

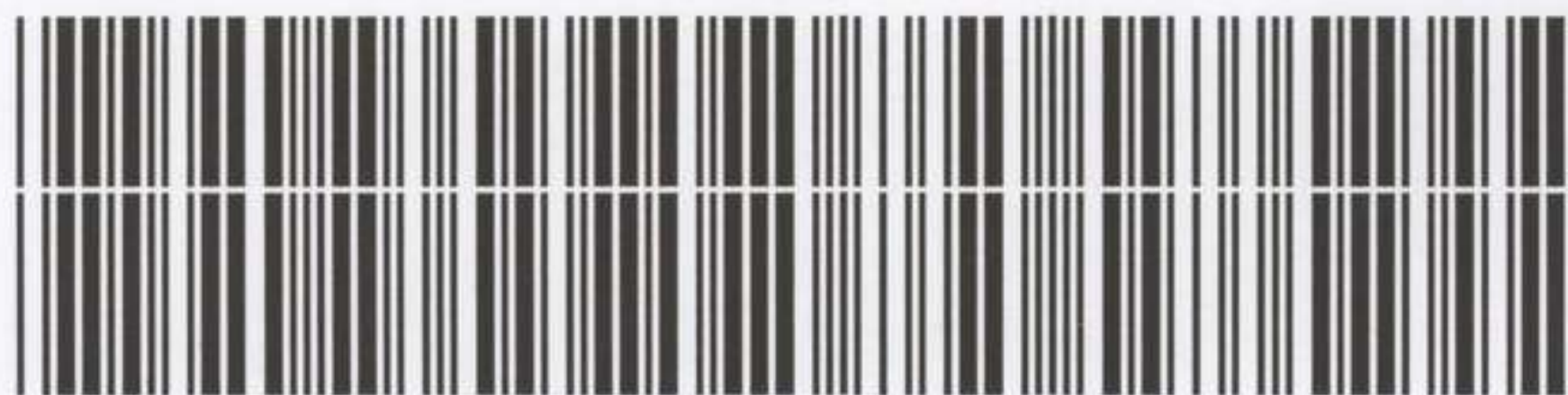
AWM4
Australian Imperial Force unit war diaries,
1914-18 War

Infantry

Item number: 23/34/41

Title: 17th Infantry Battalion

December 1918



AWM4-23/34/41

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

Australian Imperial Force.

WAR DIARY

OF

17TH BATTALION

FOR

DECEMBER 1918

Signature of Officer compiling

Fredcroft L

Signature of Officer Commanding

M. Sade

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118.

86

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
PRISCHES	1		His Majesty the KING inspected the Brigade near MAROILLES. Day fine but cold. Lieut. V. J. SULLIVAN, M.C., and Lieut. W. R. McCOURT rejoined from Hospital. 2nd Lieut. W. O. RABEY, D.C.M. rejoined from O. C. B. 2nd Lieut. A. S. STEFANSON joined from AUSTRALIA.	Appendix 1
	2		Morning:- Inspection, and Educational Work. Afternoon:- Recreation. 2nd Lieut. W. O. RABEY, D.C.M., sick to hospital.	
	3		Inspection and Educational Work in morning. Recreation in afternoon. Drizzly rain during day.	
	4		Inspection and Educational Work, and Recreation. Wet day.	
	5		Inspection and Educational Work. Fairly fine. Lieut.-Colonel R. M. SADLER, M.C. returned from UNITED KINGDOM to the command of the Battalion. Lieut. H. E. LANE proceeded to UNITED KINGDOM on furlough.	
	6		Educational Work and Recreation. Lieut. E. H. McCULLOCH proceeded on leave to NICE. Lieut. R. E. MASSEY, M.M., returned from hospital in UNITED KINGDOM. 2nd Lieut. L. BUHL rejoined from O. C. B. Battalion Strength:- 38 Officers. 506 Other Ranks.	
	7		Morning:- Route March. Afternoon:- Recreation. Day showery.	
	8		Church Parades held. Day fairly fine.	
	9		Very wet day. Educational Classes held.	
	10		Route Marches in morning. Recreation in afternoon. Fairly fine.	
	11		Educational work. Fairly fine day. Lieut. C. R. MAYNARD returned from leave in BIARRITZ.	
	12		Educational work. Very wet day. Father CLUNE, M.C., delivered an Address on Repatriation.	

