

A/7/286.

No. 2 Group Artillery,
15th October 1917.

To

C. R. A.,
3rd Australian Division.

In forwarding the attached Report of the Medical Officer of this Group, I wish to add that, in my opinion, if the Group remains in the line for any considerable length of time, it will, from pure exhaustion, materially lose its fighting efficiency.

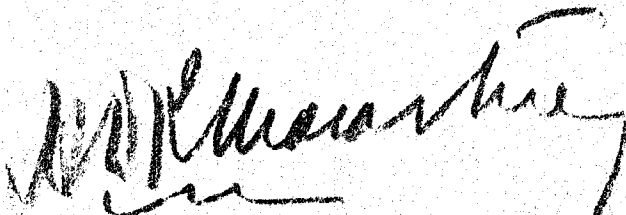
The troops, on the whole, are in a very low condition of health; a great many have influenza and severe colds, and it is only the hardiest of them who are still, by sheer determination, sticking to their work.

In the 25th Battery there are now only 2 Sergeants who are fit for duty, no Corporals at all, and 3 Bombardiers. The telephonists number 5 and the qualified Gun-layers 3, the remainder having been evacuated sick or wounded, or killed in action. The Officer Commanding this Battery states that the Battery, as a whole, is in a very bad state of health.

When the 26th Battery arrived in this area, there were approximately 25 telephonists on the strength. Of this number only 2 now remain, the work having to be carried on with men almost totally untrained and inexperienced. The Battery only has 5 qualified layers, their places having to be taken, during long periods of firing, by Gunners who have never had an opportunity of properly trained. On one occasion, in order to keep the Guns in action and give relief to Layers, two Officers had to take their place at the Guns.

The figures given with regard to the 25th and 26th Batteries give some indication of the shortages in Specialists throughout the Brigade and of the low condition of the personnel physically.

Batteries of the 8th F.A. Brigade are alike deficient in N.C.Os. and specialists, and the health generally is very poor indeed.



Lieut-Colonel,
Commanding No. 2 Group Artillery.