

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

Infantry

**Item number:** 23/48/41

**Title:** 31st Infantry Battalion

December 1918



AWM4-23/48/41

ONE ORIGINAL.

DUPLICATE.

TRIPPLICATE.

258

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE.

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WAR DIARY  
OF

31ST. BATTALION. A.I.F.

FOR

DECEMBER 1918.

SIGNATURE OF OFFICER COMPILING.-----

*B. S. Given Lt*

SIGNATURE OF OFFICER COMMANDING.-----

*Mr Freeman Lt Col*

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.)

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
<p>BECQUIGNY Ref. Map Sheet VALENCIENNES 2. 12 1/100,000</p>	<p>L.</p>		<p>Church parade (voluntary) was held in a barn at 11.0 a.m. - the Battalion Padre The Rev. R. C. Foyster officiating. The day was fine but cold.</p>	
	<p>2.</p>		<p>Parades under Company Commanders were held from 9.30 a.m. till 11.30 a.m., the training being carried out consisted of smartening up drill. A great deal of coal is being drawn from an old German dump at BUSIGNY for the use of the civilians; a G. S. waggon is sent with a couple of civilians and any amount of coal can be obtained.</p>	
	<p>3.</p>		<p>All companies were paraded to the Medical Officer for inspection for scabies. The weather is raw and dismal and the village is exceedingly muddy. The first big batch of Christmas parcels arrived to-day from Australia, and naturally they were all eagerly accepted.</p>	
	<p>4.</p>		<p>Owing to drizzling rain parades to-day were cancelled. The Q. M. brought back from England the Battalion flag: which is a chequered flag with a yellow and chocolate fringe with a large rising sun in the centre worked in shades from canary yellow to gold. Two flags with Battalion colours and rising sun in yellow in the centre were also received from England a gift from the Women of Australia. The idea is for one flag to be flown at Battalion H.Q. for a while and it is then to be returned to Australia for safe keeping. The other remains the property of the Battalion.</p>	
	<p>5.</p>		<p>To-day was dismal and later in the day rain fell. During the morning the Battalion was bathed at BUSIGNY and there they received a clean change of clothing.</p>	
	<p>6.</p>		<p>Company parades were held from 9.30 a.m. till 11.30 a.m. and the time was devoted to smartening up drill. Two advance parties left during the morning - one for MAZINGHIEN area (6H. 26.62) and the other for the FAVRIL area (5I. 66.26). The morning was dull and misty, but in the afternoon the sun came out, and it was quite pleasant after the dismal weather we have been having.</p>	
	<p>7.</p>		<p>Preparations were afoot early for the move - the start being at 10.0 a.m. The transport left independently at 9.30 a.m. and proceeded direct to REJET DE BEAULIEU ) WHERE THE Battalion were to be billeted. The Battalion moved off at 10.0 a.m. in the following order C Coy.</p>	

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25500

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
REJET DE BEAULIEU 6H. 60.54.	7.		H.Q., D, B, & A. Coys, and proceeded by the following route - VAUX-ANDIGNY, MOLAIN, ST. MARTIN-RIVIERE, L'ARBRE DE GUISE, MAZINGHIEN and thence to billets, arriving there at 2.30 p.m. A halt was made at mid-day for a drink of hot tea from the cookers, which had accompanied the Battalion. Immediately on arrival the cooks had a hot meal ready for the men. Battalion H. Q. is situated at 6H.60.54. The day was misty and damp. On arrival at MAZINGHIEN the 8th Brigade Band met the Battalion and played them to their billets. The village is considerably damaged - having been mixed up in an attack.	
	8.		The day was spent in resting prior to the move to-morrow; move order was issued in the morning ordering the move for 9.0 a.m. to GRAND BEART. The sun shone brilliantly throughout the day which was a welcome change after such dismal weather.	"A"
GRAND BEART 5I. 94.11.	9.		The fine day of yesterday did not bear out the possibility of a spell of fine weather, for the start of the march was made at 9.0 a.m. in a drizzling rain. The order of march was B. Coy. H.Q. A, C, & D, Coys. and the route followed was LE PETIT CAMBRESIS, LA GROISE, FAVRIL and GRAND BEART. The Battalion arrived in the village at 12.15 p.m. and was immediately billeted by the advance party. Soon after arrival a hot meal was ready for the men, and blankets were also issued. The weather improved wonderfully during the march, and the sun was shining when the Battalion arrived. So far no system of general education has been carried out in the Unit, but nominations for a variety of trades have been called for and the personnel will attend Army Workshops, Veterinary Hospitals and the like. It is hoped that very soon the scheme will be in full working order, and all the men attending schools of some sort.	
	10.		To-day was miserable and wet and no training was carried out. Lt.Col. McArthur left this Battalion to take over temporary command of the 32nd Battalion.	
	11.		Rain still continues and it is impossible to carry out any recreational training. The Padre has secured a supply of magazines etc. which have been distributed to the men.	
	12.		Rain all day rendering impossible the carrying out of parades.	