WAR DIARY
or
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

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86

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(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
PRISCHES	13		Inspection and Educational work. Strength:- 40 Officers. 486 Other Ranks.	
	14		Inspection and Educational work. Commanding Officer left to visit Billets near CHARLEROI. Day misty.	
	15		Church Parades. Day fine.	
	16		Preparations for march to SILENRIEUX. Day drizzly.	
AVESNELLES	17		Battalion moved by route march to AVESNELLES. Day wet. ... Arrived AVESNELLES at midday, and proceeded to Billets, which were very good. ... Lieut. H. R. BOOTH rejoined from hospital.	Appendix 2
SIVRY	18		Battalion route marched to SIVRY. Day again showery. ... Arrived at 1430 and proceeded to Billets, which were very scattered. ... Captain W. L. TRENERRY, M.C. returned from leave to PARIS.	Appendix 3
RENLIÉS	19		Battalion route marched to RENLIÉS, arriving about midday. Day showery. Billets very good.	Appendix 4
SILENRIEUX	20		Battalion route marched to SILENRIEUX, arriving about 1300. Day showery. Lieut. R. W. FETTIT, M.C. rejoined from hospital in UNITED KINGDOM. Battalion Strength:- 45 Officers. 475 Other Ranks.	Appendix 5
	21		Day spent in resting, and settling down in Billets.	
	22		Day fairly wet. Church Services held at School Hall and Church. Lieut. R. A. FITZ-ALAN proceeded on leave to UNITED KINGDOM.	
	23		Day fairly fine. Inspection during morning. Lieut. H. E. LANE returned from U. K. leave.	
	24		H. R. H. the Prince of Wales at WALCOURT received representatives of Battalion, and presented medals.	

WAR DIARY

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Summaries are contained in F. S. Regs., Part II.
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or
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

86

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
SILENRIEUX	24		Battalion Officers' Mess celebrated VICTORIA CROSS won by Lieut. J. MAXWELL, M.C., D.C.M., of the 18th Battalion A.I.F. Lieut. J. G. EDMONDSON returned to Battalion from Brigade. 2nd Lieut. F. BROWN returned from Corps Signalling School.	
	25		CHRISTMAS DAY. Weather excellent. By dint of putting all hands to the wheel, a Christmas spread was provided worthy of all traditions. The Battalion fed sumptuously on Pork, Turkey and Vegetables, and Pudding, helped by such liquor as could be obtained. Voluntary Church Parades were held during the morning.	
	26		BOXING DAY. Fine and frosty. Lieut. E. W. DARK, M.C., proceeded to ENGLAND on leave. Lieut. L. LAYTON-SMITH, M.C., proceeded to UNITED KINGDOM for Demobilisation Duties. Lieut. A. F. GILBERT appointed A/Adjutant.	
	27		Day fine. Educational work carried on. Battalion Strength:- 44 Officers. 470 Other Ranks.	
	28		Inspections and Educational work. Boxing stadium opened with great success.	
	29		Church Parades held in School and Church. Day fine.	
	30		Inspection parades. Educational work. Recreation in afternoon. Lieut. J. T. TOOHEY proceeded to UNITED KINGDOM on Demobilisation Duties.	
	31		NEW YEAR'S EVE duly celebrated as far as possible under the circumstances by impromptu Watch Night demonstrations, etc.	

WAR DIARY

OF

17th Battalion AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE

FOR

December 1918**LIST OF APPENDICES.**

No.	Subject.
1.	Inspection by His Majesty the KING
2.	Operation Order for Route March to SILENRIEUX
3.	Operation Order for Route March AVESNELLES - SIVRY
4.	Operation Order for Route March SIVRY - RENLIES
5.	Operation Order for Route March RENLIES - SILENRIEUX
6.	Educational Syllabus
7.	R. Q. M's. Report
8.	Transport Officer's Report

17TH BATTALION, A.I.F.

Copy No 12

Appendix 1

ORDER NO. 107

30/11/18.

