

AWM4

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

Provost

Item number: 3/4/21

**Title: Assistant Provost Marshal, 3rd
Australian Division**

March 1919



AWM4-3/4/21

CONFIDENTIAL.

ORIGINAL.
~~DUPLICATE.~~
~~TRIPLICATE.~~

Australian Imperial Force.

WAR DIARY

OF

Aust Provost Corps (attached 3rd Aus Divn)

FOR

March 1919.

Signature of Officer compiling

Walter Cooper Mappe

Signature of Officer Commanding

Walter Cooper Mappe

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.

or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
BLANGY	1-3-19	-	<p>The 2 MMP mentioned in my War Diary of 22.2.19 returned to these Headqrs (absences 9th Inf Bde 16 10th Inf Bde 21 11th Inf Bde 14 other units 27 Total 78)</p> <p>Weekly returns sent to Corps</p> <p>Results of round up of Aust Absentees + deserters in Amiens was 2</p> <p>In addition 1 English soldier was arrested on suspicion of being connected in a robbery of 9000 francs at Amiens. He was handed over to the Sgt Jay of Police but on enquiries being made it was found that he was not the soldier wanted and he was released</p> <p>a wheat stack was burnt to the ground at VILLEROY</p> <p>It was alleged to have been set alight by 2 Aust Soldiers.</p>	inc
	2-3-19		<p>DARM accompanied by Sgt Maj Larson MMP proceeded to Villeroiy to investigate cause of wheat stack being burnt the night before.</p> <p>The result was that Cpt G. R. Brown MMP was placed under arrest</p>	inc
	3-3-19		<p>Sgt G. Kenny MMP who was away at DOURLERS as a witness on FGCM returned to these Headqrs</p> <p>Report sent to Daag 3rd Aust Div ref burning of wheat stack at Villeroiy (copy attached)</p> <p>The picquet for the town of Blangy supplied by 39th Battalion was relieved by another picquet supplied by the 40th Battalion</p>	inc
	4-3-19		<p>The Traffic Officer visited all units on East side of main BLANGY-Abbeville Road. All units reported everything quiet and no complaints</p>	inc

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2112.

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Blangy	5/2/19		Lieut Harrison J. L. reported these Headqrs for duty as Traffic Officer	inc
	8/3/19		Weekly returns sent to Corps (absentees 9 th Bde 12. 10 th Bde 15 11 th Bde 15 other units 11 Total 53)	inc
	9/3/19		Lieut Thompson (Traffic Officer) on duty at Gamaches. Two MMP proceeded to Abbeville for round up of absentees and deserters. As a result 2 Aust soldiers were arrested both being AWL (copy of my report attached)	inc
	10/3/19		APM and 2 MMP proceeded to Boulogne for a round up of absentees and deserters but without any result.	inc
	11/3/19		Lieut Thompson proceeded to Gamaches on duty whilst 9 th Inf Bde Embarkation Quota are billeted there. 3 Traffic Control men proceeded to Gamaches for return to Australia.	inc
	12/3/19		The ^{APM and} 4 MMP above mentioned returned to these Headqrs	inc
	14/3/19		A summary of evidence in the case of No 6036 Sgt Brown 5 th Aust Provost Corps was taken in this office by Lieut Harrison J. L.	inc

WAR DIARY

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
BLANGY	15/3/19		Lieut Harrison J. B. who reported here for duty as Traffic Officer on 5/3/19 returned to Corps Headqrs. Weekly returns were sent to Corps (absentees 9 th Bde 4 10 th Bde 8 11 th Bde 1 other units 2 Illegal absentees 10 Total 20)	
	16/3/19		Sgt Fay Larson C. MMP proceeded to 2 nd Aust Division Headqrs as witness in F.G.C.M of Pte Sharkey 2 nd Aust Pioneer Battalion	Inc.
	17/3/19		Arrangements were made for 3 MMP to do duty at Gamaches Lieut Thompson R.H. 43 rd Ptn who was Acting Traffic Officer returned to his unit this morning	Inc.
	19/3/19		a Medical Board for all Traffic Control personnel was held place today	Inc.
	21/3/19		Sgt Fay Larson L. MMP returned from 2 nd Aust Division where he had been ^{acting} as a witness in case of Pte Sharkey, 2 nd Aust Ptn Battalion	Inc.
	22/3/19		Weekly returns sent to Corps (absentees 9 th Bde 4 10 th Bde 3 11 th Bde 3 other units 1 Total 11)	Inc.
	23/3/19		4 MMP were sent to Gamaches on duty. MMP detachment from 9 th 10 th Inf Bdes returned to their Headqrs for duty.	Inc.

