

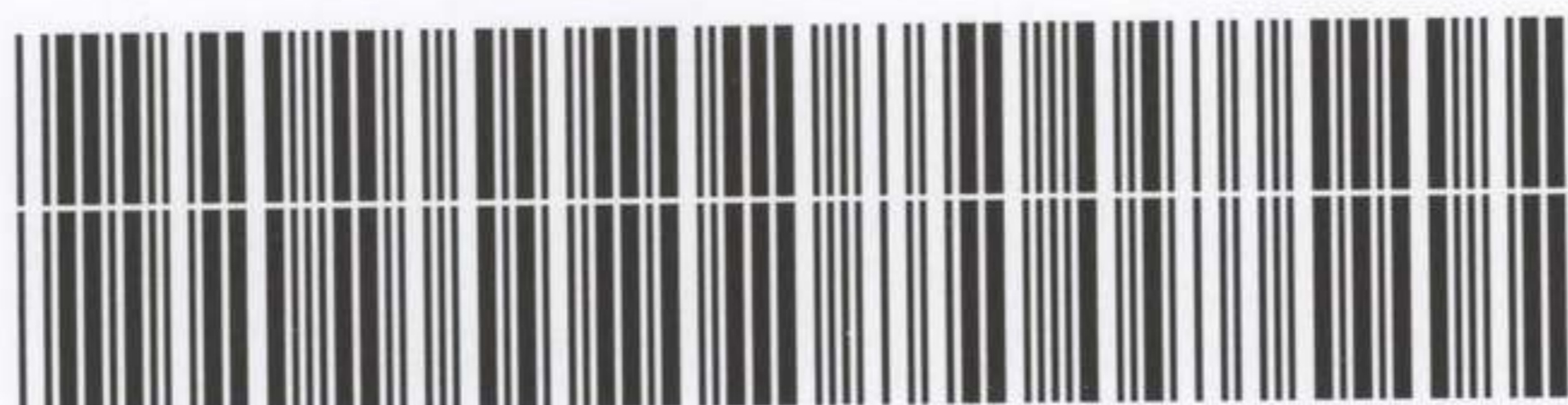
**AWM4**  
**Australian Imperial Force unit war diaries,**  
**1914-18 War**

Infantry

**Item number:** 23/32/46

**Title:** 15th Infantry Battalion

January 1919



AWM4-23/32/46

201

**CONFIDENTIAL.**

ORIGINAL.  
DUPLICATE.  
TRIPLICATE.

Australian Imperial Force.

**WAR DIARY**

OF

*15<sup>th</sup> Battalion*

FOR

*January* 191*7*

Signature of Officer compiling.....

Signature of Officer Commanding.....

*Original*

C O N F I D E N T I A L .

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.)

201

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
PHILIPPEVILLE.	1919.			
	Jan 1st.		<p>Fine Day. Training was carried on as per Syllabus. In the afternoon Battalion Sports were held. An excellent and varied programme had been arranged and included such extra items as Pillow Fight on cross bar, and a Mule race. These and other events caused much amusement. Each company also ran a special side-show:- Aunt Sally, Hoop-la. etc. - the proceeds going to various charitable purposes. Many civilians attended and some took part in the contests. The function altogether proved highly successful.</p>	
		2.	<p>Cloudy day with very cold wind blowing. Route march in the morning. In the afternoon a Rugby football match 15th Battalion versus 13th Battalion took place. The muddy nature of the ground made the game mostly forward dribbling play and our team proved victorious by 8 to nil.</p>	
		3.	<p>Rainy, bleak day. Training as per Syllabus. In the evening A. and C. Coys. held a very successful dance in the Hotel de Ville.</p>	
		4.	<p>Fine morning followed by wet afternoon. Training as per Syllabus. In the afternoon our Soccer team defeated the 13th Battalion team by 5 goals to nil. The Mock Parliament Session was continued. In the absence of the C.O., who was away on leave, Major Sampson, acted as Speaker. Very heated ( and amusing) debates took place on the Bill before the House to Tax Bachelors and the House finally adjourned until Friday next.</p>	
		5.	<p>Drizzling most of the day. The usual Church Parades were held and in the afternoon various sports were indulged in. In the evening B. and D. Coys. combined held a very successful dance, the hall was again packed.</p>	
		6.	<p>Bright day. In the morning Platoon and Company Drill was carried on.. A football (rugby) match 15th Battalion versus 4th Field Engineers resulted in a victory for the 15th Battalion by 3 points to nil, after a strenuous and exciting game. The Mock Parliament sat again in the evening. The Opposition had greatly weakened and the Premier ( Lt. G. Jamieson, ) was able to carry through his Bill for the Taxation of Bachelors. During the day Lt. Keesing (12th Field Coy ) visited the Battalion and gave a very interesting lecture on Town Planning. The lecture was well attended and appreciated.</p>	

