

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

Chaplains

**Item number:** 6/5/9

**Title:** Senior Chaplain, Methodist,  
Headquarters AIF, London

September 1918



AWM4-6/5/9

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WAR DIARY

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

Chaplain's Department Army Form C. 2118.

Senior Methodist Chaplain 473  
September 1918

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Chaplain W. S. Bath	No 4	Command Depot, Hurdcoft	Statistics: - 5 Church Parades, average 450/500. 5 Holy Communion Services 8 Fellowship Meetings, 4 services in the adjoining villages, largely attended by soldiers. 3 Harvest Festival addresses. This Chaplain reports that the Open Conference inaugurated during August still continue with most gratifying features. Every Wednesday evening one is held & the subjects have been "Christianity & Religion", "The Authority of the Bible", "Conscience". Does it matter what a man believes? There has been a regular average attendance of from two to three hundred at these conferences & intense interest has been shown. Hospital visitation has been carried out systematically; the men have been visited in their huts & seen in the Y.M.C.A. & a great amount of personal work done among them.	
Chaplain A. P. Bladen	No 1	Australian Auxiliary Hospital Warefield.	Statistics. 6 Voluntary Services. 4 Communion Services. Two funerals conducted & rest of time written to. Approximately 3500 visits have been paid to the patients in the wards. On these visits papers, periodicals & comforts are taken & distributed and all the little ministries of helpfulness which go to make up a Hospital Chaplain's duty, are carried out.	
Chaplain V. R. Bradbury M.C.	No 2	Command Depot, Littleover Camp	Statistics: - 5 Church Parades 5 Voluntary Services. 4 Impromptu concerts conducted. The classes for incapacitated men are well maintained & attended very encouragingly. This Chaplain, with many other finds that the personal work among the men offers very fine opportunities & tells taking full advantage of them with very encouraging results.	

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Chaplain J. Y. Beveridge	R. B. A. A. Hayesbury.		<p>This Chaplain reported for duty from France towards the end of August &amp; received a very hearty welcome from those in authority. He finds that every aid is given him in his work &amp; that opportunities of service for the men are manifold.</p> <p>Statistics:- 5 Church Parades - held in the village Congregational Church - 2 Holy Communion services. 5 Voluntary services. 5 Fellowship Meetings. 5 Bible classes. 5 Sing songs conducted at the Congregational Institute. 4 Outgoing drafts have been farewelled &amp; coffee, cake &amp; cigarettes distributed to every man.</p> <p>This Chaplain reports that he has been made President of the Regimental Institutes &amp; subject to the will of the C. O. has to do with the distribution of the Regimental Funds. He has attended to all the Regimental Institutes &amp; has regularly visited them. He sees that everything is done in order &amp; exercises control over them.</p> <p>He spent one day in London at H. Q. writing up the back numbers of the War Diary for the Senior Chaplain.</p> <p>He visited the Australian Comforts Fund &amp; obtained the gift of a great deal of sporting material for the men.</p> <p>He acted as the C. O.'s substitute on the village Red Cross Symptom Committee &amp; carried out the duties pertaining thereto.</p> <p>He has worked with the Y. M. C. A. officials in the utmost harmony &amp; the outcome has been mutually beneficial.</p> <p>Finding that the men were very chary of visiting him in the Officers Quarters he has shifted his quarters to one of the Batteries &amp; the men now have no difficulty in coming to him. A great number have done so through the month &amp; advice, help, cheer encouragement &amp; consolation has been given gladly.</p>	
Chaplain R. Fingon.			<p>4 Inter-divisional Troops.</p> <p>Statistics 2 Church Parades, 1 Voluntary service. No more possible owing to open warfare. 5 funerals &amp; incidental correspondence.</p> <p>This Chaplain reports a difficulty in connection with burials. He says that the units have a practice of burying their dead near where they have fallen &amp; without reporting the case to the Chaplain, thus not giving him an opportunity of</p>	

