unit	
		PM 10.	Fresh attack on our left against BULLECOURT made by 7th English Division No trench taken which was afterwards lost. Enemy shelling quiet	J.J.
	4th	5 AM	Relieved by 1st Brigade & Battalion moved to Reginal front line Relief Complete. Prisoners taken 2 OR	J.J.

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A.A.G.

A/A Cd HWD Forts D50
Commanding 21st Batt AIF

Place	Date 1917	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	May 4th		Very Heavy Enemy Shelling on Railway Line from C5A to U27d also BANK ROAD running through C5A U29 A+D	
			Casualties 25 OR in our Sector	
		pm 11	5 Officers + 120 O.R. dig Strong posts in advance of O.S.Z and on return Battalion is relieved by a Battalion of 3rd Brigade and Unit moved to the	
			NORCUIL — LONGATTE ROAD	
	5th		Situation Normal Receive Reinforcement 6 OR	
	6th		Situation Normal	
	7th		Situation Normal	
	8th		Unit moved to LE SARS camp. Received 36 OR reinforcement	

Casualties during operation

	O	OR
Killed	6	25
Wounded	10	250
Missing		49

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Lt Col J H D Forbes DSO
Commanding
2nd Batn N.Z.E.

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Place	Date 1917	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
MAMETZ	May 9th	9am	The Battalion moves to MAMETZ Bde Camps A Camp via ALBERT ROAD to COURCELETTE - MARTINPUICH Decauville Road to CONTALMAISON - FRICOURT - MAMETZ. Arrived 2pm.	J.J
	10th		Organised games & recreation	J.J
	11th		Recreation games. Capt A W Hutchin reports from Bde for Temp duty. 0 Rs 11. Capt J J McMahon. RMO. proceeds on PARIS LEAVE. Reinforcements	J.J
	12th		Training & games. Cricket match. Capt Bland & 19 other ranks proceed on Seaside leave	J.J
	13th		Bde Church Parade. Fine weather. Lieut A E Richards & 38 other ranks arrive from Base. Sgt A V Burns appointed to Commissioned rank.	J.J
	14th		Training Sgt J S Rigby from 6th L T M Bty appointed 2/Lieut Eight other ranks proceed on English furlough	J.J

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Lt-Col F W D Parkes DSO Commanding 21st Bn AIF

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Place	Date 1917 MAY	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
MAMETZ	15th		Army ~~Corps~~ Commander visit the Bde. Fine Weather. F G C M.s Commenced.	F.F
	16th		Court Martials in progress. Wet weather. Lectures in Huts. 2/Lt H W Garton evacuated sick.	F.F.
MILLENCOURT	17th	9am	The Battalion moves to MILLENCOURT. Route via MEAULTE - VILLE BUIRE - LAVIEVILLE. Arrives 2pm. CSM Mason appt 2/Lieut 5 officers report for duty from 24th Bn 2/Lt W A Taylor 2/Lt J M McLachlan 2/Lt P O Oliver 2/Lt Wkly Scales 2/Lt H H Corney.	F.F.
	18th		Training. Further progress with F G C M's. Capt A G Brown Adjt proceeds on English furlough. Lieut J L Watt taken over Duties as Adjt Three other ranks on English leave. 2/Lt F Rigby + 2/Lt B Bolderyhaw report for duty Reinforcements 10 other ranks.	F.F.
	19th		Training	F.F.

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Lt Col J W D Inkster D S O
Commdg 21st Batn A I F

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Place	Date 1917	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Millencourt	MAY 20th		6 hours Parade. Fine weather.	F.F.
	21st		Musketry & Training. Court Martials concluded	F.F.
	22nd		Training. Musketry. Capt F F McMahon RAMC returns from leave.	F.F.
	23rd		Courts Martials continued. Lecture. Musketry Training & games. 2 Lt W A L Agnew & 2 Lt W Macconochie report for duty from Wounded List	F.F.
	24th		Training & Musketry. 2 Lt B Beesmen evacuated sick.	F.F.
	25th	8 am	Bathing Parade	
	26th		Training Major H A Crowther D S O reports back to Unit for duty from Seconded list	H.O.C.

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A Cdt I & D Forbes DSO
Commanding 21st Bath AIF

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Place	Date 1917	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Millencourt	May 27th		Church Parade. Battalion Sports held in the afternoon	H.A.C
	28th		Tactical scheme to exemplify lateral bombing, attack on strong point by 2nd cooperation with 2 TMs carried out at MILLENCOURT by Coys. 6th Inf Bde staff in attendance	H.A.C
			Reinforcements received OR 19	
	29th		Training. Lt Collins reported for duty from seconded dist Reinforcements received OR 19	H.A.C
			C.O. leaves Unit to proceed to England on duty	
	30th		Training. 6th Inf. Bde Sports Meeting held at HENENCOURT. The Corps Commander has awarded Military Medals to the following NCOs & Men: 311 Sgt J Winstanley J, 942 Lc Olive WE 3878 Pte McIntosh J, 1075 Pte Skinner AF 5091 Pte Smith W, 2417 Lc Taylor TB, 743 Pte Sedgman S, 1006 Sgt Reilly AE 875 Lc Hogg S, 4930 Lc Bott SEH 914 Lc Kean EH	
	31st		Training.	

	O	OR
Present effective Strength	40	658
attached	6	14
Detached	18	95

Henry A. Crowther Major
Commanding 21st Battalion

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