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GRAND BEART	13		Rain still continues, but there appears to be a likelihood of improvement. The Battalion is still resting. A batch of clerks left for England to-day, to take up duty on A. I. F. H.Q. in London.	
Ref. Map. Sheet VALENCIENNES 12 1/100,000	14		The weather showed signs of improvement, and the sun shone fitfully throughout the day. During the morning the C. O. was visited by the Brigade and Divisional Commanders. The C. O. held a meeting of all officers at 11.30 a.m. and discussed the question of a Battalion Mess and also the particulars on the Demobilization Forms, which are to be filled up on the 17th Inst. by all members of the A.I. F.	
	15		Company parades were held from 9.30 a.m. till 11.30 a.m. and the time was devoted to inspections with a little smartening up drill. The weather was dull and threatening this morning, but improved in the afternoon and the sun shone. A great deal of material was sent from the Q.M. store forward to FELLERIES - where the Battalion were to be finally billeted.	
	16		As far as possible company parades were held, but the weather was dull and threatening, which considerably interfered with the parades.	
	17		Weather was wretched all day and parades were impossible. Preparations were afoot for the move of the Battalion to-morrow.	B
AVESNELLES.	18		The Battalion moved out of its present billets at 9.30 a.m. in the following order - C. Coy. H. Q. D, A, and B. Coys. and proceeded by route FAVRIL, FAUBOURG de FRANCE, MAROILLES, MARBAIX, AVESNES to AVESNELLES, where it arrived at 3.30 p.m. and was billeted in the Lazarette for the night. A halt was made at noon for lunch. The day was rainy and the march was in consequence very unpleasant.	
FELLERIES. Ref. Map Sheet NAMUR 8 1/100,000	19		The Battalion moved off from its billet at 9.30 a.m. in the following order - D. Coy. H. Q. A, B and C. Coys. and proceeded by route FLAUMONT to FELLERIES, where it arrived at 11.0 a.m. and was at once billeted by the advance party. The start was made in rain, but this ceased at about 11.0 a.m. Battalion H. Q. is situated at 5A 41,71. Both the village and the billets occupied by the men are good, and the men will be very comfortable for the period of their long stay here.	

(4)