1. His Majesty the KING will be passing along the Main Road from AVESNES to LANDRECIERS to-morrow about 1330.
2. (a) The personnel of the 5th Australian Infantry Brigade Group will form up along the Main Road, just East of MAROUILLES. Troops will form up in Single Line on either side of the road, with officers in front.
 (b) The 17TH BATTALION will form up on road in front of Headquarters Mess at 1140, and will pass Starting Point - road junction J.5.20.05 - at 1206.
 Dress - Belts and Side Arms. Overcoats will not be worn unless further ordered.

3. The following distances will be maintained on the march -

- Between Battalions - 50 yards
- Between Companies - 10 yards

4. (a) Midday meal will be arranged by Companies prior to starting.
 (b) No officers (except C.O.'s. and Adjutants) will be mounted.
 (c) All available men will be on parade.

[Signature]
 Lieut.
 A/Adjutant 17th Battalion A.I.F.

DISTRIBUTION

- | | |
|--------------|-------------------|
| 1. File | 7. "D" Coy. |
| 2. C.O. | 8. R. Q. M. |
| 3. "HQ" Coy. | 9. T. O. |
| 4. "A" " | 10. R. S. M. |
| 5. "B" " | 11/12. War Diary. |
| | 6. "C" Coy. |
| | 14. Spare |

17TH AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY BATTALION ORDER NO. 107.

Reference Maps:-

VALENCIENNES)
 NAMUR) 1/100,000.

Battalion Headquarters,
 15th December 1918.

1. The 5th Australian Infantry Brigade Group will move from present Area to WALCOURT Area between the 17th and 20th December 1918.

2. (a) The 17TH BATTALION will move to SILENRIEUX by stages, commencing on 17th December 1918, in accordance with attached Table.

(b) "HQ", "B", "C" and "D" Companies will assemble in column of threes facing North-West along road running in N.W. direction from "P" in PRISCHES and joining PRISCHES - CARTIGNIES Road, at 0915, and will move off in the order named.

"A" Company will move from Billets in column of threes direct to Starting Point, in time to reach Starting Point at 0950; the Company will join the Battalion at this Point, moving in rear of "D" Company.

Transport will be ready to join the Battalion - head of column to be at junction of road running in N.W. direction from "P" in PRISCHES and PRISCHES - CARTIGNIES Road - at 0915. "A" Company kitchen will move direct to Starting Point with "A" Company, and will join the remainder of the Transport at Starting Point.

Dress - Full Marching Order - less blankets.

3. (a) Blankets will be rolled in bundles of ten, properly labelled, and dumped at Company Billets by 0700.

(b) Officers' Valises will be dumped with blankets at Company Billets by 0700, or at C.M. Store by 0730.

(c) Mess Cart will collect Officers' Mess Gear commencing with "B" Company at 0730, then "C" and "D" Companies and Headquarters. "A" Company's Mess Gear will be loaded on wagon with blankets and valises at 0700. C.M. will arrange to collect blankets and valises. O's. C. Companies will ensure that there is no delay in loading the above gear.

4. BILLETING.

(a) SILENRIEUX. Lieut. F. W. Tindale will report to Brigade Headquarters at 0900 on the 16th instant, and proceed by Motor Ambulance to SILENRIEUX, where he will arrange details for Billets in conjunction with the Town Major. Only pack or small haversack to be carried.

(b) 1st STAGING AREA. Lieut. F. W. Croft, M.C., and 1 Other Rank from "HQ", "A", "B", "C" and "D" Companies, will report to Lieut. Edmondson at Church AVESNELLES at 1000 on the 17th instant. Party will be mounted on bicycles. Other Ranks will report to Lieut. Croft at Battalion Orderly Room at 0800 in readiness to proceed.

(c) 2nd, 3rd, and FINAL AREAS. The Billeting Party detailed in (b) will act as Battalion Billeting Party throughout the move. Further details will be notified later.

5. ADDITIONAL TRANSPORT. One Motor Lorry will be available for the

(2)

86
Battalion Order 107 (continued).

15/12/18.

6. (a) (continued)

Villages in the Staging and SILENRIEUX Areas, and have the good and bad sources clearly marked.

