

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

Engineers

Item number: 14/7/36

Title: Headquarters 1st Australian
Divisional Engineers

December 1918



AWM4-14/7/36

CONFIDENTIAL.

ORIGINAL.
DUPLICATE.
TRIPLICATE.

Australian Imperial Force.

WAR DIARY

OF

H.Q. 1ST AUSTRALIAN DIVISIONAL ENGINEERS.

FOR

DECEMBER

1918.



Signature of Officer compiling

B. Blount Capt. & Adj.

Signature of Officer Commanding

W. A. Henderson
Lieut. Colonel.

C.R.

~~SECRET~~
~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY~~
(Erase heading not required.)

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WAR DIARY

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Instructions regarding
Summaries are
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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
SOLRE-Le-CHATEAU.	9th.		C.R.E.attended a Conference of Senior Officers at D.H.Q.to discuss Educational Scheme, Recreational Training etc. Adjutant to Field Companies. Weather fine but dull.	Bld
do.	10th.		C.R.E.to new area by Car,returned the same evening. Lieut.THOMPSON and Field Company representative Officers went forward to the new area for Billeting purposes. Area for Field Companies is rather cramped. Adjutant to Field Companies and Division. Weather wet.	Bld
/Do.	11th.		C.R.E.inspected Company Billets. Educational Officer Sgt.COLLINGS,3rd.Bn.reported for duty. Commenced carting of timber forward by Lorry to establish a dump in new area. Wet day.	Bld
do	12th.		C.R.E.in Office during the day. Adjutant to Field Companies. Prepared to send a Dump party forward to commence a R.E.Dump under Lieut.THOMPSON,Stores Officer,but Lorries failed to report.Day dull and wet. Capt.A.P.MURPHY returned from leave to PARIS.	Bld
do.	13th.		C.R.E.to Field Companies. Lieut.THOMPSON forward to new area to establish R.E.Dump,Dump party also proceeded. Adjutant to Corps to C.E.Office re supplies. Dull showery day. Conference of O.C.s at C.R.E.to discuss details as to the Three Field Companies moving together on Brigade march.	Bld
do	14th.		Orderly Room and staff to PRESLES by Lorry and C.R.E.by car. Adjutant and transport to follow next day. Day dull and fine.	Bld
do and PRESLES.	15th.		Move for Transport cancelled until the 19th.inst. Adjutant and Transport remained at SOLRE-Le-CHATEAU. C.R.E.returned to SOLRE-Le-CHATEAU from PRESLES on the evening of the 15th. to be at D.H.Q.next day for the arrival of the Prince of Wales. Dull showery day.	Bld
PRESLES (Ref. NAMUR)	16th.		C.R.E.to D.H.Q. re receiving of the Prince of Wales. C.R.E.then returned to PRESLES. Day dull and showery.	Bld

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(A10266) Wt W5300/P713 750,000 2/18 Sch. 52 Forms/C2118/16.

CONFIDENTIAL.

WAR DIARY

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Army Form C. 2118.

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
PRESLES,	17th.		C.R.E. inspecting R.E. Stores in CHATELET in connection with 1st. Aust. Div. Dump. Adjutant still at SOLRE-Le-CHATEAU with Transport. Wet day.	<i>Bll</i>
do	18th.		C.R.E. met Staff Captain, C.E. Australian Corps in CHATELET to arrange supply of material for Dump. Cold wet day.	<i>Bll</i>
do	19th.		C.R.E. in Office. Stores Officer collecting material for Dump. Adjutant left SOLRE-Le-CHATEAU with Transport of D.H.Q., D.E.H.Q., and D.A.P.M., at 6 a.m. arriving in PRESLES at 4.30 p.m. Cold day, odd showers.	<i>Bll</i>
do	20th.		C.R.E. and Adjutant in Office all day. Many requisitions received for R.E. Material, but a general supply not yet available. Corps report that the supply is through "Q". O.C. 2nd. Field Coy., called on C.R.E. Cold wet day.	<i>Bll</i>
do	21st.		C.R.E. to Brigades re accommodation for classes in practical carpentry and plumbing. Adjutant to R.E. Dump CHATELET. Dull wet day.	<i>Bll</i>
do	22nd.		C.R.E. and Adjutant visited all Field Companies. Billets and Horse Lines inspected. Adjutant to CHATELET for pay. Cold wet day.	<i>Bll</i>
do	23rd.		C.R.E. went round the Field Companies in the morning and again in the afternoon with the G.O.C. Division. Everything satisfactory. Adjutant to R.E. Dump CHATELET. Dull day.	<i>Bll</i>
do	24th.		C.R.E. and Adjutant in Office all day. Weather fine and mild.	<i>Bll</i>
do	25th.		Xmas. Day. C.R.E. in Office during the morning. Adjutant to Field Companies. No work during the afternoon. Several Field Company Officers called in during the day. Fine day.	<i>Bll</i>
do	26th.		C.R.E. remained in Billets all day. Adjutant in Office. O's C Companies called in during the day. Day dull and wet.	<i>Bll</i>

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~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY~~

(Erase heading not required.)

