

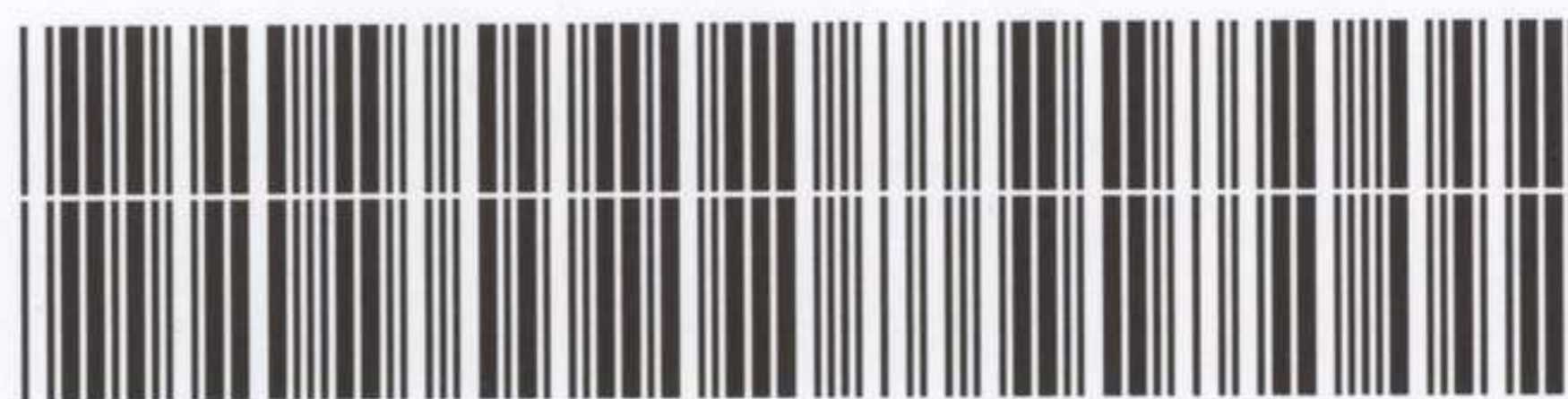
AWM4
Australian Imperial Force unit war diaries,
1914-18 War

Infantry

Item number: 23/70/32

Title: 53rd Infantry Battalion

March 1919



AWM4-23/70/32

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118.

Ref. Map. - NAMUR 8.
 Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence
 Summaries are contained in F. S. Regs., Part II,
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or
 INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

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| Place | Date | Hour | Summary of Events and Information | Remarks and references to Appendices | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|---------------------|------|--|--------------------------------------|------------------|--|---------------------|--------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|------------|-------------|--|
| RANCE. | 1-3-19. | | <p>Weather conditions ideal, with a warm bright sunshine. This, with the order that, from 23 hours, the summer time would come into force, made all look forward to the seasons most appreciated by Australians.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>ARRIVALS.</u> nil.</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"><u>BATTALION</u></th> <th style="text-align: right;"><u>STRENGTH.</u></th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <th style="text-align: right;">Officers .O/Ranks .</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Present.....</td> <td style="text-align: right;">28.....252.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Detached.....</td> <td style="text-align: right;">19.....202.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total.....</td> <td style="text-align: right;">47.....454.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p style="text-align: right;"><u>DEPARTURES.</u> nil.</p> | <u>BATTALION</u> | <u>STRENGTH.</u> | | Officers .O/Ranks . | Present..... | 28.....252. | Detached..... | 19.....202. | Total..... | 47.....454. | |
| <u>BATTALION</u> | <u>STRENGTH.</u> | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Officers .O/Ranks . | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Present..... | 28.....252. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Detached..... | 19.....202. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total..... | 47.....454. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| RANCE. | 2-3-19. | | <p>Once again the photographer tried his art, the Battalion parading for an "Official Photograph". The happy expressions on the faces of those warned for draft, will no doubt make this picture one of the best yet taken of the 53rd Battalion.</p> <p>The restrictions on dances, enforced on account of the influenza prevalent in the area, being removed from this date, will give the Amusement Committee first opportunity to enliven the rather dull evenings; also, after Wednesday next, we hope to see again the Concert parties and Cinema.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>ARRIVALS.</u> NIL.</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"><u>BATTALION</u></th> <th style="text-align: right;"><u>STRENGTH</u></th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <th style="text-align: right;">Officers .O/Ranks .</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Present.....</td> <td style="text-align: right;">28.....270.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Detached.....</td> <td style="text-align: right;">19.....184.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total.....</td> <td style="text-align: right;">47.....454.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p style="text-align: right;"><u>DEPARTURES.</u> NIL.</p> | <u>BATTALION</u> | <u>STRENGTH</u> | | Officers .O/Ranks . | Present..... | 28.....270. | Detached..... | 19.....184. | Total..... | 47.....454. | |
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| Present..... | 28.....270. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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VOLUME 37. Page 2.

