

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

Infantry

Item number: 23/37/46

Title: 20th Infantry Battalion

November 1918 - March 1919



AWM4-23/37/46

20TH BATTALION A.I.F.

C.O.S MONTHLY REPORTS.

[Duplicates]

NOV, - DECEMBER 1918

FEB. TO MARCH 1919.

C.O.'s REPORT FOR MONTH OF DECEMBER, 1918.

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From the 1st to the 17th of the month the Unit remained at BEAREPARE. During the period great attention was paid to Education Class. Eighteen classes were formed, and got well under way, great interest being taken by the troops in all classes, and a good attendance maintained. Training consisted of 1 hour parade in the morning, and a two-hour's route march twice a week. Recreational training such as football, hockey, etc. played every afternoon. Naturally the troops were all in fine condition.

On the 17th inst. the march to the RHINE was resumed. The destination for that day was AVESNELLES. Heavy rain fell throughout the march. Battalion arrived at destination at 1330. Foot inspection was carried out immediately on arrival at Billets. There were no cases of bad feet throughout the Unit.

The march was resumed on the 18th inst., the destination being SIVRY. Rain fell throughout the march and cold winds blew continuously. Destination was reached at 1445. Comfortable, although scattered, billets were arranged, and hot cocoa and milk was issued to the troops at 2000. A foot inspection was carried out as on the previous day, but no cases of bad feet were reported.

On the 19th inst. the march was resumed to SOLIE ST. GERY. Rain again fell while the troops were on the march, and the weather was bitterly cold. Destination reached at 1130. Billets very comfortable. Hot coffee issued at 2000. One case of bad feet reported, and arrangements made for him to travel on G.S. Waggon the next day.

The destination for the 20th inst. was DAUSSOIS. The Battalion marched well and arrived there at 1245. Two cases of bad feet discovered in the Unit. Throughout the four days' march only one man fell out, and he was brought on by motor ambulance. The troops were in fine spirits throughout. The billets in DAUSSOIS were most unsatisfactory, and in several places the billets were filthy. Foot and mouth disease and also influenza were rather prevalent in the village. The R.M.O. immediately condemned the village as a billeting area, and a report to this effect was forwarded to the 5th A. I. Brigade.

The Battalion remained at DAUSSOIS until the 23rd inst. Much time was put in in cleaning billets, streets, etc.

The Unit moved from DAUSSOIS to PRY and CHASTRES on the 23rd inst., and arrived at destination at 1130. Rain fell throughout the march. Battalion Headquarters and 3 Companies billeted in PRY and 1 Company in CHASTRES. The billets were found to be very comfortable. The civilians appeared to be delighted to have Australian troops billeted with them, and expressed wonderment at the Australians being all volunteers.

The 24th December was spent in cleaning up generally, and in the re-organisation of billets. On Christmas morning the Band rendered a programme in the village square, and was heartily applauded by the civil populace, who appreciated the music highly. Christmas Dinner for the troops consisted of Roast Beef and Potatoes, cabbage, and pudding. An issue of $\frac{1}{2}$ -bottle of beer per man was made. Christmas parcels from the 20th Battalion Comforts Fund, were issued at the rate of one per man. The troops spent a quiet but very enjoyable Christmas.

Boxing Day was proclaimed a holiday. The Band rendered an enjoyable programme in the morning, and football match was played in the afternoon.

On the 27th December, a route march was carried out in the morning. The Educational classes were re-organised and commenced in the afternoon. The remainder of the month was spent in parades of

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20TH BATTALION A.I.F.REPORT BY COMMANDING OFFICER NOVEMBER 1918.

From the 1st to the 21st November 1918 the Battalion continued in rest at VIGNACOURT. Everything possible was done for the comfort of the men, such as Mess Rooms, Reading rooms and indoor games. During the fine weather, Football and Hockey played the chief part.

Throughout the month the Battalion held two Sports meetings and the Brigade one. All events were keenly contested and fine sport was the result of each meeting. At the Brigade Sports, the 20th Battalion easily won the Brigade Shield.

The spirit and health of the Troops was remarkable.

On the 21st November, the Battalion entrained at VIGNACOURT for the forward area, detraining at BERTRY on the following morning. The Battalion then marched to BOHAIN. Bitterly cold on the march but the Troops were in excellent spirits and completed the march in good condition. Billets in BOHAIN were most comfortable. Several Concert parties were performing in the Town and this added very much to the amusement of the men.