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PHILIPPEVILLE	1919			
	Jan 7.		Bright day but cold hard wind blowing. In the morning Platoon and Company Drill was carried on. In the evening A. and C. Coys. held another very successful dance. During the day Capt. H.R.Koch, M.C., Lieut. A.W.F.G. Crow, M.M., Lieut. C.M.Black, left for Australia.	
	8.		Dull day, slight showers. Companies carried on independently in the morning. Scratch football matches took place in the afternoon.	
	9.		Day very fair, occasional sunshine. In the morning musketry was indulged in. A rugby match against 4th Field Ambulance was played in the afternoon. Unfortunately the ground was very muddy. A strenuous game resulted in a draw, each side scoring 3 points.	
	10.		Fine clear day. In the morning a Battalion Parade was held. In the evening a combined company dance was held and was much enjoyed by all.	
	11		Dull showery day. In the morning Companies carried on independently on account of the rain. In the afternoon, the soccer match versus 14th Battalion was won by our team by 4 goals to nil.	
	12		Dull day but otherwise fine. The usual Church Parades were held. A Soccer football match against a civilian team at Philippeville resulted in a draw. In the evening there was a "Bal organise par La Jeunesse de Philippeville en l'honneur des Officers Australiens". The hall was tastefully decorated and a most enjoyable time was spent. The good feeling between the civilians and ourselves was especially noticeable in the two events of today.	
	13.		Dull day again. Platoon Drill and Rifle Exercises carried out. In the afternoon the rugby match versus 13th Battalion was lost by us - the final score being 6 points to 5. In a Soccer match against 4th Field Engineers we were also unsuccessful losing by 3 goals.	
	14		Dull day but otherwise fine. A Battalion Parade was held. In the morning the Brigadier visited the companies and was very pleased with everything.	
	15		Wet rainy day. It had been arranged for the Battalion to visit the Brigade Sports but owing to the inclement weather, these had to be postponed. Companies carried on in their billets independently.	

D. D. & L., London, E.C.  
(A10266) Wt W5300/P713 750,000 2/18 Sch. 52 Forms/C2118/16.

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201

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
PHILIPPEVILLE	1919			
	Jan. 16.		<p>Fine clear day. A Battalion Parade was held in the morning followed by a Route March. In the afternoon, our Rugby team defeated the 4th Field Engineers by 3 points to nil. The game was fast and strenuous and provoked much excitement.</p>	
	17		<p>Cloudy day. Companies carried on independently. In the afternoon various scratch football matches were held.</p>	
	18		<p>At first fine, later rainy. The Battalion marched over to CHAUMONT ( 7 kilos ) to take part in the Brigade Sports. The day at first was fine but the ground proved very heavy for the competitors. Our team won its heat in the Tug-of-War and other places were obtained in various events. Heavy sleety rain commenced to fall at midday and the Sports had to be abandoned before the finals could be decided.</p>	
	19		<p>Dull day. Usual church parades were held. In the afternoon a football match (Rugby) against the civilians here was won rather easily by us.</p>	
	20		<p>Sharp frosty day. Musketry was carried out on the range. In the afternoon the Brigade Sports were finished. Lt. Willcox of this Battalion was our most successful competitor, winning the 100 yards championship, Officers race, 2nd. in open 100 yards Brigade Championship and also winning the Gallipoli Race. During the day a draft of 3 Officers and 57 O/Ranks left us en route for Australia. The 3 Officers were Lieuts, E.W. Simon, M.M., M.A. Cook, and B.C. Newland.</p>	
	21		<p>Sharp, clear frosty day. Training carried out as per Syllabus. A scratch Rugby match C. Coy. Versus B. Coy. was won by the former after a fast exciting match.</p>	
	22		<p>Sharp, clear frosty day. Training carried out as per Syllabus.</p>	
	23		<p>Dull day, snowing slightly. Battalion parade followed by route march. In the afternoon our Rugby team defeated the 13th Battalion team by 11 points to nil.</p>	
	24		<p>Sharp clear frosty day. Training carried out as per Syllabus. In the afternoon scratch football matches were played.</p>	