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|--------------------|---------------------|------|--|--------------------------------------|------------------|--|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|----|
| RANGE. | 3-3-19. | | <p>Much interest is taken in the Divisional Musketry Competition, and twelve of the best shots of the Battalion went to the range at SIVRY for practice shooting. They will continue the practice on the 4th and 5th insts. also.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>ARRIVALS.</u> Reinft. 1.</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;"><u>BATTALION</u></td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;"><u>STRENGTH.</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Officers .0/Ranks .</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Present</td> <td style="text-align: right;">27 265.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Detached</td> <td style="text-align: right;">20 190.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td style="text-align: right; border-top: 1px solid black;">47 455.</td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: right;"><u>DEPARTURES.</u> NIL</p> | <u>BATTALION</u> | <u>STRENGTH.</u> | | Officers .0/Ranks . | Present | 27 265. | Detached | 20 190. | Total | 47 455. | 29 |
| <u>BATTALION</u> | <u>STRENGTH.</u> | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Officers .0/Ranks . | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Present | 27 265. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Detached | 20 190. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 47 455. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| RANGE. | 4-3-19. | | <p>Thirteen of the horses of the Battalion left for the Base. There were some sad hearts among the Transport personnel at parting with their dumb cobbars. The rain which started to fall yesterday evening, continued all the day.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>ARRIVALS.</u> NIL</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;"><u>BATTALION</u></td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;"><u>STRENGTH.</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Officers .0/Ranks .</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Present</td> <td style="text-align: right;">25 2571</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Detached</td> <td style="text-align: right;">22 186.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td style="text-align: right; border-top: 1px solid black;">47 443.</td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: right;"><u>DEPARTURES.</u> Evacs 12.</p> | <u>BATTALION</u> | <u>STRENGTH.</u> | | Officers .0/Ranks . | Present | 25 2571 | Detached | 22 186. | Total | 47 443. | |
| <u>BATTALION</u> | <u>STRENGTH.</u> | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Officers .0/Ranks . | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Present | 25 2571 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| Total | 47 443. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |



WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118.

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Ref. Map. - NAMUR 8.
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VOLUME 37. Page 3.

| Place | Date | Hour | Summary of Events and Information | Remarks and references to Appendices | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|------------------|---------------------|---|--------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|----------------|--|---------------------|----------------------------|--|---------------|---------------|-----------------|--|----------------|---------------|--|--|-------------|---------------|--|--|
| RANCE. | 5-3-19. | | <p>The departure of the draft for AUSTRALIA was, perhaps, one of the most important events happening during our stay at RANCE.</p> <p>Lieut-Colonel W.J.R. CHEESEMAN "DSO" MC", in a very fitting speech, bade them "Bon-voyage". They were played out of the village by the Band, who escorted them for some distance along the road, and gave them a good start on the voyage of their return home.</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;"><u>ARRIVALS.</u></td> <td style="width: 30%;"><u>BATTALION</u></td> <td style="width: 30%;"><u>STRENGTH.</u></td> <td style="width: 10%;"><u>DEPARTURES.</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>NIL.</td> <td></td> <td>Officers .0/Ranks .</td> <td>NIL.</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Present</td> <td>24 251.</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Detached</td> <td>23 192.</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Total</td> <td>47 443.</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> | <u>ARRIVALS.</u> | <u>BATTALION</u> | <u>STRENGTH.</u> | <u>DEPARTURES.</u> | NIL. | | Officers .0/Ranks . | NIL. | | Present | 24 251. | | | Detached | 23 192. | | | Total | 47 443. | | |
| <u>ARRIVALS.</u> | <u>BATTALION</u> | <u>STRENGTH.</u> | <u>DEPARTURES.</u> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| NIL. | | Officers .0/Ranks . | NIL. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Present | 24 251. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Detached | 23 192. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Total | 47 443. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| RANCE. | 6-3-19. | | <p>Other than the carrying out of the various duties which and routine of the Battalion, there is nothing to record.</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;"><u>ARRIVALS.</u></td> <td style="width: 30%;"><u>BATTALION</u></td> <td style="width: 30%;"><u>STRENGTH.</u></td> <td style="width: 10%;"><u>DEPARTURES.</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Reinfts.....1.</td> <td></td> <td>Officers .0/Ranks .</td> <td>To AUST.....1 Off: 370/Rs.</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Present</td> <td>21 220.</td> <td>Lt. J.P. DAVIS.</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Detached</td> <td>25 187.</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Total</td> <td>46 407.</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> | <u>ARRIVALS.</u> | <u>BATTALION</u> | <u>STRENGTH.</u> | <u>DEPARTURES.</u> | Reinfts.....1. | | Officers .0/Ranks . | To AUST.....1 Off: 370/Rs. | | Present | 21 220. | Lt. J.P. DAVIS. | | Detached | 25 187. | | | Total | 46 407. | | |
| <u>ARRIVALS.</u> | <u>BATTALION</u> | <u>STRENGTH.</u> | <u>DEPARTURES.</u> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Reinfts.....1. | | Officers .0/Ranks . | To AUST.....1 Off: 370/Rs. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Present | 21 220. | Lt. J.P. DAVIS. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Detached | 25 187. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