## WAR DIARY

or

## INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

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FELLERIES. Ref. Map. Sheet NAMUR 8. 1/100000.	20		<p>It was notified early that H. R. H. the Prince of Wales would visit the Battalion at midday. The visit was to be strictly informal and the men were to carry on with their ordinary occupations. Soon after midday the Prince arrived in a car accompanied by the Brigadier and Staff Captain of the Brigade. He made the round tour of the village inspecting some of the men's <del>visits</del>, and also spoke to several of them. He appeared to be very interested in all he saw.</p> <p>The weather is cloudy and rain threatens.</p> <p>Active preparations are afoot in a <sup>large</sup> factory where it is proposed that the men shall sit down for their Christmas dinner. A large room in an old Brasserie has also been selected for the Y. M. C. A., and this is being cleaned up and made ship-shape with a comfortable reading and recreation room.</p>	
	21.		<p>No parades were carried out today, but the preparations for Christmas and the comfort of the men were proceeded with.</p> <p>No rain fell today, but snow seemed to threaten.</p>	
	22.		<p>Church Parades were held as follows :- R. C. in the Church at BEUGNIES at 10 a.m. C. of E. and O. P. D. in the Dance Hall at FELLERIES at 9-30 a.m.</p> <p>A dance was held in the Dance Hall at 8 p.m. which, two days' previously, had been announced to all and sundry by the village crier. Needless to say, the number of couples who desired to dance far exceeded the accommodation of the Hall - added to which the floor was not of the best. It had never seen polish in its existence and was thick with mud, which was brought in on the boots of these dancing. A square dance - The Lancers - was attempted, and when the couples were sorted out in their proper places it was found that there was only a space of about 30 ft. square for 20 couples to move in. Needless to say there was some confusion, and it was decided after this dance to confine the programme only to waltzes and polkas.</p> <p>The girls of the village turned out in their very best clothes, and appeared to enjoy the dance - although it was crowded. Capt. R. C. ALAND. MC. was the M. C. for the evening. Further dances are being arranged at which only two companies at a time will be represented; entrance will be made only by tickets (free).</p> <p>The weather throughout the day was wet and very windy.</p>	
	23.		<p>No parades were held today on account of the rain and wind. Preparations are now practically complete for the Battalion dinner for the men - which will take place at 1 p.m. on Christmas Day. The Battalion Padre left today to proceed to London after which he will be required to carry out transport duty to Australia.</p>	

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FELLERIES. Ref. Map . Sheet NAMUR. S. 1/100000	24		Company parades were held from 9.30 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. during which inspections and smarting up drill were carried out. The day opened brilliantly with sun, but later in the afternoon clouds appeared and at about 6p.m. snow commenced to fall, which was intermittent all the evening. Preparations are now complete for the Christmas dinner on the morrow. The battalion officers mess started this morning and when in full swing promises to be a huge success. <i>B.I.D.</i>	
	25		Today the weather was fine and dry. The men of the battalion all sat down to a very satisfying dinner: all waiting being done by officers and N.C.O.'s. A large factory building was procured for the occasion and was attractively decorated by the men. In order that no man or N.C.O. should be on duty on Xmas day, during the general festivities, the duties were relieved and were taken over for some hours by the officers, who acted as Regimental guard, transport drivers, Postal men etc. <i>B.I.D.</i>	
	26		No parades were carried out today. The men suffering a recovery from the good time enjoyed on Christmas day. The weather continues very fine. There is still plenty mud in the village. <i>B.I.D.</i>	
	27		Today was most depressing as to weather conditions; it really seemed that all the rain and wind held over during our successful pushes towards the closing of hostilities was delivered today. Despite this, however, the Brigadier General walked over to our battalion area to carry out an inspection of general arrangements in billets. <i>B.I.D.</i>	
	28		Usual parades were held. The weather was rather chilly, with intermittent rain. <i>B.I.D.</i>	
	29		Church parades were held in SARS POTTERIES and FELLERIES. <i>B.I.D.</i>	
	30		There were further falls of rain at intervals during the day, which considerably interfered with the day's routine. <i>B.I.D.</i>	
	31		Supply of VEREY lights obtained from a train near by, (blown up during the enemy's hurried promenade Germanywards), was used gleefully by the various units located in the area. The effect produced far exceeded anything put up by the Boche in the late disturbance, even in his most frantic "wind-up" spasms. The necessary lubrication for finishing an old, and, on the whole, friendly year, being ungettable, the uproar at midnight, on the 31st. December 1918, was not the noise it should have been. "FINI LA GUERRE": <i>B.I.D.</i> NAPOO 1918!	

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31st. BATTALION. A. I. F. (Erase heading not required.)

DECEMBER. 1918.

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			<p>CASUALTIES for MONTH:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>D.</td> <td>of.</td> <td>W.</td> <td>Died.</td> <td>of</td> <td>Illness.</td> <td>Wounded.</td> <td>Wounded &amp; at duty.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Nil</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Nil</td> <td>Nil.</td> </tr> </table>	D.	of.	W.	Died.	of	Illness.	Wounded.	Wounded & at duty.	Nil			1			Nil	Nil.																					
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			<p>REINFORCEMENTS for MONTH.</p> <p>2 Officers      18 O.Ranks.</p>																																					
			<p>Court Martial Cases.      2.</p>																																					
			<p>Orderly Room Cases.      7.</p>																																					
			<p><i>W. Freeman</i> Lt. Colonel Commanding 31st. Battalion A.I.F.</p>																																					



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WAR DIARY.

of

31st. BATTALION A.I.F.

for

MONTH OF DECEMBER 1918.  
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LIST OF APPENDICES.