(b) Transport Officer will carry a sufficient quantity of CREOSOL to disinfect dirty and doubtful stables and horse standings prior to occupation, to prevent any contagious diseases.

7. O's. C. Companies and Transport Officer will synchronise time at Battalion Headquarters at 1930 on the day prior to each move.

8. A C K N O W L E D G E.

L. Clayton-Smith

Lieut.
Adjutant 17th Battalion A. I. F.

DISTRIBUTION.

1. File
2. C. O.
3. "HQ" Company
4. "A" "
5. "B" "
6. "C" "
7. "D" "
8. R. Q. M.
9. T. O.
10. R. M. C.
- 11/13. War Diary
14. Spare

MARCH TABLE TO ACCOMPANY BATTALION ORDER NO. 107

17th Bn. A.I.F.

Date	From	To	Route	Starting Point	Time of passing Stg. Pt.	Remarks
1918 Dec.						86
17	FRISCHES	AVESNELLES	CARTIGNIES - GODIN - Southern portion of AVESNES	Crossroads where road from BAURE- PAIRE meets the FRISCHES-CARTIG- NIES Road	1000	
18	AVESNELLES	SIVRY	FELLERIES - CLAIRFAYS	Where RAU de BAU- VRET crosses road from FLAUMONT to FELLERIES North of "A" in FLAUMONT	0925	Halt for lunch from 1130 to 1300
19	SIVRY	RENLIERS	Through BOIS de MARTINSCHT to main road near SIVRY ST thence direct to RENLIERS	500 yards E. along main SIVRY-SIVRY ST. road from point where this road is met by road from GRANDRIEU to SIVRY	1028	The Battalion leaves the Brigade Column near SIVRY ST.
20	RENLIERS	SILENRIEUX	Main Road BOUSSU - SILENRIEUX	Road junction N.W. of BARRENCON where road running through "3" of 38 meets main road	1004	

The following distances will be maintained throughout the march:-

Between Units - 200 yards
" Companies - 100 "
" each Section of 6 Vehicles - 25 yards

Distribution as in Bn. Order 107.

All concerned.

Hd. Qrs. 17th Battalion A.I.F.,
15th December 1918.

The following points affecting March Discipline, turnout of Transport and personnel, were decided on during the Divisional Commander's recent tour of Brigade Groups. These points will be strictly adhered to.

MARCHES.

All marching personnel of units will march in threes, C.O. or 2nd in Command will ride in rear of Battalions. Company Commanders will ride in rear of their Companies. 2nd in Command to march at head of Companies. All mounted officers and other ranks will ride within the column. During marches, packs and rifles of brakesmen and cooks will be carried on the transport.

CARRIAGE OF
HAY-NETS

Hay-nets, when filled, will be carried on the front of water carts. In the case of G.S. limbered wagons, they will be carried on the rear of front limber, and fastened high up for the sake of cleanliness.

DRAGROPES ON
G.S. LIMBERS

Drag ropes will be carried wound under the rear half of limber so as not to interfere with the tail board.

POLISHING OF
AXLES, BRAKE-
HANDLES, etc.

In addition to polishing the axle caps, drag axles, brake handles, etc., all frictional metal parts of vehicles will be polished.

EQUIPMENT

The full authorised saddlery equipment will be carried. No departure from this will be allowed. Blanket, surcingle and surcingle pads for off-horse will be included. Nose bags will be carried on either side of the off-horse, securely fastened, with cleaning gear secured on top of surcingle pads between nose-bags. Steel helmets of G.S. limbered wagon drivers will be carried on front portion of G.S. limber, fixed thereto in wooden cleats. In the case of artillery, steel helmet will be carried on off-horse. Neck chains will be carried round horses necks. Neck chain of the off-horse will be fastened under the strap securing the zinc collar pad.

WATER CARTS.

Petrol tin racks will be removed from water carts.

In future, when off parade, either in or out of their own billeting area, officers will wear Sam Browne belts, and other ranks the web or leather belt, according to the arm of the service to which they belong.