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Chaplain R. Finegan			continued. having the body removed to an authorized cemetery, or, as in his case, where he has six units to look after, of giving Christian burial. He has taken great interest in educational work among the men of his charge & has been the means of commencing classes in a variety of subjects. The project has been taken up enthusiastically & men have already taken up studies in French, English, Book Keeping, Commercial Correspondence, Mathematics & Elementary Science.	
Chaplain H. C. Foreman M.A.	3 <sup>rd</sup> Aust General Hospital, Rouen, Abbeville.		Statistics: - 12 Voluntary Services from 15 to 150 attending. 5 Communion Services, 5 Fellowship meetings, 5 Week evening services This Chaplain reports that a special Harvest Festival service was held during the month. Gifts of fruit were made by the staff & outades to such an extent that every patient in the hospital subsequently received some. Religious literature & New Testaments from the Bible Society have been distributed & gladly received. A library has been formed & books are regularly loaned to the patients. The wards are carefully visited & the number of patients seen daily is generally 200 or over. Correspondence for sick & helpless men is undertaken often as many letters as 400 being written during the month in this way. He has conducted services in the adjoining P of W. Camp, in the W.A. A. C. Hut & the South African Hospital Church. He is much impressed by the character of the patients. Are men who had lost both his arms would salute with one stump & throw a kiss to the sister with the other & was never anything but bright & cheerful. For one week in the month he did all the funeral duty for the whole area for all of the Protestants in the military & German cemeteries.	
Chaplain W. C. Francis	4 <sup>th</sup> Light Horse Brigade, Palestine.		Statistics: - 3 Church Parades, 4 Bible Classes This Chaplain reports that the Brigade has been on the move a great deal & thus religious work is rather handicapped. He is concentrating on work of a personal nature among the men. He is in charge of a library provided by the brigade fund & finds that it is a great boon. He speaks very gratefully of the assistance given him in his work by the C. O. officers & also records the very harmonious & D. D. & L., London, E.C. relations existing between the different Chaplains. They are bonded together to assist in the work against the evils of ill-humour & one of their number has been set aside to lecture on the question.	

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Chaplain H. Green.	A. S. B. D. Havre		<p>Statistics: 7 Church Parades, average 400 men. 12 Voluntary Services at A. S. B. D. average 200. 4 Voluntary services at No 39 Hospital, average 700. Letters written, approximately 300. Hospital Patients visited, approx 2000. Devotional meetings 30, average attendance 30. "Fun Starts" &amp; Lantern services have been run as opportunity permitted.</p> <p>During the month 350 men have signed the War Roll Card which is as follows: "I hereby pledge my allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ as my saviour and King, &amp; by God's help will fight the battles for the Victory of the Kingdom." These men were all linked up with the Chaplains of their units &amp; their true faith verified.</p> <p>The work in the No 39 General Hospital (Veracruz) goes on most successfully &amp; has been attended with the most encouraging results. A very great amount of personal work is done by this Chaplain &amp; his room is repeatedly sought &amp; he advice &amp; help asked &amp; given.</p>	
Chaplain J. Humphrey	27th Battalion A.I.F		<p>Statistics: - Church Parades 3. Voluntary Services 3. Fellowship Meetings 2. Holy Communion 2. Lecture 1. Letters to rest of men written 40. In answer to enquiries 25. Burials 30.</p> <p>This Chaplain reports that his battalion was in the line for 11 days &amp; out in rest the remainder of the month. He was appointed Bdr Representative on both Brigade &amp; Divisional Sports Committee &amp; assisted in the two meetings which were arranged.</p> <p>He obtained sports material from the comforts fund &amp; distributed it to the men. He followed the troops with the canteen wherever they have been. The receipts for the month was 15,500 francs.</p> <p>As the troops were in rest in the banks of a canal, he arranged a series of aquatic events &amp; great interest was taken in these pictures. His services have been at the disposal of the men at any time &amp; they have been greatly availed of.</p>	

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Chaplain H. Heath	12	Training Battalion, Hurdcott.	<p>Statistics. 8 Church Parades. 8 Fellowship Meetings. 4 Open conferences on Moral &amp; Religious Questions.</p> <p>This chaplain works in the greatest harmony with the other chaplains &amp; Y.M.C. secretaries and finds the associations mutually beneficial. Special Parade services are held for the newly arrived men who are isolated each Sunday.</p>	
Chaplain C. Jenkins	No 2	Command Depot, Westham Camp.	<p>Statistics: Church Parades 12. Voluntary services 5. Week night Sing songs 5. Fellowship Meetings 5.</p> <p>This chaplain has been working a number of hours &amp; has exercised supervision over others as far as religious services are concerned. He has been taking charge of the religious work of the Y.M.C.A. but complains that not much assistance is given him in this direction as their activities are mainly social &amp; religion is relegated to a very secondary place.</p> <p>He has regularly visited the 4 hospitals in his area &amp; has discharged a ministry of kindness &amp; helpfulness to the patients there.</p> <p>He has been appointed by the C.O. to the position of adviser &amp; helper of the unfortunately too many disabled wives of Australian Soldiers who are in the district &amp; who are continuously seeking information about their husbands.</p>	
Chaplain J. A. Gault	A. J. B. D.	Naure.	<p>This chaplain continues to carry out his magnificent work with very fine results. His report only covers half of the month as, owing to being somewhat run down, a medical board had given him three weeks leave, which commenced on the 16th.</p> <p>Statistics for 15 days:- Church Parades 5. Pleasant Sunday Afternoons 2. Voluntary Sunday evening services 3. Communion services 4. Farewell services for drafts 2. Week night Sunday services 4. Devotional services 4. Lectures 1. Fun Nights 2.</p>	

