

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

Infantry

Item number: 23/49/41

Title: 32nd Infantry Battalion

December 1918



AWM4-23/49/41

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CONFIDENTIAL.

ORIGINAL.
DUPLICATE.
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Australian Imperial Force.

WAR DIARY

OF

32nd Battalion A.I.F.

FOR

December 1918

Signature of Officer compiling

[Handwritten Signature]
Lieut

Signature of Officer Commanding

[Handwritten Signature]
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.

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Reference Maps

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
BUSIGNY	1		Church Parades. Settling down in new Billets.	
	2		Relascation of censorship in matter of places and descriptions.	
	3		Battalion bathed.	
	4 1/2		No special work. Preparations for next move.	
	5		Battalion marched to MAZINGHEIM, leaving @ 1400, arriving 1730.	
MAZINGHEIM	7		Battalion route marched to RUE DE BOIS.	
RUE DE BOIS	8		Church of England's Holy Communion @ 1100	
	9		Lt Col. J. A. McArthur ^{Asst.} took charge of 32nd Battalion.	
	10 1/2		Companies worked independently during mornings at Physical Training, Bayonet Fighting and drill.	
	15		Transport conveyed all spare kit, Lewis Guns and Technical Stores to SARRS-POTERIES.	
	17		All packs loaded at A.M. Store ready for transport.	
	18		Battalion route-marched to AVESNES via FAVRIL and LANDRECIES. Adopted columns of trees; found it most successful. Good billets at AVESNES.	
	19		Battalion route-marched to SARRS-POTERIES.	

J.A.M.

WAR DIARY

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
SARS-POTERIES	20		Morning cleaning up equipment and arranging billets. 100 Princes of Wales visited Battalion. Companies commenced Demobilisation Returns. General preparations for Christmas. Major B.A. Wark D.S.O. awarded the Victoria Cross.	
	21		Company parade during morning. Inspections, Drill, PT, BF and Musketry	
	22		Company parade RC, Co of E and O.P.D Church parades. Sody commences at 0800. Voluntary service @ 1800.	
	23		Company parades for PT, BF and drill during morning. Commercial classes under Educational Scheme commenced.	
	24		Company parades during morning. Final preparations for Xmas.	
	25		Christmas Day. Men from all Companies and Headquarters have breakfast and lunch in Pottery. Lt Gen Battalion dinner. Officers with their men. Both Divisional Commanders and Brigade Commanders were present, and each in turn were given a magnificent reception by the men. Later on the hall again rang with cheers when the health of Major Wark V.C. DSO was proposed by Brigadier General Davies DSO.	Special order attached appendix
	26		Football match against Engineers. In the evening the Battalion cooks and the guard of the day before had their Christmas dinner.	
	27		Company parades. HQ and Coy Sergeants who had waited on men on Xmas Day celebrated their Christmas Dinner.	

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WAR DIARY

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Reference War. Manuscript 2/100000

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
SARS POTERIES	28		H. R. H. the Prince of Wales presented medals to nineteen members of the Battalion at SOLRE LE CHATEAU. Early 1915 men leave Battalion for return to Australia.	
	29		Company parades for PT and drill. Educational classes.	
	30		Inspection of Battalion billets by Brigade Commanders. Battalion football team plays against team from 14th Brigade Group.	
	31		Company parades and educational classes. B Coy hold dance in Company Mess Room.	

See

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WAR DIARY

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LIST OF APPENDICES.

No.	Subject.
A.	Special order re Christmas Festivities
B.	Transport Officer's Report
C.	Quartermaster's Report
D.	Educational Report

Done

SPECIAL ORDER

By. Lieut. Colonel J. McArthur D.S.O. Commanding 32nd Battalion. A.I.F.

The Commanding Officer desires to place on record his appreciation of the excellent work performed by all concerned in making the arrangements for, and carrying out the Xmas Festivities.

It was solely due to their untiring zeal and energy that we were able to seat the whole Battalion together for Xmas Dinner.

Owing to transport and other difficulties supplies were extremely difficult to obtain, but notwithstanding this they were obtained and everything worked without a hitch.

The work performed by Major B.A. Wark V.C. D.S.O. who acted as President of the Committees, Captain & Q.M. Weaver who had the general management and organisation of the gathering and the remainder of the Committee who rendered such valuable services, also R.Q.M.S. Lodge and Sergeant Charles "M.S.M" who were largely responsible for the organisation of catering arrangements, the C.S. Majors, C.Q.M. Sergeants and Sergeants of the Battalion for their whole hearted support and particularly Sergeant Dredge (Sgt. Cook) and all of the cooks who worked so hard in preparing the dinner, Sergeant Francis and his Pioneers for their excellent work in connection with the seating accommodation.

The Commanding Officer takes this opportunity of conveying to all Officers and other ranks of the Battalion his best wishes for a Bright, Happy and Prosperous New Year, at the same time trusting that during the coming year all will be comfortably settled down in their homes in Australia.

26/12/18.