The G.O.C. desires that a standard of uniformity and excellence in turnout generally be maintained throughout the Division. Under the existing conditions it is possible to concentrate more effectively on the appearance of transport and personnel. If necessary, additional men can be attached to the Transport Section. The fighting qualities of the Division are well known, but henceforward the Division is bound to be judged by the smartness of its appearance.

Haydon-Smith

Lieut.
Adjutant 17th Battalion A. I. F.

Distribution as in Bn. Order 107.

17TH AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY BATTALION ORDER NO. 108.Reference Maps:-

VALENCIENNES)
NAMUR) 1/100,000

Battalion Headquarters,
17th December 1918.

86. The 17TH BATTALION will move to SIVRY to-morrow, 18th instant, in accordance with March Table issued with Battalion Order No. 107.

2. The following Routine will be observed :-

Reveille	-	0630
Breakfast	-	0715
Sick Parade	-	0745

The Battalion will be formed up in column of threes along road leading from Battalion Headquarters, ready to move at 0845. Order of March - "HQ", "A", "B", "C", "D" Companies, Transport.
Dress - Marching Order.

3. Billeting Party of 1 Other Rank per Company (mounted on bicycles) will report to Lieut. Croft at Battalion Headquarters at 0800 on 18th instant. Lieut. Croft will report with party to Lieut. Banfield (Brigade Billeting Officer) at Hall, SIVRY, at 1000.

4. (a) Blankets will be rolled in bundles of ten, properly labelled, and dumped at Q.M. Store by 0700.

(b) Officers' Valises will be dumped at Q.M. Store by 0730.

(c) Mess Cart will collect Officers' Mess Gear at 0730.

(d) Maltese Cart will collect Medical Equipment at 0800.

5. O.C. "D" Company will detail a Straggler's Party of 1 officer and 20 other ranks to march behind 1/3rd S.A.A. Section, in the Brigade Column. The party will move to the Starting Point with the Battalion, fall out at that Point, and move in rear of S.A.A. Section, which passes Starting Point at 1018.

6. Halt for mid-day meal will be from 1150 to 1300, and not as previously notified.

All water bottles should be filled before moving to-morrow.

7. ACKNOWLEDGE.

DISTRIBUTION

1. File	8. R.Q.M.
2. C.O.	9. T.C.
3. "HQ" Coy.	10. R.M.C.
4. "A"	11. R.S.M.
5. "B"	12/14. War Diary
6. "C"	15. Spare
7. "D"	

H. Clayton-Smith
Lieut.
Adjutant 17th Battalion A.I.F.

86

17TH AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY BATTALION ORDER NO. 109Reference Map:-

NAMUR, 1/100,000.

1. The 17TH BATTALION will move to RENLIES to-morrow the 19th instant, in accordance with March Table issued with Battalion Order No. 107.

2. The following routine will be observed:-

Reveille	-	0700
Breakfast	-	0730
Sick Parade	-	0800

Companies will assemble at 1005 along road running through "M" in Champ MARTIN, and "E" in LOUVIERRE, head of column to be at road junction directly South of "Y" in SIVRY.

Order of march - "C", "B", "A", "D", "HQ" Companies, Transport.

3. Billeting Party of 1 N.C.O. per Company will report to Lieut. Croft at point where they met the Battalion to-day, at 0730.

4. (a) Blankets and valises will be dumped by "B" and "C" Companies at Company Billets by 0730, and by "HQ", "A" and "D" Companies at C. M. Store by 0730.

(b) Mess Gear will be ready for collection by Mess Cart at 0830.

5. ACKNOWLEDGE.

L. Gordon-Smith
Lieut.
Adjutant 17th Battalion A. I. F.

DISTRIBUTION

1. File
2. C.O.
3. "HQ" Company
4. "A"
5. "B"
6. "C"
7. "D"
8. R. Q. M.
9. T. O.
10. R. M. O.
11. R. S. M.
- 12/14. War Diary.
15. Spare

17TH AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY BATTALION ORDER NO. 110.

Reference Map:-

NAMUR 1/100,000.

Battalion Headquarters,
19th December 1918.

1. The 17TH BATTALION will move to SILENRIEUX to-morrow the 20th instant, in accordance with March Table already issued.

2. The following Routine will be observed:-

Reveille	-	0645
Breakfast	-	0715
Sick Parade	-	0730

The Battalion will form up ready to move from the Church, RENLIES, at 0900.

