

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

Engineers

Item number: 14/8/28

Title: Headquarters 2nd Australian
Divisional Engineers

January 1919



AWM4-14/8/28

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ORIGINAL.
***DUPLICATE.**
TRIPPLICATE.



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Australian Imperial Force.

WAR DIARY

OF

2ND. AUSTRALIAN DIVISIONAL ENGINEERS HEADQUARTERS

FOR

JANUARY 1919

191

Signature of Officer compiling

a/c

Signature of Officer Commanding

Lieut. Colonel

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SHEET (1)
HEADQUARTERS
SECOND AUSTRALIAN DIVISIONAL ENGINEERS
Army Form C 2118.
JANUARY 1919

WAR DIARY
or
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

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.

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| Place | Date | Hour | Summary of Events and Information | Remarks and references to Appendices |
|---------------------------|-------|------|--|--------------------------------------|
| THY-LE-CHATEAU BELGIUM | 15th. | | <p>C.R.E. arrives back from 35 days leave (part of 75 days 1914 leave). Found that Major REID was the only Field Coy. Commander remaining. Major WEBB had in spite of my recommendation to the contrary been taken for duty with the Demobilisation Dept. Major HARRIS had gone on 14 days leave almost immediately after I went *** on leave, and had been given 4 months leave for non-military employment by Demobilisation Dept. without reference to D.H.Q. or C.R.E.. I consider the principle of the latter quite wrong. In WEBB's case he was taken for another military appointment for which his services were required, but HARRIS I consider should have completed his military duty of attending of attending to the winding up of his company's affairs before being released for non-military employment. I have strong reasons for wishing to get away early for such employment myself and have prior claims by length of service to any of the Company Commanders and could most probably have succeeded in getting free by going to London and applying to the Demobilisation Dept. But it did not seem to be a fair way to act so I returned expecting to find that the Field Company C.O's had stuck to their posts.</p> <p>Men are settling down pretty comfortably here and seem to be contented and popular with the residents.</p> <p>Repatriation seems likely to proceed more quickly than was at first expected.</p> | <i>Open</i> |
| | 16th. | | <p>Bright fine day. Major REID went off on 30 days leave to-day this leave had been approved before I went on leave but he was prevented from getting away through Major HARRIS getting extended leave while in England.</p> | |
| | 17th. | | <p>Had meeting of A/C.O's, Companies viz:-Cpt. POLSON 5th. Field Coy. Lt. RENSCHAW 6th. Field Coy. (Cpt. FEWRELL on leave), Cpt. NOEDL 7th. Field Coy. Discussed preparation of Repatriation Precedence Rolls and batch of 50 men to be despatched on 24th. Decided that order of precedence should be according to date of embarkation in Australia, unless very exceptional reasons rendered deviation from the rule advisable. This seems to be the only fair rule to adopt and one that is least likely to cause discontent. Any other system gives openings for individual claims which would only lead to contention and disagreement. Intend to adhere to this rule as strictly as possible.</p> | |
| | 18th. | | <p>Weather unsettled.</p> <p>Owners ** of the house where we have H.Q. mess, offices and billets wish to get back here. Saw G.O.C. to-day and suggested that I should move my H.Q. to MARCINELLE (CHARLEROI) where D.H.Q. is located. He considers that it is more important that I should be with Companies than with D.H.Q. and I agree. So will stay on in this house until owners actually turn up.</p> | |

D. D. & L., London, L.C.
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WAR DIARY

SHEET 2

Army Form C. 2118.