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WAR DIARY

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Blangy	24/3/19		<p>L/Cpl Imbach & Pte Sharples, 3rd Aust Divn Traffic Control, proceeded to Charleroi in charge of machinery in Capt St Hartleys care mentioned in my war diary of 22/2/19</p> <p>2 Mules in an officers mess cart were found straying on the road near Disumont by the M P on 23/3/19 and were brought to these Hdqrs to await disposal.</p> <p>A Government Triumph motor cycle was found ^{by M P} in possession of Sgt J C Dearman (attached CRE 3rd Aust Division) who was placed under arrest on a charge of -</p> <p>conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline - viz</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Being in unlawful possession of a Government Motor Cycle. 2) Failing to report having in his possession a Government Motor Cycle <p>also on alternative charge of contravening 4th Army Standing Order No 282.</p> <p>Sgt Bird, 9th Field Coy Engs, who is alleged to have handed this machine over to Sgt Dearman, and who left here on No 18 quota for Havre is being brought back to these Hdqrs to answer similar charges in connection with this motor cycle.</p>	
	25/3/19		<p>The two mules and officers mess cart ^{mentioned} mentioned in War Diary of 24/3/19 were claimed by, and handed over to 79th Battery RFA, 17th Division</p>	<p>inc.</p> <p>inc.</p>

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Blangy	26/3/19		<p>The motor cycle referred to in my war diary of 24/3/19 was identified by the 17th Div Signals RE as the one they lost on 31/12/18 and it was handed back to them.</p> <p>P. 6036 bpt Lt JH Brown Aust Provost Corps was tried by Court Martial DAPM Sgt Maj Larson & Cpt Mitchell proceeded to Boullancourt as witnesses in Cpl Brown's case.</p>	inc.
	20/3/19		<p>The result of Cpl Brown's Court Martial was promulgated to Brown by DAPM this morning.</p> <p>The charge preferred against Cpl Brown was — conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline at RAMBURES on 2nd March 1919 making false statements in a report to DAPM.</p> <p>He pleaded guilty, was found guilty and was sentenced to 28 days FPA No 2.</p> <p>The sentence was confirmed by Maj General M. J. Gillebrand Commanding 3rd Aust Div and was commuted to 28 days forfeiture of pay.</p> <p>Re distribution of MMP and MP Horses. 2 MP horses were evacuated to 3rd 4m VS.</p>	inc.

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Blangy	29/3/19		<p>12 MMP (2) horses were evacuated this morning for demobilization. Lt Col Smallash and Pte Sharples who were away on duty in charge of machinery, ^{in Capt Hartley's case} that was sent to SMTO Aust Corps returned to these Headqrs today.</p> <p>6 pte Smallacombe MMP proceeded by motor lorry to Vignacourt to collect a piano belonging to 2nd Lt Tunnel Coy. from Capt Hartley's.</p> <p>Weekly returns sent to corps. (absentees 9th Inf Bde 3 10th Inf Bde 5 11th Inf Bde 2 Total 10)</p> <p>a Traffic Control post was established at Translay at ration dump</p>	<p>Inc</p>
	31/3/19		<p>Gunner Lowe, 47th Battery AFA, who came to this unit under escort on 20/12/18 for trial by F.G.C.M. returned to his unit under escort to be summarily dealt with by his OC</p> <p>All spare saddlery and harness was handed in this morning.</p> <p>Traffic control post at Translay was changed over.</p>	<p>Inc</p>

Confidential

copy

DEPUTY ASSISTANT
PROVOST MARSHAL,
3RD AUSTRALIAN DIV.

127 D. O. O. G.

3rd Aust Div

No. MP 756

Date. 3.3.19.

copy to A. P. M. Aust Corps (for information)

Alleged burning of wheat stacks by 2 Australian soldiers at Villeroi on 1st March 1919.

With reference to the above, I have to report having proceeded to Villeroi yesterday to investigate same. I then saw No. 6036 Trooper Brown of R, Aust Provost Corps, who is on Detachment with the 11th Infantry Brigade, who stated to me that at about 9.30 p.m. on the 1st inst, whilst he was proceeding on foot from Villeroi to Rambures, he noticed a stack of wheat burning in the middle of a ploughed field. He states that he saw the figures of two Aust. soldiers by the light of the burning stack, and that they were running away across the ploughed field from the stack in the direction of Villeroi. At that time he was a distance of between 200 to 300 yards from these men. He followed them through a hedge into an orchard, then through another hedge when they turned to the right, jumped ~~through~~ ^{over} another hedge on to the road leading into Villeroi, when he lost sight of them at the turn of the road. He states that he then reported the facts to Sgt. Maj Thomas F.V., of 25th Coy A.C.S.C., Villeroi, and afterwards made a statement before the Mayor of Villeroi giving details as above. In company with Sgt. Maj Lawson M.M.P. and Trooper Brown, I then proceeded at about 2.30 p.m. yesterday along the Rambures - Villeroi road to the field where the stacks of wheat had been burnt. I then found that the burnt stack was in the middle of a freshly ploughed field. The land all around the stack for a distance of about 40 yards being freshly ploughed. On making a most careful examination of the ploughed field in the direction in which Brown stated the

Two soldiers and himself had crossed the field, there were no tracks of any description, which Brown himself admitted.