Order of March - "HQ", "D", "B", "A" and "C" Companies, & Transport
Dress - Marching Order.

3. BILLETING PARTY. 1 Other Rank per Company will report to Lieut. Croft at Battalion Headquarters at 0800. Party will report to Lieut. Tindale at Town Major's Office, SILENRIEUX, at 1000.

4. (a) Blankets and valises will be dumped by "A" Company/Billets by 0730. Blankets and valises of other Companies will be dumped at Q. M. Store by 0800.

(b) Mess Gear will be ready for collection as under:-

"A" Company	at	0730
Other Companies	at	0800

5. STRAGGLERS PARTY. O.C. "C" Company will detail a Stragglers Party of 1 Officer and 20 Other Ranks to move behind 1/3rd S.A.A. Section in the Brigade Column. Party will move to Starting Point with the Battalion, fall out at that point, and follow S.A.A. Section which passes Starting Point at 1016.

6. O's. C. Companies will ensure that every man marches with his Company (the only exceptions being those otherwise detailed by Battalion Headquarters, or under instructions from R.M.O.).

7. A C K N O W L E D G E.

DISTRIBUTION

(Sgd). L. LAYTON SMITH, Lieut.
Adjutant 17th Battalion A.I.F.

- | | |
|--------------|-------------------|
| 1. File | 8. R. Q. M. |
| 2. C.O. | 9. T. O. |
| 3. "HQ" Coy. | 10. R. M. O. |
| 4. "A" " | 11. R. S. M. |
| 5. "B" " | 12. Capt. Harnett |
| 6. "C" " | 13/15. War Diary |
| 7. "D" " | |

Appendix 6

EDUCATION SYLLABUS Vol. 10

Day	10 - 11	11 - 12	5 - 6
Mon	Arithmetic & Algebra	French Shorthand	
Tues	English	Book Keeping Essay	
Wed	Geography	Commercial Correspondence	as arranged.
Thu	Arithmetic & Algebra	French Shorthand	as
Fri	English	Book Keeping Essay	as
Sat	Geography	French Shorthand	lectures
Sun	—	—	—

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17TH BN QM'S REPORT

APP. 7

of App. 17TH BN QM'S REPORT
 from the 1st to 17th December the Battalion
 was resting at PRISCHES, during that
 time rations were continually short all round
 On the 17th the Battⁿ moved from PRISCHES
 to Avesnelles, on the 18th the movement continued
 to SIVRY arriving same day, leaving SIVRY
 on 19th arrived RENLIES same day. Left RENLIES
 on 20th arriving at SILENRIEUX same day where
 the Battⁿ is now stationed. During the march
 the troops were well billeted & fed. hot meals being
 served on march from the Cooks, during the
 Rations have been very short whilst at SILENRIEUX
 noticeably meat & Vegetables, fuel has been obtained
 by purchase, Billets have been supplied with Straw
 & a large reading room & recreation room has been
 established. On Xmas day the Dawson Coyth
 troops were looked after as regards
 dinner. Shewith Copy of Menu

Xmas Day. Dinner
 Tomato & Veg Soup
 Roast Turkey
 " Goose
 " Powl
 " Sucking Pig
 " Mutton
 Boiled & Baked Potatoes
 Cabbage, Onions, Carrots
 Plum Pudding, Rum Sauce
 Custard & Fruit
 Blanc Mange.

Beer
 Tea
 Coffee

86

App

Transport Report.

App. 8

December
1918.

During the first half of the month the battalion was at PRISCHES. The animals were well sheltered during that time and in addition were able to get some grazing. The work was only the distribution of rations + cleaning up.

On the 14th inst. the battalion marched out from PRISCHES to AVESNELLES, on the 18th inst. the move was continued from AVESNELLES to SIVRY, BELGIUM, on the 19th from SIVRY to RENLIES, on the 20th from RENLIES to SILENRIEUX where the battalion is at the present time.

The animals stood the journey well in spite of the bad weather experienced on the way.

The animals are comfortably stabled in their present situation and condition is good.

W. Busby Capt
17th Br.