D. D. & L., London, E.C.  
(A10266) Wt W5300/P713 750,000 2/18 Sch. 52 Forms/C2118/16.

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
PHILIPPEVILLE	1919 Jan 25.		Another sharp clear frosty day. Training as per Syllabus. In the afternoon, scratch football matches were played. In the evening A. and C. Coys. combined gave a very enjoyable dance. There were many civilians present and a very pleasant evening was spent by all.	
	26		Dull day, snowing steadily most of the time. The usual Church Parades were held. The "Jeunesse" of the town gave a return dance to the Sergeants. The hall was crowded and all had a most enjoyable evening.	
	27		Dull day with a little snow. Training as per Syllabus. A fair quantity of snow had fallen and many snow-balling contests were indulged in. Officers, Privates and civilians engaged in a general mêlée and there were many amusing incidents. The fun was generally enjoyed and a general armistice finished hostilities.	
	28		Bright day but cold and frosty. Training as per Syllabus. The dance given by B. and D. Coys. took place in the evening and proved very successful. The hall as usual was packed.	
	29		Another bright frosty day. Training as per Syllabus. News having been received that it would be necessary for the Battalion to vacate PHILIPPEVILLE and move nearer FLORENNES, in order to make room for the 12th Brigade, great consternation was aroused amongst all, especially amongst the civilian population. Such cordial relationships have been established that immediately and spontaneously, the civilians addressed a memorandum to the Brigadier asking that we be allowed to stay. This was signed by all the important civilians here. A copy of the letter is attached. In the evening the C.O. attended a Brigade Conference at FLORENNES. Another large draft left during the day for Australia. It consisted of Capt. C.C. Drane, M.C., and Lieut. F.R. Mudge and 93 O/Ranks.	
	30		Dull day, slight fall of snow. Training as per Syllabus. Outside sport (except snow-balling) was impossible owing to the state of the ground.	
	31		Dull day cold and frosty. Training as per Syllabus. No sports could be held in the afternoon.  Strength of Battalion including detached. 35 Officers and 542 Other Ranks.	

*C. M. Johnston*

.....Lieut. Col.  
COMMANDING 15th BATTALION.

## WAR DIARY

OF

15<sup>th</sup> Battalion A.I.F.

FOR

January 1919.

## LIST OF APPENDICES.

No.	Subject.
1	Training syllabus
2	Educational "
3	Ipswich report
4	Q.M.'s "
5	Letter from civilians of Phillipville
6	Translation of notes

15th BATTALION, A. I. F.

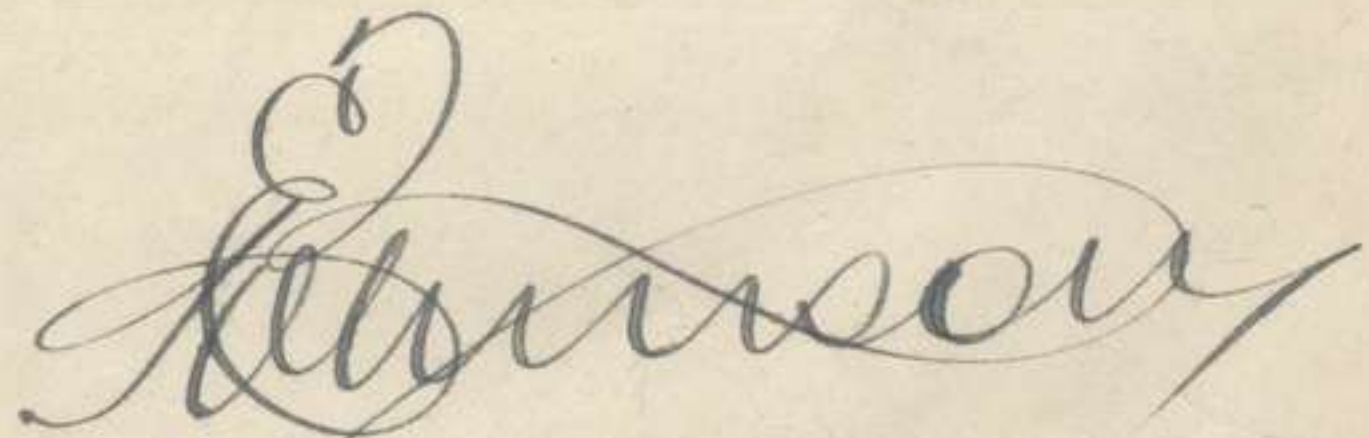
SYLLABUS OF TRAINING FROM 13th JANUARY to 26th JANUARY 1919.

MORNING PARADES 0915 - 1200.