J. Anderson Lieutenant.
A/Adj. for C.O. 32nd Battalion A.I.F.

Wark

Transports Officer's Report for December 1918.

For the month ending December 1918 no appreciable difference regarding the quantity of work carried out by the transport section has been shown. Comparing with preceeding months a slight increase is evident rather than a decrease, doubtless this may be attributed to railheads being so far apart in this area, and the ever increasing demand for motor transport being apparent.

Early in the month we were handicapped by having to endure a long and tedious journey; before the animals had time to properly recover from the effects of same we were immediately confronted with the task of having to cart our own supplies as the Divisional Train had to withdraw all their teams for the purpose of carting from railhead to dump.

After leaving REJET we were told that from the ~~the~~ no motor transport would be available, but as a substitute we would have four limbers attached to us from the Divisional Ammunition Column.

We also found that we would have to supply sufficient transport to carry all the Battalion packs as well as blankets and this required more vehicles than we possessed including attached teams

The distance from our present quarters to our previous ones was approximately 35 kilometres. Three extra journeys had to be made before the Battalion moved and we had to supply three G.S. Waggon and nine limbers for each journey in four days.

When we eventually reached our Winter quarters our animals were rather jaded and legweary, but fortunately found we had been provided with splendid stabling in our new area. However work still continued to be plentiful as wood and coal had to be carted daily not only for cooking purposes, but also for the billets. ~~the~~

Immediately we arrived at our destination, two attached waggons were ordered to return to their Units once more leaving all the work of the Battalion and much of the Brigade work to our own animals. During the fortnight we have been in our Winter quarters we have had to supply on average eight teams every day (including ~~over~~ Christmas Day) for Battalion work, and one team every two days for Brigade Headquarters.

Officers chargers have not been overworked.

The fodder ration has certainly improved a little, but even now it is far from satisfactory only averaging 6 to 8lbs of oats per head per day, and from 7 to 8 lbs. of hay. Although the quantity has slightly increased, it has, however, deteriorated in quality, frequently finding the hay too mouldy for the animals to eat it, and often necessary to destroy a good deal.

Very little sickness has been experienced and nothing at all infectious only a few cases of lameness although nothing serious.

One horse was evacuated suffering from Laminitis.

CC

from ASC since we have been in
this Area.

The standard of supplies generally speaking
was maintained but in the cases of
Fresh Vegetables, Salt & pepper the
supplies were inadequate. The first named
commodity was supplemented by
supplies purchased from
Battalion Funds.

Handwritten scribbles and initials, possibly "M. J. G." or similar.

Handwritten initials, possibly "J. G." or similar.

During December very little of interest
transpired in this branch.

The transport problem, owing to the number
of moves the unit made, again manifested
itself & caused some inconvenience, due to
some extent to the Battalion maintaining
its strength and in the case of officers being
considerably in excess of Establishment
Prior to the Battalion moving into this Area
from Basrah, all available stores &
including packs, steel helmets, sheepskins,
& T.P.s were sent forward thus leaving the
1st & 2nd Lines of Transport available for
carrying the men's blankets.

Stores During the month in some cases
the scale of equipment was reduced and the
stores rendered surplus were returned to
D.A.D.S. (Flags signal among Poles, Binoculars
& Compasses magnetic). Authority was also
received to submit indents for stores
required to complete Regimental equipment
but not considered necessary to be in
possession of unit. Indents were submitted.

A very small percentage of Clothing P.D. was
received from D.A.D.S. probably owing to
transportation difficulties.
Salasses & Straw were received & issued
in this Area.

Supplies A lot of inconvenience was
caused owing to the irregular issue of rations

32nd Battalion A.I.F.Educational For month of December 1918

During the month the Educational Scheme within the Battalion has been commenced. Many difficulties have ~~been~~ confronted by the Staff in their work of organising classes of instruction and the grading of men into categories with a view to instruction as facilities are provided or vacancies in special courses occur.

In the first place the Officer who was sent across to England to attend the Educational Conference was taken sick and did not return to the Battalion. Lieut. Haslam stepped into the breach and has worked incessantly himself and also infused his staff and his deputies into the different Companies with like enthusiasm.

The lack of suitable accommodation for the different classes has caused a certain amount of delay and inconvenience.

Furniture is almost a negative quantity in this area, and the matter of lighting and fuel is very difficult. Forms and tables have however been constructed and the class rooms have been made as comfortable and convenient as possible.

The number of subjects on which instruction can at present be given, also the standard of such instruction, are very much limited owing to the fact that Text books have been unobtainable. Even the most advanced student, or the most capable instructor needs to "brush up" after being out of touch with his subject for a year or two.

~~Attendance~~ Instruction is now being given in Commercial subjects (Including Shorthand and Bookkeeping) English literature and mathematics (Arithmetic, Algebra and Trigonometry) and the attendance at these classes is quite encouraging.

The apathy with regard to Educational training which is often encountered, is to a large extent accounted for by the persistent rumors of early Demobilization, but now that the scheme is in working order, interest is growing daily and a large number of men will gain knowledge which will be most valuable to them in their future careers.

Haslam