D. P. & L., London, E.C. (A10266) Wt W5300/P713 750,000 2/18 Sch. 82 Forms/C2118/16

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Chaplain J. A. Gault			<p>continued.            Social Evenings 4. Excursions 2. Visits to Haver Gault 2. Visits to 39 General Hospital 2.            Decisions for God 299.            A new feature of this Chaplain's work is in connection with the Gault visitation. He has instituted a Church Parade that is very greatly appreciated by the prisoners. He visits as many of them as he can &amp; helps them as circumstances permit.            He writes: - "The thing which impresses me is what Dr. God Newton states of as 'The accessibility of the claims of religion to the soldier': as one said the other day the 'God was never so popular as he is to-day'. At every religious service there is a response to an appeal to make a decision &amp; to persist in God's service. The outlook is full of hope."</p>	
Chaplain S. W. Johnstone			<p>1st Coy. B. Sutton Vaux.            Statistics: - Church Parades 6. Voluntary Services 8. Devotional services in Y.M.C.A. held from 8-30 to 9 p.m. 24. Decisions for God 18. Chairman at Lectures 4. Hospital Patients visited. approx 420. Special attention is paid to serious cases. Letters written 14.            In connection with Church Parades &amp; religious services, this Chaplain regrets the lack of interest which the officers show &amp; states that they are usually conspicuous by their absence. He speaks in the highest terms of the behaviour &amp; deportment of the N.C.O.s &amp; men on parade.            He also records his pleasure in being associated with the Y.M.C.A. in the camp &amp; counts its leader a great asset to the religious life of the place.</p>	
Chaplain A. A. Mills			<p>41st Battalion A.I.F.            This Chaplain after having been badly gassed some time ago rejoined his unit on the 21st August at Sauby Launette &amp; received a very hearty welcome from officers &amp; men.            For the period 21st Aug to Sept 9th the Brigade was in the forward &amp; front line areas. This Chaplain lived in the R.A.P. with the Medical officer &amp; was of great assistance in attending to the wounded &amp; assisting in their evacuation.</p>	

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Chaplain A. J. Mills			<p>continued.            Statistics. 4 Church Parades. 2 Communion Services. 100 letters to bereaved relatives and friends. 3 concerts. Burials 84.            From the 9<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> the Brigade was out in rest near DOINAT. A large hut was placed at the disposal of the Chaplain for Recreation purposes &amp; he had it fitted up with forms &amp; tables. Equipment was supplied by the M.C.A. and a fine institution was in full swing in a few days. under his charge</p>	
Chaplain C. J. Perry	8 <sup>th</sup> of A. B.		<p>Owing to the continual moves this Chaplain reports that very little organized religious work was possible. He has been concentrating on the individual &amp; personal type of service &amp; has found abundant opportunity in this respect. He speaks of the intense interest manifested by the men of his charge in spiritual things &amp; feels that the continual danger in which they have been for some considerable time is a contributory cause to this.            Statistics:- 1 Church Parade 1 Holy Communion. 10 burials. 20 letters written to relatives of deceased &amp; wounded men.</p>	
Chaplain G. W. Pittendrigh	2 <sup>nd</sup> Battalion A.I.F.		<p>Statistics. Church Parades 2. Voluntary Services 2. Burials 26. Letters written 45.            This Chaplain reports that the Battalion was in the line most of the month. During that period he alternated between the A. I. F., Battalion H. Q. and the Transport lines. He spent a considerable portion of the time that the Battalion was in the line, searching for the dead &amp; having them conveyed to authorized cemeteries &amp; giving them Christian burial.</p>	
Chaplain W. Mills Robson	46 <sup>th</sup> Battalion		<p>Statistics: 2 Church Parades. 6 Bible classes averaging 30. 9 Evening Song Services. 2 Voluntary services. 50 letters written. 12 burials.            This Battalion spent half of the month back in rest, the other half was spent in the reserve &amp; forward areas. This Chaplain took charge of the Church Parades and            During the former period.</p>	