MONDAY 13-1-19.	Company Drill.	Baths for 2 Companies.
TUESDAY 14-1-19.	Company Drill.	Baths for 2 Companies.
WEDNESDAY 15-1-19.	Musketry.	
THURSDAY 16-1-19.	Route March and Foot Inspection.	
FRIDAY 17-1-19.	Rifle Exercises, Guards and Sentries.	
SATURDAY 18-1-19.	Battalion Parade, Battalion Drill.	
SUNDAY 19-1-19.	Church Parades.	
MONDAY 20-1-19.	Musketry.	Baths for 2 Companies.
TUESDAY 21-1-19.	Musketry.	Baths for 2 Companies.
WEDNESDAY 22-1-19.	Route March and Foot Inspection.	
THURSDAY 23-1-19.	Thorough inspection of companies, Company Drill.	
FRIDAY 24-1-19.	Musketry.	
SATURDAY 25-1-19.	Battalion Parade, C.O.'s. Inspection, Battalion Drill.	
SUNDAY 26-1-19.	Church Parades.	

.....  
AFTERNOONS.  
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Football, Training for Brigade Sports, Boxing.



.....Captain,  
ADJUTANT 15th BATTALION.



EDUCATIONAL CLASSES (Morning 1045-1145)

2

C and D Coys.		ROOMS		A and C Coys	
				ANNEX- ROOMS.	
MONDAY	SHORTHAND ENGLISH FRENCH	D Coys ROOM No 4 Ed ROOMS 1 do	BOOKKEEPING ARITHMETIC GERMAN	No 2 Ed ROOMS C Coys ROOM No 3 Ed ROOM	
TUESDAY	BOOKKEEPING ARITHMETIC GERMAN	No 2 Ed ROOMS D Coys ROOM No 3 Ed ROOMS	SHORTHAND ENGLISH FRENCH	No 5 Ed ROOMS 4 do 1 do	
WEDNESDAY	SHORTHAND ENGLISH FRENCH	D Coys room No 4 Ed ROOM 1 do	BOOKKEEPING ARITHMETIC GERMAN	No 2 Ed ROOM C Coys ROOM No 3 Ed ROOMS.	
THURSDAY	BOOKKEEPING ARITHMETIC GERMAN	No 2 Ed ROOMS D Coys room No 3 Ed ROOMS	SHORTHAND ENGLISH FRENCH	No 5 Ed ROOMS 4 do 1 do	
FRIDAY	SHORTHAND ENGLISH FRENCH	D Coys room No 4 Ed ROOMS 1 do	BOOKKEEPING ARITHMETIC GERMAN	No 2 Ed ROOMS C Coys ROOM No 3 Ed ROOMS.	
SATURDAY	BOOKKEEPING ARITHMETIC GERMAN	No 2 Ed ROOMS D Coys ROOM No 3 Ed ROOMS	SHORTHAND ENGLISH FRENCH	No 5 Ed ROOMS 4 do 1 do	

ROOMS. C and D Coys. Recreation Rooms  
Nos 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, Educational Rooms, Rue de la Balance.

Students are able to select any two subjects - where these occur on the same day in their Unit, they may go to the other Unit's class for one subject. Thus, a man from D Coy. taking Shorthand and English can take Shorthand on Monday, Wednesday and Friday at D Coy's room and English on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at No 4 R. E.O. Room.

AFTERNOON CLASSES AT EDUCATION ROOMS.

MONDAY	ALGEBRA GEOMETRY	1345-1445 1445-1545	Cpl. B. Flewell-Smith do
TUESDAY	TRIGONOMETRY ENGLISH LITERATURE	1345-1445 1445-1545	Pte F. W. Paterson Pte H. T. Donnelly.
THURSDAY	ALGEBRA GEOMETRY	1345-1445 1445-1545	Cpl B. Flewell-Smith do
FRIDAY	TRIGONOMETRY ENGLISH LITERATURE	1345-1445 1445-1545	Pte F. W. Paterson. Pte H. T. Donnelly.

SPECIAL COURSES AT EDUCATION ROOMS.

TUESDAY ) WEDNESDAY ) FRIDAY )	1445-1545	Elementary course in Telephones,	Lt B.C. Hewland
WEDNESDAY ) FRIDAY )	1445-1545	Book-keeping	Pte A.R. Hughes

Students desirous of other courses should hand in their names to the Education Office, and if instructors can be obtained, classes will be formed.

.....\*

To.

3

REPORT ON TRANSPORT FOR MONTH ENDING 31st JANUARY 1919.

For the month the Battalion has been stationed at PHILIPPEVILLE and apart from the usual routine of work, nothing of great importance has occurred.

Our main trouble as regards supplies has been the inability to obtain whale oil for the harness, the dubbin issued as a substitute is far from being good, the trouble is the dubbin usually freezes.

All animals were inspected by the D.A.D.V.S. and classified and have also been inoculation.

*P. H. O'Brien* Lieut.

Transport Officer.