<u>NO.</u>	<u>SUBJECT.</u>
A.	MOVE ORDER TO "GRAND BEART".
B.	MOVE ORDER TO AVESNELLES.
C.	MAP OF BILLETS IN "FELLERIES".
D.	QUARTERMASTERS REPORT.
E.	TRANSPORT OFFICERS REPORT.

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WAR DIARY FOR DECEMBER.

APPENDIX "A"

MOVE ORDER.

The battalieu will move from its present billets to "GRAND BEART" by march route tomorrow. Starting Point. Q.M. Store.

Time of passing. 0900

Order of march. B, Hqrs, A, C, D.

Dress. Full marching order, Midday meal to be carried.

Blankets to be rolled in bundles of not more than ten, and properly labelled. Blankets must be rolled lengthways, and cardigans and sheepskins are to be carried and not rolled in the bundles. Any such articles found in the rolls will be confiscated. Blankets to be dumped at Q.M. Store, (with valises) at 0800.

(Sgd) V.L. Meryisset Capt. & Adjt.  
31st. Battalieu.

8.12.18.

WAR DIARY FOR DECEMBER.

APPENDIX "B"

MOVE ORDER.

The battalieu will move from its present billets to AVESNELLES on 18th. inst.

Starting Point. Q.M. Store.

Time of passing 0930.

Order of march. C, BHQ, D, A, B.

Cookers will move in rear of companies.

Distances. 100 yards between companies.

Dress. Fighting Order W.P. sheets under flap of haversack.

S.B.R's to be carried also midday meal.

Transport as previously detailed will report to you at 0730, and must be clear by 0815.

Billets. To be left in a sanitary condition.

Transport arrangements for move to AVESNELLES on 18th inst, and to FELLERIES on 19th. inst.

The undermentioned vehicles will report to your company Hqrs, and will be used to carry your blankets, packs, office and mess gear.

1 G.S. Wagen.

1 G.S. Limbered wagen.

Care will be necessary in the rolling of blankets and the stacking of packs to enable above gear to be carried.

Officers valises will be picked up at your Coy Hqrs by other transport.

Times, etc. will be notified later.

Note. W.P. Sheets and S.B.R's are to be carried on the march.