18

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
PRESLES.	27th.		C.R.E. and Adjutant in Office all day. Weather wet and cold.	<i>B.H.</i>
do.	28th.		C.R.E. in Office writing up reports on work of Field Companies and Pioneers, in the present war. Adjutant to Field Companies. Authority received from Corps to draw on Army Dump CHARLEROI. Weather wet and stormy.	<i>B.H.</i>
do.	29th.		C.R.E. and Adjutant in the Office during the day. Weather dull and wet.	<i>B.H.</i>
do	30th.		C.R.E. and Adjutant to Field companies during the morning. In afternoon to Football Matches Pioneer Bn. versus 1st. Battalion and Engineers versus Divisional Engineers. The games were won by the 1st. Bn. and 3rd. Bn. respectively. Weather fine but dull.	<i>B.H.</i>
do	31st.		C.R.E. to D.H.Q. Adjutant remained in Office. Weather fine but dull. Occasional showers.	<i>B.H.</i>

W.A. Henderson

Lieut. Colonel.
C.R.E., 1st. Australian Division.

H. Q.
1ST AUSTRALIAN
DIVL. ENGINEERS.

No. _____

Date _____

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WAR DIARY

OF

H.Q.1ST.AUSTRALIAN DIVISIONAL ENGINEERS.

FOR

DECEMBER

191⁸.

LIST OF APPENDICES.

No.	Subject.
I.	STATEMENT OF CASUALTIES.EVACUATIONS.ETC.
II.	SYNOPSIS FOR THE MONTH.
III.	EDUCATIONAL SYNOPSIS.
IV.	GRAPH SHOWING STRENGTH ETC.

F. S. Dowling
Capt. & Adjt.
for C.R.E., 1st. Australian Division.

H. Q.	
1ST AUSTRALIAN	
DIVL. ENGINEERS.	
No.	_____
Date	_____

H.Q.Divsnl. Engineers,
1st.Australian Division.
1st.January 1919.

MONTHLY STATEMENT OF CASUALTIES, EVACUATIONS, REINFORCEMENTS etc.
FOR MONTH ~~JANUARY~~ DECEMBER 1918.

Appendix
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Unit.	Casualties				Evacuated sick.		Rejoined from Hospital.		Reinforcements joined		Transfers				Remarks.
	Killed, Died of Wounds, Wounded.										Plus.		Minus.		
	Off.	O.R.	Off.	O.R.	Off.	O.R.	Off.	O.R.	Off.	O.R.	Off.	O.R.	Off.	O.R.	
1st.D.EH.															
Q.	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
1st.F.Co.	-	-	-	-	-	7	1	8	-	-	-	-	-	4	5 O.R.to AUST.
2nd.F.Co.	-	-	-	-	-	11	1	3	-	-	1	-	-	2	
3rd.F.Co.	-	-	-	-	-	10	-	2	-	3	-	-	-	10	
<hr/>															
Total.	-	-	-	-	-	29	2	13	-	3	1	-	-	17	

Changes in Officers :-

1st.Field Company,
Lieut.F.G.MOFFITT from Hospital 7/12/18.

2nd.Field Company.
Capt.R.A.CLINTON from Hospital Wounded 7/12/18.
Major R.V.CUTLER MBE, MC.taken on strength as O.C. 1/12/18.

R. H. G. G. G. Captain & Adjutant.
for C.R.E., 1st.Australian Division.



SYNOPSIS FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER 1918.

Appendix II

Lieut. Colonel MURDOCH has acted as C.R.E. during the Month in the absence of Lieut. Colonel WM. HENDERSON, DSO, who has been on special leave in ITALY and the South of FRANCE.

There has been a few alterations in the D.E.H.Q. Staff, the attached Draughtsman has been dispensed with as there were no further requirements for his services, but the Staff had been increased by the addition of an Education Officer and his Clerk.

At the beginning of the month the three field Companies were billeted in separate wings in the one building in SOLRE-Le-CHATEAU, with D.E.H.Q. in the same village.