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VOLUME 37. Page 4.

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| Place | Date | Hour | Summary of Events and Information | Remarks and references to Appendices | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------|--------------------|------|---|--------------------------------------|------------------|--|--------------------|--------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|------------|-------------|--|
| RANCE. | 7-3-19. | | <p>The Education Officer, 55th Battalion (Lieut. WATTERS) gave a very interesting Lecture on Education which roused many to greater efforts to qualify themselves, by further study, to take their places as good citizens of our great AUSTRALIA. Sport has been held up owing to the weather and state of the ground; but to-day the Officers of the 53rd & 55th Battalions had a try-out in a friendly game of Football, which resulted in a win for the Officers of the 55th Battalion.</p> <p><u>ARRIVALS.</u></p> <p><u>BATTALION</u></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><u>STRENGTH.</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">Officers .O/Ranks.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Present.....</td> <td style="text-align: right;">22.....219.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Detached.....</td> <td style="text-align: right;">23.....185.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total.....</td> <td style="text-align: right;">45.....404.</td> </tr> </table> | | <u>STRENGTH.</u> | | Officers .O/Ranks. | Present..... | 22.....219. | Detached..... | 23.....185. | Total..... | 45.....404. | <p><u>DEPARTURES.</u> To AUST..... 1 off. 3 o/rs. Major J.J. MURRAY "DSC" "MC"</p> |
| | <u>STRENGTH.</u> | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Officers .O/Ranks. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Present..... | 22.....219. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Detached..... | 23.....185. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total..... | 45.....404. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| RANCE. | 8-3-19. | | <p>A very exciting Football match was played between the N.C.Os of the 53rd & 55th Battalions which resulted in a win for the 55th N.C.Os. Now that there is some prospect of finer weather, sport of all kinds should soon be in full swing again.</p> <p><u>ARRIVALS.</u> Reinfts..... 1 Off. 2Lt. VL. RUSHTON.</p> <p><u>BATTALION</u></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><u>STRENGTH.</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">Officers .O/Ranks.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Present.....</td> <td style="text-align: right;">23.....213.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Detached.....</td> <td style="text-align: right;">23.....188.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total.....</td> <td style="text-align: right;">46.....401.</td> </tr> </table> | | <u>STRENGTH.</u> | | Officers .O/Ranks. | Present..... | 23.....213. | Detached..... | 23.....188. | Total..... | 46.....401. | <p><u>DEPARTURES.</u> Evacs..... 3.</p> |
| | <u>STRENGTH.</u> | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Officers .O/Ranks. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Present..... | 23.....213. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Detached..... | 23.....188. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total..... | 46.....401. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| RANCE. | 9-3-19. | | <p>Church Services for all religious denominations were held during the morning, and at night the men enjoyed a very good programme shown by the 5th Div. Cinema.</p> <p><u>ARRIVALS.</u> NIL.</p> <p><u>BATTALION</u></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><u>STRENGTH.</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">Officers .O/Ranks.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Present.....</td> <td style="text-align: right;">24.....212.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Detached.....</td> <td style="text-align: right;">22.....188.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total.....</td> <td style="text-align: right;">46.....400.</td> </tr> </table> | | <u>STRENGTH.</u> | | Officers .O/Ranks. | Present..... | 24.....212. | Detached..... | 22.....188. | Total..... | 46.....400. | <p><u>DEPARTURES.</u> NIL. Evacs..... 1.</p> |