1-2-1919.

To.

Q.M.'s. REPORT FOR THE MONTH OF JANUARY 1919.

SUPPLIES.

For the month of January supplies generally were complete and regular. Equivalents issued were generally satisfactory except in the instance of equivalents for the purpose of replacing the supply of fresh vegetables. The difficulty of effectively replacing ( where usual supplies fail to come forward ) such valuable components of rations is generally recognised, but greater advantage would apparently be taken of local markets, especially in the purchase of green vegetables which are indispensable. It was again found necessary to supplement the usual supply of vegetables by local purchases. This practice however was greatly curtailed on account of the lack of regimental funds.

DIET SHEETS, which are compiled daily, were found to be invaluable and are always retained as a record and a guide to future preparation.

BISCUIT FLOUR. Greatly facilitates the manufacture of improvised dishes such as, rissoles, cheese cakes etc., and is obtained in quantities by crushing to a fine powder the ordinary army biscuit which is always available.

RICE FLOUR. can be used for almost any purpose for which flour is required and is obtained by crushing to a fine powder the ordinary rice.

IMPROVISED OVENS. Were found to give excellent results and greatly facilitates the serving of roast joints and baked vegetables. Such ovens are constructed on Aldershot model and are made in size according to the number of men for which it is required to prepare meals.

*A. J. Beard*  
.....Lieut.  
QUARTERMASTER 15th BATTALION.

1-2-1919.

Province de Namur  
Ville de Philippesville

Philippesville le 28 Janvier 1919

5

~~Copy~~

Monsieur le Général,

Ce matin, la population de Philippesville a appris que le 15<sup>e</sup> B de troupes australiennes qui tient garnison dans notre ville depuis six semaines, allait être déplacé et envoyé dans une localité voisine.

Cette nouvelle a été reçue avec une grande tristesse par notre population qui a appris à connaître et à aimer les Officiers et soldats australiens qui, à tant de titres, méritent notre recon:

naissance.

S'il s'agissait de démobiliser et de renvoyer ces troupes en Australie, nous ne pourrions que les remercier, les féliciter et leur offrir nos vœux d'heureux retour dans leur Patrie, mais comme il est simplement question de les déplacer, nous venons Monsieur le Général, au nom de toute la population, vous prier de maintenir le 15<sup>e</sup> B à Philippeville, et ce pour les raisons suivantes:

La population civile et les troupes australiennes s'entendent parfaitement, les officiers et les soldats sont très

satisfaits de leurs relations avec les habitants.

Pour le peu de temps que ces troupes doivent encore rester en Belgique, il semble qu'il ne soit pas absolument nécessaire de les envoyer dans les environs où elle devront prendre de nouvelles habitudes et chercher d'autres relations. Il en serait de même pour nous.

Enfin, le nombre de soldats étant diminué par la démobilisation d'une partie d'entre eux, on pourrait, s'il était nécessaire, trouver chez nous le logement de nouvelles troupes, tout en maintenant celles qui s'y trouvent actuellement.

Nous espérons, Monsieur le Général,  
que vous examinerez notre requête avec  
la plus grande bienveillance et  
Nous vous prions d'agréer l'hommage  
de nos respectueux sentiments.

*Grison*  
Suivent les signatures d'un grand nombre  
de Philippévillains.

PHILIPPEVILLE,  
28th Jan. 1919.

The General.

*Translation*

6

This morning the people of Philippeville have learnt that the 15th Battalion, A.I.F. who have been billeted in our town for 6 weeks are about to be moved and sent to a neighbouring locality.

This news has been received with much regret by our people who have learnt to know and to like the Australians, both Officers and soldiers, who in a very high degree, merit our esteem.

If it were a question of demobilising and of sending back the troops to Australia, we could only thank them, congratulate them, and offer them our best wishes for a happy return to their country; but, as it is simply a question of changing billets, we come, Sir, in the name of the whole population to beg you to keep the 15th Battalion in Philippeville, and this, for the following reasons :-

The civil population and the Australian troops understand one another perfectly and the Officers and soldiers are very well satisfied with their relations with the inhabitants.

For the short time that the troops have still to stay in Belgium, it seems that it may not be absolutely necessary to send them into a new environment where they will have to become used to new customs and look for other acquaintances. It will be the same for us.

Lastly, since the number of soldiers is being diminished by demobilisation, we could, if necessary, find accommodation for the new troops, as well as maintaining those who are actually here.

We hope, Sir, that you will examine our request with the utmost good will and we beg you to accept the assurance of our most respectful sentiments.

(Signed) A E. Pirson.

( The signatures of a large number of citizens of Philippeville follow ).