These buildings were held until the morning of 17th. December when the Companies moved out with the 3rd. Brigade Group, arriving in the new area near CHATELET, on the evening of the 19th. December.

D.E.H.Q. moved separately, the C.R.E. and Orderly Room Staff proceeded by Car and Lorry on the 14th, but by a sudden change in orders the Adjutant and Transport were delayed in SOLRE-Le-CHATEAU till the 19th. on which day they moved with D.H.Q. and D.A.P.M. Transport to PRESLES in one stage.

In view of the three Companies moving in one column as Divisional Engineers, Colonel MURDOCH called a meeting of Field Company Commanders to arrange details for the march and for the Billeting arrangements, and as a result, Brigades were asked to repeat move orders to each Field Company each day. The order of march for the Companies in the column was laid down as 1, 2 and 3 for the first day, 2, 3 and 1 for the second day and 3, 2 and 1 for the third day, and Brigade was notified.

Each Company moved as usual as a distinct Unit with Transport, and between the Companies, Unit distances were maintained. It was hoped to have the Three Field Companies together again in the new area handy to C.R.E., as this arrangement offered facilities for running combined Education classes amongst the Field Companies, as well as being convenient from a disciplinary point of view.

The village of SART EUSTACHE was allotted to the Three Field Companies with D.E.H.Q. not far distant at PRESLES.

Advanced Billeting parties reported that there was insufficient accommodation, so the 1st. and 3rd. Companies were sent to SART EUSTACHE and the 2nd. Field Company to BINCHE, very close to PRESLES. This was the best arrangement under the circumstances and from the 19th. December until the present time they have occupied these Billets.

The strength of the Companies has fallen off during the month, owing to personnel returning to AUSTRALIA, and to the Educational Scheme, by which several men have been detailed to attend classes for varying periods and others have been accepted as Instructors. To offset this there have been no reinforcements arriving from the Base.

At this stage of active service the question of Drivers has become more difficult. The majority of the old hand Drivers have been returned to AUSTRALIA, and their places have been difficult to fill, as under present conditions there is a tendency to prefer the rank of Sapper to that of Driver in spite of the extra 1/- per day. In addition, with the constant duties the Drivers have to perform it has been practically impossible to offer them any facilities under the Educational Scheme, and many of them are anxious to attend classes. A suggestion has been made to reduce the number of Horses as follows :-

Dump the Bridge and keep 2 Horses only for ~~the~~ Pontoon and Trestle Team ~~2~~ this means dispensing with 12 Horses per Coy. each

Dispense with Pack Horses - 4, per Company.

Dispense with all spare Horses. (5)

This would make a total reduction of 21 Horses per Company, with a corresponding reduction in Drivers, which would greatly help matters.

WORKS.

Again, Field Companies had little to perform in the way of Works and beyond cleaning up and improving Billeting accommodation, there has been only a few incidental jobs to perform.

MATERIAL.

In anticipation of a big demand for R.E. Material, in the CHATELET Area, Lieut. THOMPSON, R.E. Stores Officer was sent ahead of the Division with Sapper personnel to establish a Dump of suitable material. A limited amount of Lorry Transport was made available for his use. There was a particularly large Hun Dump in CHARLEROI, and the Stores Officer drew on this to obtain R.E. Material for the Division. This procedure was stopped waiting authority from Army, through Australian Corps, to draw further Material.

Meanwhile the only source of supply arranged by Australian Corps was from RANCE, and any old enemy Dumps in the Divisional Areas of which there were none applying to the 1st. Aust. Division. RANCE was a very long trip and the supply was limited. In the 4th. Divsnl. Area there was a train load of malthoid and arrangements were made to draw on this supply to the extent of 200 Rolls. So for the first week, the supply of R.E. Material was very limited and all available material was allotted to No. 2 Sanitary Section for the making of Latrines as they were considered of first importance, and an exceptionally large number were required to meet the demands of the scattered Billets.

On the 28th. December, authority came from Corps to draw on the Army Dump at CHARLEROI, and accordingly a sufficient supply of material has since been available for Latrines, Ablution Sheds, Educational purposes including Tables, Forms and any other requirements of urgency apart from Hutting and Stabling which has been in the hands of "Q".

Roofing Material has been short, but a supply of Corrugated Iron is expected: hessian is practically unobtainable in any quantities. A workshop is being formed at the Dump for incidental small jobs and also for Signboards for which there is a large demand. The Dump situated at 75 Rue D'Abattoir, CHATELET, is the first divisional R.E. Dump formed, since leaving LONG, early in November. Stores Officer lives in CHATELET, and Dump personnel are billeted close to the Dump.