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<i>Chaplain Mills Robson.</i>			<p><i>continued.</i>  various religious services arranged which was included a special Memorial service to those who had fallen in the fighting early in the month. He instituted a Bible class 3 times a week &amp; conducted an evening song service at the Y.M.C.A. from 8.40 to 9 p.m. every night.  He arranged sports for the men &amp; was instrumental in obtaining material for their games etc.  He established a Recreation &amp; Writing Room, obtained a piano &amp; equipment for it &amp; made it a great social centre for the men.  Whilst the Battalion was in the line he spent most of his time at the A.I.S. &amp; Battalion R.A.P. discharging a ministry of comfort &amp; cheer &amp; helpfulness to the wounded who passed through.</p>	
<i>Chaplain J. J. Webb.</i>	<i>2<sup>nd</sup> Aust Inf. Brigade</i>		<p><i>Stobbes - 1, Church Parade. 2 Voluntary services. 3 concerts arranged. 13 Burials</i>  <i>25 Letters written &amp; hundreds censored.</i>  This chaplain reports that the Brigade was in action or on the march during practically the whole of the month &amp; all but personal work was almost impossible. His time was divided between the wagon lines and gun positions. The latter were regularly &amp; frequently visited &amp; literature &amp; comforts distributed.</p>	

## WAR DIARY

OF

Senior Methodist Chaplain

FOR

September

1918

## LIST OF APPENDICES.

No.

Subject.

Incidents supplied by Chaplain W. Mills Robson  
46<sup>th</sup> Battalion.

The Sporting Spirit

Whilst in the back area Brigade arranged for a special "stunt". One section was to hold a line of trenches whilst another section attempted to capture them. As the troops moved forward numerous fares were disturbed & beat a hasty retreat. When nearing the final objective a fare bounded out of a cop only to find itself surrounded by an hilarious light hearted crowd of "Aussies". This was too much for the sporting instinct of the "diggers". "Well catch him" was the general cry. All hands joined in. The shout was the general cry. All hands joined in. The shouting voices of the officers were soon heard castigating the men for neglecting their duty. "Can't you see the General over there" they roared. The chase was abandoned by all with the exception of one man who said "General or no General, my gang to catch that fare". Soon his bayonet went flying through the air. Missed. With a supreme effort he flung his rifle at the escaping quarry. Missed. Wildly rushing in he flung his entrenching tool at the practically exhausted fare. This time success crowned his effort. Triumphantly holding up his capture he walked across to an old French woman working in the field. saying "There, Madame, is a 'dies bon' feed for you. Being severely reprimanded by his Company Commander & threatened with punishment, he simply grinned & said "anyhow I got him".

During the Big Push on the 18<sup>th</sup> September a private in the 46<sup>th</sup> Battalion rusted the machine gun position & killed the gunners. He then put the gun out of action. Moving on he found himself outnumbered by a party of Germans led by an officer, who speaking in English said, "What are you doing here?" "Come to take you prisoner" was the quick reply. Calling to a couple of mates to then sought to put his words into action. The officer ran to the gun & threatened to shoot them down unless they surrendered. "You can't. Shut it out of action" & then he took the party prisoners, as he was being taken to the rear the officer dejectedly remarked "If we only had an army like you Aussies, we would have won the war long ago".

True Comradship.

An Australian talking from Broken Hill was

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 badly hit in the leg. Before the stretcher bearers got to him he had lost a large quantity of blood. Arriving at the A. D. S. he was more dead than alive. The doctors desisted of saving his life. Before operating it was necessary to ~~make~~ make an infusion of blood. A mate offered to supply the necessary blood & it was duly infused. The operation was successfully performed & the leg removed. After a couple of days of careful nursing the wounded man was taken to the C. S. S. As he was being transferred to the ambulance car he jokingly said "Well, I think I've got an Aussie out of this". A stretcher bearer remarked "Don't get great to think that another fellow's blood has saved that chap's life". Another standing by immediately said "We'd all be willing to be bled as often as they liked if our blood would save a cobbler's life". And they would.