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

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| THY-LE-CHATEAU BELGIUM | 19th. | | Rode to HAM-sur-HEURE where Corps Headquarters is located to see C.E. (Col. Martyn) but everybody out. Weather unsettled. | <i>Price</i> |
| | 20th. | | Had frost this morning and bright sunny day. Rode to NALINNES to attend lecture on Demobilisation and Education, but found on arrival that it had been postponed till the following morning. Lt. Gillespie our Education Officer was taken by the Demobilisation & Repatriation Dept for duty during my absence on leave and T/sgt. Hadden is acting in his place and awaiting appointment to commission in Education Service. The Demobilisation Dept. have now taken a large number of 2nd. Division Engineers Officers Major Webb, Capt Bell, Lts. Williamson Gillespie, Thorpe. The Companies each have a weekly dance in a hall in the village, the local womenfolk supplying the necessary feminine element; men civilians not admitted except on special invitation. | |
| 21st. | | Freezing hard clear day. Went for trip to NAMUR with Lt. Christian, via the MEUSE VALLEY. Orders received that Capt. Polson a/O.C. 5th. Field Company to proceed to LONDON for duty with Demobilisation Dept. This constant withdrawal of officers is leaving Companies very short and throwing responsibility of equipment on to junior and inexperienced officers during a critical period. | | |
| 22nd. | | Fine freezing day. Nothing of note. Lieut. Gray saw me regarding taking over responsibility for equipment of 5th. Field Company and protested at being required to do it. Told him it could not be avoided. Went to 7th. Field Company's Football Clubs dance in evening. | | |
| 23rd. | | Snowing a little in morning, cleared up later. Went to D.H.Q. to see about arrangements for repatriation draft to get into CHARLEROI. There is a railway available but no attempt had been made to provide transport by this means. | | |
| 24th. | | Capt. Polson 5th. Field Company left for London this morning. very cold and gloomy day. Draft of 50 men under Lt. Carlton & 2Lt. Smith left today for repatriation. Went on 3 pontoon wagons as no other transport was available. | | |
| | | Inspected 7th. Field Coy's billets and stable this afternoon. Horses very dispersed in isolated stables and so impossible for constant guard to be kept on all. Visiting piquet used. Numerous cases of stealing have been reported elsewhere and special care has to be taken to guard against it. | | |
| 29th. | | Cold weather and some snow during the last few days. Still have had no instructions regarding disposal of equipment and animals. Am very anxious to get rid of both as soon as possible. The position as regards officers is likely to become difficult. a number have been taken for various duties; a large number of those remaining have applied for non-military employment; others have or will shortly be repatriated. It is necessary therefore to look ahead | | |

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY. SHEET 3

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| <p>THY-LE-CHATEAU BELGIUM</p> | <p>29th. Cont.</p> | | <p>and guard against too early depletion of officers by releasing them for non- military employment Have adopted as a policy that I will not recommend Commanding Officers for release until their Company mobilisation equipment has been disposed of and that applicants for non- military employment will not be recommended if they are low down on the repatriation roll until such time as it can be seen that their services can be safely dispensed with in the near future. Allotment for Div. Engineers for next draft to leave about Feb. 3rd. is 2 officers 3Sgts. 100 o/rs. Have suballotted 40 to 6th. 50 to 5th. and 1 to 7th. and 2 to H.Q. based on date of embarkation. Next officers on roll on same basis are Lieuts Hill & Renshaw (Capt. Fewtrell being returned from leave has taken over command of 6th. Field Coy) Lieut. Harris Adj. who embarked about one month later than Renshaw has appealed against Renshaw being allowed to go before him on the ground, that as a married man with children he should be given priority. Cap. Fewtrell saw me today and protested against being held back from repatriation on account of being in command of a Company and so held responsible for mobilisation equipment. He argues that as Major Harris had been allowed to get free and pass on responsibility to him he should be allowed to do likewise. Told him that he could appeal if he wished but that I could not recommend his release.</p> <p>Received memo today from D.H.Q. asking if I approved of Major Reid being granted 4 months non-military employment in U.K.. In accordance with the policy I have adopted regarding Commanding Officers, replied that I could not recommend it until the Company equipment had been disposed of.</p> <p>Dull weather. Visited Universite-du-Travail in CHARLEROI in company with G.O.C. & Brigadiers of 5th. & 6th. Brigades. Large number of Technical classes for members of A.I.F. being conducted; Lt. Lawrie of 7th. Field Company is in charge of organisation and has a Section of Sappers with him.</p> <p>Latest regarding disposal of equipment is that Units must deliver to Ordnance Park at Base in CALAIS. This will entail further delay. The simplest plan would be to hand over to D.A.D.O.S. LOCALLY. Animals are still on charge.</p> <p>The retention of equipment and animals necessitates holding back some drivers who are due for repatriation also C.Q.M.S. Farrier Sgts. &c.</p> <p>Some of the 5th. & 6th. who are being withheld were paraded before me and protested. Capt. Fewtrell has also put in an appeal against being held for duty.</p> <p>All leave for U.K. stopped yesterday, men on leave granted extension owing to interruption of transport arrangements. Believe cause is that trouble has occurred with British Troops at CALAIS & employed on railways.</p> | <p>quell</p> |
| | <p>30th.</p> | | | |

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SHEET 4

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|----------------|-------|------|---|--------------------------------------|
| THY-LE-CHATEAU | 31st. | | <p>Dull weather. Three lorries have been arranged for to take to take draft into CHARLEROI on Feb. 2nd. .</p> <p>Peace Conference sitting in VERSAILLES. German Colonies question at present under discussion and causing considerable differences of opinion to be evident. President Wilson is pressing for a system of **** internationalisation. Great Britain has after hesitation agreed but Australia, Japan and S. Africa are strongly against it. Nothing of note today.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>McClellan</i> Lieut. Colonel C.R.E. Second Australian Division.</p> | <p><i>Over</i></p> |