A Stock Sheet is rendered to the C.R.E. correct to 6 p.m. the previous evening.

EDUCATION.

Shortly after arriving in SOLRE-Le-CHATEAU and the Companies had settled down, the question of Education was revived.

Lieut. Colonel MURDOCH called a meeting of the Company Commanders to discuss the matter. At that time there was no Educational Officer appointed for the Divisional Engineers, so it was decided to appoint an Officer in each Company to interview each man personally to see what his requirements in the matter of Education were, and also as far as possible to advise how far the scheme, as far as it was known to be could assist him.

The object was to make the questions more of a personal matter and get away from the Company's orderboard and parade ground standpoint and then to classify and tabulate the several prospective students to give the Educational Officer something to go on, as soon as he reported for duty.

Later, as it was desirable to start with educational work, as soon as possible, another meeting of Company Commanders was called with a view to commencing combined Company Classes in certain Subjects. The main difficulty was the almost complete absence of Text Books for the Instructors. The general opinion was that the men were keen, and instructors were available, but the latter naturally required a certain amount of brushing up in their respective subjects in order to carry on.

It was decided that an immediate start was not practicable for the following reasons:-

The whole Scheme needed careful working especially in the initial stages, and there was a serious risk of a false start if classes were commenced before the instructors were sure of their subjects. Most of the subjects required were of a Technical nature, and out of fairness to the instructors, text books for them were deemed necessary to enable them to carry on and keep their prestige as such.

On the other hand any prolonged delay might lessen the keenness of the men but it was decided to wait for text books before a general start could be made.

The Educational Officer Mr. COLLINGS, late Sergeant in the 3rd. Bn. reported at D.E.H.Q. on the 11th. December and proceeded to get in touch with the Field Companies on Educational matters.

Practical Carpentry classes have been formed for the benefit of the Infantry Brigades mainly.

Under the scheme each Field Company supplies an Officer and three assistants as Instructors, and the tools from three of the four Tool Carts in each Company.

As more tools are available the classes will be increased.

Second and Third Brigades commenced on the 30th. December and the First Brigade will commence on the 2nd. January.

Sappers from the respective Field Companies may attend these classes. Personnel from the Field Companies have been detached to attend classes and places of instruction away from their Companies, such as Loco Works, Mechanical Workshops etc.

Appendix III shows details of Education as applying at present to Field Companies.

R. Mowling Capt. & Adjt.
for C.R.E., 1st. Australian Division.



EDUCATIONAL SYNOPSIS FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER 1918.

CLASSES IN OPERATION.

1. Carpentry.	Average Students.	39
2. Bookkeeping	do do	33
3. Arithmetic. Elem.	do do	16
do Wkmanā.	do do	16
do Commercial.	do do	16
4. Motor Driving	do do	42
5. Plumbing. Lectures	do do	12
6. Land Surveying	do do	10
7. Quantity do.	do do	10.
8. Architectural Brawing.	do do	21
Mechanical Drawing.	do do	21
9. Building Construction.	do do	38
10. Chemistry.	do do	12
Total		<u>286</u>

INSTRUCTORS - 8 Officers. 10 Other Ranks.

Technical Classes have commenced in the Three Field Companies, touching on every day subjects e.g.

Motor Driving and Running Repairs By Lieut. MOFFITT. 10 Subjects from the names of parts and cars to actual driving. A salved Motor is being used for Demonstration.

Carpentry. 7 Subjects from the use of Tools, and care of same to the practical work viz. Joists, Roof Plates etc. By Cpl. TAIT and assistants.

Plumbing. From the soldering iron to wiping joints. By Sapper NUGENT.

Land Surveying by Lieut. GIBBISON.
 Quantity Surveying Lieut. DEACON.
 Architectural Drawing. Spr. BRETNALL.
 Mechanical Drawing. Spr. BRETNALL.
 Building Construction by Lieut. DEACON.
 Elementary Chemistry by Cpl. MARTIN.

A Debating class is also formed.

Instructors have been supplied to the 1st and 2nd Brigades. Workshops were selected and three grades of Classes organised and mostly practical work is carried out.

1 Officer and 17 men are attending courses at PARIS, ST. ETIENNE Loco. Workshops, Dieppe Docks, and Tank Corps Schools TENEUR.

Text Books has been our greatest drawback in the past, but with the forthcoming supply, we hope to have the classes into a more advanced stage.

L. G. Collings
 Educational Officer.
 1st. Australian Divisional Engineers

for R.M.