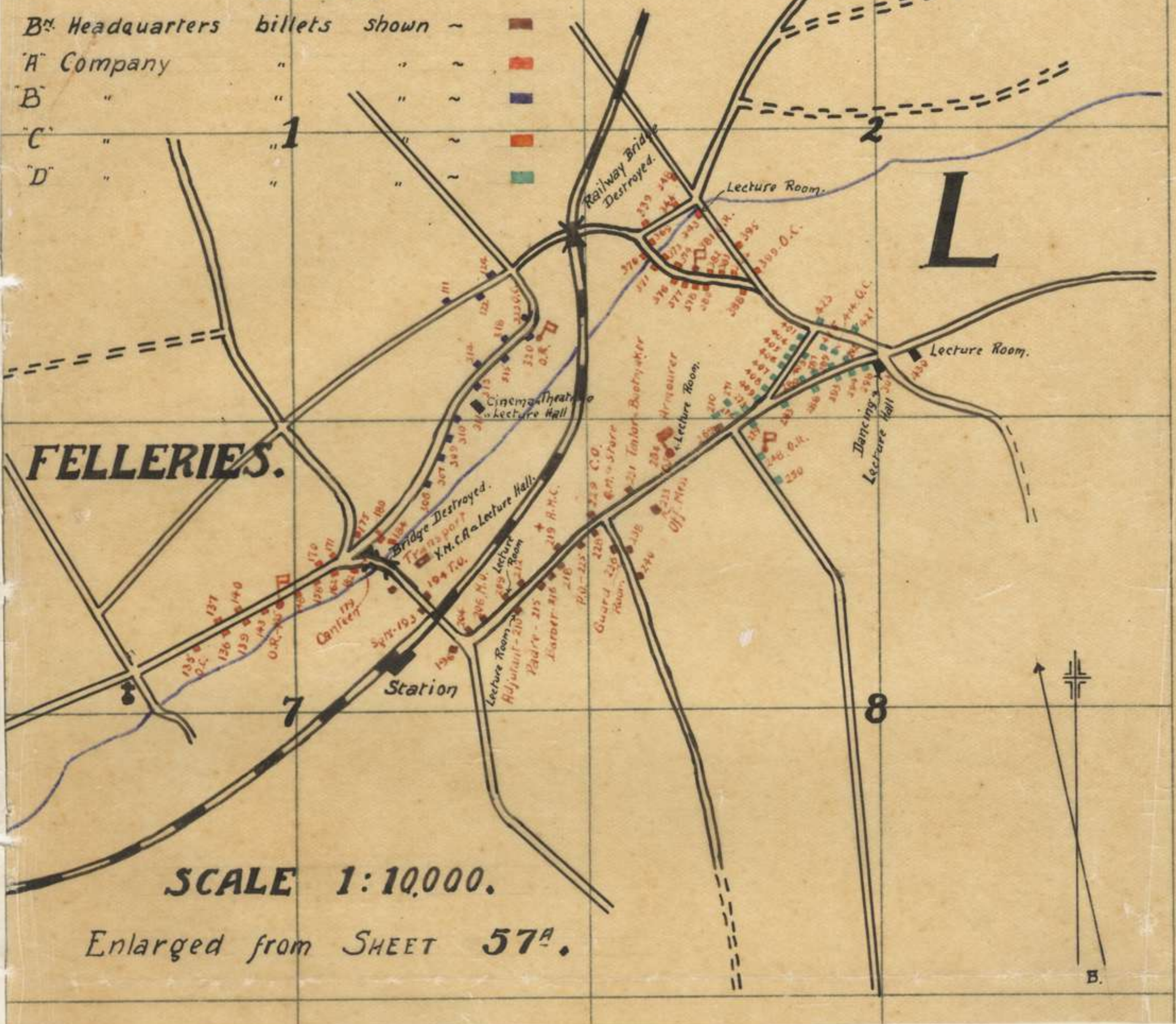
(Sgd) V.L. Meryisset, Capt. & Adjt.,  
31st. Battalieu A.I.F.

16.12.1918.

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**31<sup>ST</sup> B<sup>N</sup> BILLETTS.** 19. 12. 1918.

— **LEGEND.** —

B <sup>n</sup> Headquarters	billets shown	~	■
A Company	"	~	■
B "	"	~	■
C "	"	~	■
D "	"	~	■



**SCALE 1:10,000.**

Enlarged from SHEET 57<sup>A</sup>.

WAR DIARY FOR DECEMBER.

QUARTERMASTER'S REPORT.

During the past month the Battalion has been on the move every week and very little has been done in the way of re-equipping. Ordnance stores have been almost unobtainable and the shortage of all clothing and grindery have been acutely felt. Rations have been most unsatisfactory during the past month, the meat has been very light and the margarine and potatoes have not been on issue for the last fortnight. During the latter end of the month the rations have improved but the shortage of potatoes is very unsatisfactory. All mobilisation stores have been checked thoroughly and all shortages were indented for and the battalion is now complete in all technical stores. Iron rations were withdrawn and are now held regimentally. The Battalion Christmas dinner was a great success, and the Coy cooks deserve great credit for the work they did to make it so. Very few comforts have been obtained from A.C.F. owing to transport difficulties.

*P. Gardner Capt  
 RM 31 Bn*


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WAR DIARY FOR DECEMBER 1918.

TRANSPORT OFFICERS REPORT.

During the last week of November, the transport moved to "BECQUIGNY", when they occupied good billets in farms. A further move eastward to "REJET DE BEAULIEU" during the first week in December resulted in the transport reaching "FELLERIES", its destination, on Dec. 19th. Here both the stabling for the animals, and the men's billets were excellent. After a few days rest, wagons were washed and harness cleaned. Later, in conjunction with the usual routine of work, the transport began to prepare for the Brigade sports to be held in the New Year.

31.12.1918.

 Lieut.  
Transport Officer 31st. Battn.