Biscuits, Hot Cocoa and Milk was served out each night at about 2000. This was highly appreciated.

On the 25th the Battalion ~~the Battalion~~ moved by March route to MAZINGHIEN. On the following day the march was resumed to BEAUREPAIRE. Men marched very well and were in fine spirits, whistling and singing all the way. Billets very comfortable. Chief Training being Physical Training, Close order drill of a morning, and out door sports during the afternoons.

Hot Cocoa and Milk was served out each night at 2000. Health and spirits throughout the whole month was most remarkable.

John Donnelly.....Major;
E/Commanding 20th Battalion. A.I.F.

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1-hour daily, and recreational training, football, etc. in the afternoon. The Education classes are working most satisfactorily.

Throughout the month the troops were in fine spirits, and their health was exceptionally good.

J. McDonald

.....Major,
A/Commander, 20th Battalion, A.I.F.

WAR DIARY.

C.O.'s REPORT.

The month of February was characterised by good progress in the three essentials, Demobilisation, Education and ~~Amusement~~ Entertainment. Although cold and snowing during the first few days, the weather fined up considerably towards the latter end, and in consequence the troops made full use of their freedom. Leave has been liberal, and the rations good.

On the 2nd February, while the Battalion was at PRY, the third draft comprising 2 Officers and 34 Other Ranks, left for England en route to Australia. Members of the Unit have also been sent to France and England for Education and non-military employment, so that the strength of the Unit has been greatly reduced.

The Education classes are in full swing, and everything possible is being done to increase the knowledge of every individual while he is awaiting a Draft for Australia. The various classes are being well attended, and regular tours to various Belgian factories are greatly appreciated by the Troops. Many instructive lectures have been delivered, including subjects such as "Town-Planning", "The Battle of Waterloo", "Co-operation" and "Demobilisation".

Entertainment during the month has taken the form of regular Dances, to which Belgian civilians are invited, and cinema shows. Football matches have been arranged periodically, many keen contests being the result.

On the 6th of February the Battalion moved from their billets at PRY to the Village of MONTIGNIES-les-TILLEUL, which is closer to Charleroi, and much more convenient. The billets are very clean and comfortable.

Harlan
.....Captain,
A/C.O., 20th Battalion, A.I.F.



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C.O.'s REPORT ON THE MONTH'S WORK.

WAR RECORDS SECTION
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OFFICER

The month has been one in which considerable progress has been made in the demobilisation of the troops, and in extending educational operations. The shipping and industrial conditions in England having been overcome to a large extent, the men are naturally elated at the prospect of an early return, as they have been practically assured that regular drafts will leave the Unit for Australia via England. The weather has improved considerably, and with recreation properly organised in the form of bi-weekly dances and football matches, the Battalion is a happy band.

Owing to the gradually diminishing strength of the Units, several changes in administration have taken place. On the 8th inst. the remaining members of the 5th A.L.T.M. Battery were attached to the 20th Battalion, and on the 14th inst, the 17th, 18th, and 20th Battalions were amalgamated and each Unit formed into a Company of what is now known as the 5th Brigade Battalion under the Command of Lieut-Colonel F.W.D.FORBES, D.S.O. (C.O., 20th Bn)

During the month the Australian Burials Detachment was formed, and the 5th Brigade Battalion quota of 1 Officer and 33 Other Ranks marched out to take up their new duties on the 24th March.

Lectures on various subjects have filled in many interesting hours, and have been largely attended. The following represent some of the subjects dealt with:- "A Trip Through Occupied Territory" (Lieut-Col.F.W.D.Forbes, D.S.O); "The New Republic - The Czecks-Slovaks" (Chaplain Hunter-Boyd of Canada); "The Work of the Repatriation Dept in Australia" and "Land Settlement in N.S.W" (J.S.Cormack, Esq., N.S.W.); "Panama Canal" (Sapper Hall); "Australia's New Responsibilities in the Pacific" (Major Burton) and "Glimpses of Australian Life" (Miss Baxter of Y.M.C.A.)

7 Officers and 102 Other Ranks of the 20th Battalion marched out with Quota No.23 for Australia on the 30th inst., and a large number of Officers and Other Ranks have been despatched to England for Educational and Agricultural Courses.

Forbes

.....Lieut-Colonel,
Commanding 20th Battalion, A.I.F.

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*P. H. O.
1/8/19*