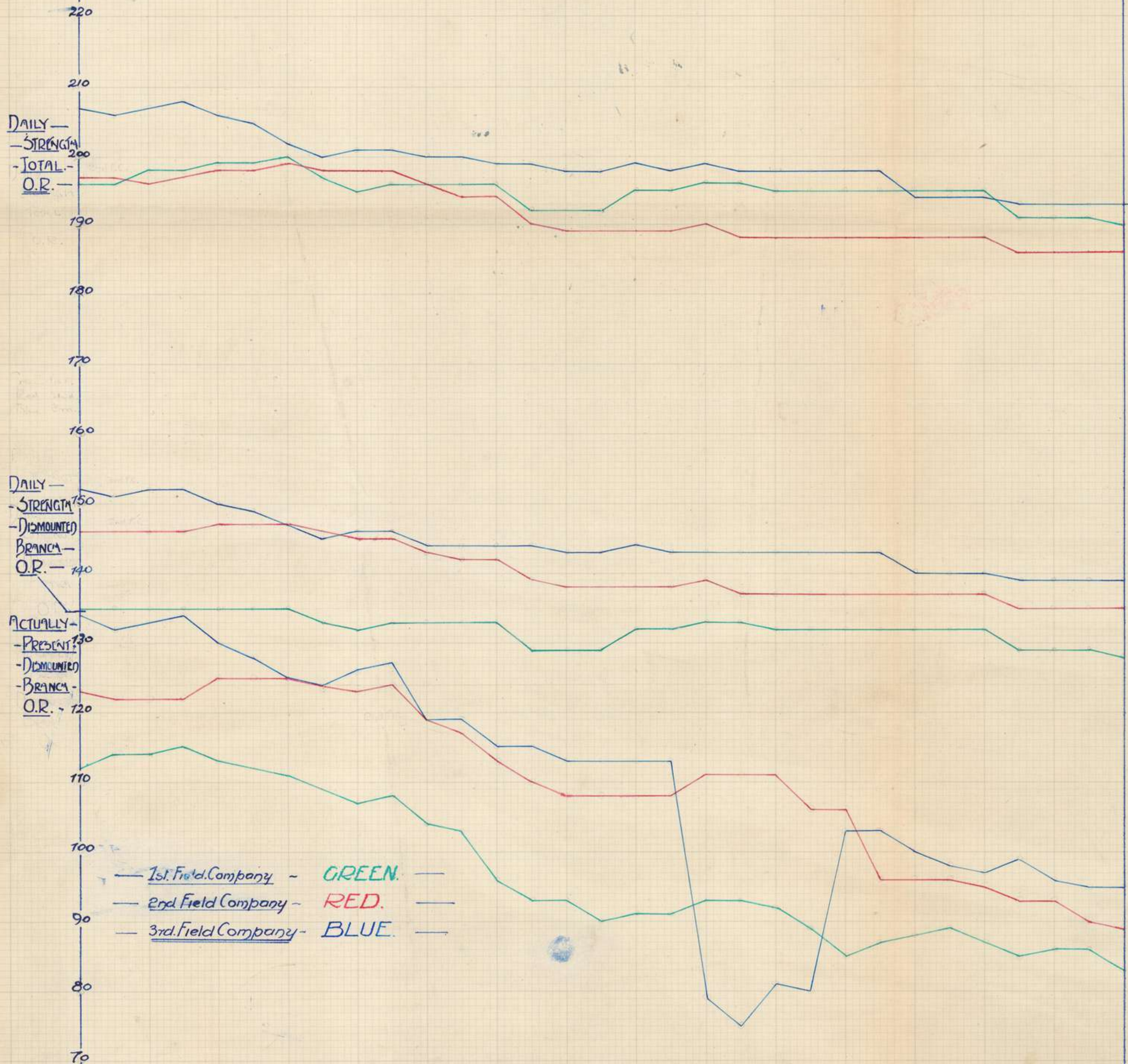
1st AUSTRALIAN DIVISIONAL ENGINEERS.

GRAPH showing STRENGTH of COMPANIES Etc.

December 1st to 31st 1918.

OTHER RANKS - DAILY STRENGTH TOTAL.
 O.R. Dismounted Branch - do. do. do.
 O.R. do do - ACTUALLY with UNIT.

Day of Month 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31.



1st. AUSTRALIAN DIVISIONAL ENGINEERS.

GRAPH showing STRENGTH of COMPANIES Etc.

December 1st. to 31st. 1918.

— O.R. Dismounted Branch - ABSENT on DUTY. —
 — do do on LEAVE. —
 — do EVACU'T'D SICK. —
 — / —

Day of Month. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

