

AWM4
Australian Imperial Force unit war diaries,
1914-18 War

Provost

Item number: 3/3/7

Title: Assistant Provost Marshal, 2nd
Australian Division

January 1918



AWM4-3/3/7

CONFIDENTIAL.

ORIGINAL.
DUPLICATE.
TRIPLICATE.

Australian Imperial Force.

WAR DIARY

APM

2nd Aust Div.

OF

Australian Provost Corps

FOR

January

1918

Douglas Brown

Douglas Brown

Signature of Officer compiling

MAJOR.
ASST. PROVOST-MARSHAL 2ND AUST. DIVISION.

Signature of Officer Commanding

MAJOR.
ASST. PROVOST-MARSHAL 2ND AUST. DIVISION.

WAR DIARY OF A.P.M. FOR MONTH OF JANUARY 1918.
-----Location of A.P.Ms. Office RAVELSBERG CAMP.

- Jan. 1. During the absence of A.P.M. Bailleul, Lieut. Penna, T.C.O. this Division, was sent to Bailleul as A/A.P.M.
- Three men of 23rd. Bn. absentees, were found in a dug out by 1st. Div. M.M.P. and handed over to us. Battalion wired to for escort.
- " 2. Owing to a complaint from Army re. excessive speed of motor vehicles, two "Traps" were arranged for the 3rd. January. Lorries travelling too quickly, cut up the road, especially in the event of a thaw. On main Armentières Road, owing to the change over of the 3rd. and 23rd. Divisions, traffic was very heavy, but no block occurred and road discipline was very good.
- " 3. Traps were set for motor lorries exceeding the speed limit. One on Ravelsberg and two on Armentières - Bailleul Road. 60 lorries were stopped and 10 were found to have exceeded the speed limit. The names of defaulting drivers, and the numbers of the lorries were taken and Charge Sheets forwarded to the Units concerned.
- " 4. Memo. from P.M. 4th. Army, stating that No. 34843 Pte. Morris R.A.M.C. had permission to get married at Nieppe and granting him 8 days' leave.
- " 5. Charles Uleyn, Farmer Neuve Eglise, claims 100 francs as value of an elm tree, alleged to have been removed by Australian soldiers
- " 6. Traffic Control order for the censor of columns of troops and Transport daily. Time head and rear of the column passes the Post number of vehicles, motors or horses in a transport column.
- Ptes. Rice and McLennan, Traffic Control, were promoted to L/Cpls.
- " 7. Promotions:- L/Sgt. Tyrrell to be Sgt.; Cpl. Leacey to be L/Sgt. and L/Cpl. Larson to be Cpl.
- " 8. A Raid was carried out in Bailleul for the purpose of catching deserters and men in the town without authority. No deserters were found, but the names of about 70 men were taken for being in the town without authority.
- " 9. A G.R.O. was issued that Traffic Control are to be provided with short gum boots and Macintosh capes; a very necessary proviso for men who have to stand out in all weathers. Report from G.H.Q. re. bad conduct of Australian troops at Nieppe, on investigation, proved to be without foundation.
- " 10. René Carpentier of Pont Nieppe, writes:- About 8th. August 1917, all civilians, except farmers, were ordered to leave the village. He stored his furniture in a house in Nieppe, and was promised by the French authorities that the house would be closely guarded, but no sentries were posted, and Carpentier found, on his return, that the house had been broken into by troops, and furniture taken and destroyed. On 18th. Dec., he, in company of a British Officer found three Australian soldiers looting. His letter was written to a member of the French Chamber of Deputies, who forwarded it to Army Headquarters.
11. Ptes. Carroll, Humphrey and Ogden escaped from 23rd. Battalion Guard Room on 10th. Jan. They had been absentees from their Bn. for some months and were arrested by 1st. Division M.M.P., on 1/1/18, in a dugout near Dranoutre. They escaped whilst awaiting trial by F.G.C.M.
12. Thaw Precautions came into force to-day. All Traffic Control Personnel and Police were warned.

A mysterious case of rifle firing is being investigated at Le

- Jan. 12. Bizet. It appears that men of the 164th. Siege Battery, R.G.A. had been fired at when in position at their Battery Also that Canadian soldiers, moving along the road, had been fired at, and one man wounded. The Canadian soldiers searched the house where the the shots appeared to come from, but without result.
- " 13. Major Brown A.P.M. returned to duty after a month's Sick Leave.
- " 14. All Thaw Precaution Restrictions removed until further notice.
- " 15. An N.C.O. of the 32nd. Bn. complained that he had been cheated by a shopkeeper in Bailleul. It appears that he purchased a book of music at a cost of 3 francs, paying for it with a 20 franc note. He only received 2 francs change, and on complaining was informed that the 20 franc note belonged to a woman who was in the shop at the time. It afterwards transpired that the woman in question lived at the shop.
- " 16. Owing to the change in the weather, Thaw Precautions for the control of traffic came into operation as from midnight 15/1/18.
- " 17. 3 men were arrested by the 21st. Bn., as the Officers of that unit were unable to elicit their names from them they were sent into this Office, and on being questioned it was ascertained that they belonged to the 48th. Bn. 4th. Div. and had been A.W.L. for 3 or 4 days. They were returned to their unit under escort.
- " 18. Claim received from Leon Louf for 5,600 francs for damage to his house; from Eyren Baert for demolition of a house, and from Henri Foretz for the theft of a tree. As all these places are in Neuve Eglise, which is not in this Divisional Area, the claims were forwarded to A.P.M. 3rd. Australian Division.
- " 19. A man of the 20th. Bn. wearing D.A.C. colours, an absentee from his unit, and who had been seen on several occasions hanging about different camps, was arrested by M.M.P. Nieppe, and returned to his Battalion.
- " 20. Thaw precautions were lifted at midnight.
- " 21. Another parade of Canadian soldiers was held in the presence of Mme. Lefebvre, for the purpose of identifying offenders who destroyed furniture in her Estaminet, but the woman again failed to identify anyone connected with the disturbance.
- " 22. A woman laid a complaint against a signaller for stealing 40 francs. The man voluntarily accompanied her to the Office and turned out all his possessions but he had nothing she could identify. She did not see him take the money, and there were other soldiers in the place at the time.
- " 23. Orders received to remove from the Area; the move to take place between 27/31st. January.
- " 24. Lieut. G.B. Freer, who had been A/A.P.M. during the A.P.Ms. absence, left to day to take up duties of A/A.P.M. 3rd. Aust Div. during the absence of Captain Colpitts.
- " 25. In connection with the impending move 4 M.M.P are to be attached to each Brigade for ordinary Police Duty while the Division is in the Reserve Area. Traffic Control will remain until the 30th. and will then entrain for the new Area. Rations have been arranged for.
- " 26. In view of the move to the Reserve Area, the following suggestions were submitted to H.Q.:- Brigades to supply piquets on roads leading from their areas; and that saluting parades be held.
- " 27. The Belgian Gendarmes complained of Australian troops throwing bombs on a house and causing a slight fire. From samples brought into the office it appears that ordinary "Smoke Bombs" were thrown.

- Jan. 28. A detachment of M.M.P. travelled to Nielles lez Blequin with H.Q. Transport. Sgt. Leacey and most of the Office furniture also went.
- " 29. The Office was established at Nielles. A.P.M.s billet No. 95.
- " 30. Nothing of moment to record.
- " 31. A man stating he belonged to the 6th. Bn. 1st. Lincolns was brought in by one of the M.M.P. After interrogation he said his correct unit was 8th. Lincolnshire Regt. 37th. Div. •