There had been no rain from the time the stacks were burnt until the time of my arrival there.

Brown then showed me the hedge through which, he alleges, the two soldiers and himself passed into the orchard.

The hedge is about 7 feet high and closely interwoven with branches.

A small opening in the hedge was shown to me by Brown as being the place where they passed through.

There was not the slightest sign of footsteps, broken twigs or anything to show that anyone had been near the place, although the ground at this gap was composed of soft soil.

I then ordered Brown to go through the gap in the hedge which he succeeded in doing with great difficulty.

I then entered the orchard accompanied by two French civilians named DOVAL GEORGES and LELEU EUSEBE, who own the place.

We crossed the orchard to the opposite ^{hedge} and Brown indicated the spot in the hedge where he alleges that the soldiers and himself had passed through.

On making a very close examination of this spot, where the ground is very soft, there was not the slightest sign of anyone ever having passed through the hedge.

Brown then stated that the soldiers had then turned up to the right, that he followed them, and that at last they had jumped over the next hedge on to the road.

We then proceeded in the direction indicated by Brown and encountered another hedge with one thick strand of barbed wire, before reaching the hedge bordering the road. On reaching the latter hedge, Brown indicated the spot where he alleges they had jumped over.

This hedge is fully 8 feet in height and again there was not the slightest trace of anyone having got over, either in the hedge itself or in the soft gutter-way on the road ends of the hedge.

During my inquiries Brown asserted that he was at no time nearer than 200 yards distance from the soldiers. He also stated that they were drunk, and when asked what made them think so, said that they were.

(Continued) Page 3

staggering and their eyes were bleary. After a most careful investigation, I am reluctantly compelled to say that I do not attach any credence whatsoever to the statements made by Tip Brown. The motives which have prompted him to make these statements are best known to himself. It would be a physical impossibility, at a distance of 200 yards or a dark night, even granting there was a glare from the burning stack, for Brown to have kept these men in view as stated by him, and also to notice that they were drunk and their eyes were bleary.

The height of the hedges which were very closely woven with branches is between 7 and 8 feet, while the distance between 3 of the hedges is roughly 60 yards.

On making a further examination of the ploughed land around the hay stack I noticed one set of human tracks leading from the main Villeroy-Rambures road direct to the stack.

On closely examining these foot marks they were found to have left indentations in the soil similar to the track made by a grooved motor tyre.

I at once examined Brown's boots which he was then wearing and found that he had soles on the boots made from a piece of grooved motor tyre.

He then stated that the tracks had been made by him that same morning as he had come back to take dimensions of the stacks which, at this time, was only a heap of debris.

When Brown reported the case to the M.P. in charge at Rambures on the night of the 1st inst, he stated that the two soldiers had run away in the direction of Foucaourt.

This statement he also made to me before we proceeded to the spot.

Foucaourt is in an entirely opposite direction to that which he afterwards showed to me.

When reporting the case to Sgt-Maj Thomas at Villeroy the same night he stated that he was coming from Oisemont, when he saw the 2 soldiers actually set the stack alight.

(Continued) Page 4

Brown's statements being so contradictory and open to doubt I have placed him under open arrest and await your further instructions as to his disposal.

I attach statement made by Sgt. Maj. Thomas F.V. of 25th Coy A.A.S.C.

I understand that a claim has been lodged with the Mairee by the owner of the wheat stacks (DABORVAL, FLORIDA. Bullock No 36, Villeroy), the amount claimed being 2037 francs

(Signed) J. Watson Colfitt
 MAJOR
 Assistant Provost Marshal
 3 Australian Divn

copy

DEPUTY ASSISTANT
PROVOST MARSHAL,
3RD AUSTRALIAN DIV.

No. MP 849
Date 16-3-19

A R M
Aust Corps

copy to Waa G
(For information)

Rounding up of Absentees in Back Areas

In accordance with instructions contained in your 1/355 of 8th January 1919, I have to report having conducted a round up of absentees in Abbeville from 9-3-19 to 12-3-19 inclusive.

The names of 5 members of this Division were taken on a charge of being in Abbeville without a pass.

In addition P O 11716 Dvr Hubert BW 1st Field Coy Engineers, 1st Australian Division was arrested.

P O 42988 Dvr Delabarre A "A" Battery 286th Bde RFA was arrested dressed in a Canadian uniform.

Another soldier who gave his particulars as P O 1738 Pte R F Matheson 11th Aust Inf Bde Hdqrs was arrested.

On enquiries being made it was ascertained that Pte Matheson whose particulars had curiously enough been given correctly by the man arrested, was present with his unit.

This man eventually turned out to be P O 1433^a Pte Smith G. F. 56th Batt F. I. F. He was awarded 2 years Hard Labour on 14th December last and escaped from P O 11 Military Prison Dunkirk on 25 Feb 1919.

He is being returned to Prison.

Signed J Watson Colpitts
Major

Deputy Assistant Provost Marshall
3rd Australian Division