| | <u>STRENGTH.</u> | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Officers .O/Ranks. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Present..... | 24.....212. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Detached..... | 22.....188. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| Place | Date | Hour | Summary of Events and Information | Remarks and references to Appendices | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------|---------------------|---|--|------------------|------------------|--|--|--|---------------------|--|--|-------------------|--------------|-------|--|--------------------|--------------|-------|--|-----------------|--------------|-------|-------|
| RANCE. | 10-3-19. | | <p>The amalgamation of the two Battalions, 53rd and 55th, took place to-day. The Battalion will in future be known as the 53rd/55th Battalion under the Command of Lieut-Colonel A.C.S. HOLLAND. The following letter from Lieut-Colonel W.J.R. CHESEMAN "DSO" MC was circulated and read to the Battalion, the sentiment being much appreciated by all. - (See Appendix.)</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><u>DEPARTURES.</u> NIL</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;"><u>ARRIVALS.</u> NIL</td> <td style="width: 30%;"><u>BATTALION</u></td> <td style="width: 20%;"><u>STRENGTH.</u></td> <td style="width: 20%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Officers .O/Ranks .</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Present</td> <td>24</td> <td>210 .</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Detached</td> <td>22</td> <td>190 .</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Total</td> <td>46</td> <td>400 .</td> </tr> </table> | <u>ARRIVALS.</u> NIL | <u>BATTALION</u> | <u>STRENGTH.</u> | | | | Officers .O/Ranks . | | | Present | 24 | 210 . | | Detached | 22 | 190 . | | Total | 46 | 400 . | No 1. |
| <u>ARRIVALS.</u> NIL | <u>BATTALION</u> | <u>STRENGTH.</u> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Officers .O/Ranks . | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Present | 24 | 210 . | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Detached | 22 | 190 . | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Total | 46 | 400 . | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| RANCE. | 11-2-19. | | <p>The usual routine and duties were carried out and at night, the 5th Div. Concert party "The Kookooyras" gave a very fine performance which was much appreciated by a large audience.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><u>DEPARTURES.</u> NIL</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;"><u>ARRIVALS.</u> 1 Off. Lt. SMALL.</td> <td style="width: 30%;"><u>BATTALION</u></td> <td style="width: 20%;"><u>STRENGTH.</u></td> <td style="width: 20%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Officers .O/Ranks .</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Present</td> <td>25</td> <td>209 .</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Detached</td> <td>2</td> <td>191 .</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Total</td> <td>27</td> <td>400 .</td> </tr> </table> | <u>ARRIVALS.</u> 1 Off. Lt. SMALL. | <u>BATTALION</u> | <u>STRENGTH.</u> | | | | Officers .O/Ranks . | | | Present | 25 | 209 . | | Detached | 2 | 191 . | | Total | 27 | 400 . | |
| <u>ARRIVALS.</u> 1 Off. Lt. SMALL. | <u>BATTALION</u> | <u>STRENGTH.</u> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Officers .O/Ranks . | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Present | 25 | 209 . | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Detached | 2 | 191 . | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Total | 27 | 400 . | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |



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Appendix No 1

53rd Battalion, A. I. F.
10-3-19.

Comrades of the 53rd Battalion,

To-day, for the purposes of demobilisation and administration, your own and the 55th Battalions are being amalgamated, under the Command of Lieut-Colonel A.C.S. HOLLAND. This amalgamation leaves me free for early return to Australia, a fact which I view with very mixed feelings. Naturally I am very glad at the prospect of seeing my people, but this necessitates the severing of those ties that have bound us together during the 18 months that I have commanded the Battalion, ties that were formed during those times of stress and battle, such as at PERONNE and BELLICOURT, and numerous other ~~times~~^{similar} experiences that we ~~we~~ have all passed through.

I thank you and those brave fellows who have laid down their lives, for your discipline, your loyalty, your magnificent courage and devotion to duty, and the high ideals which you have at all times striven to maintain.

These combined have succeeded in bringing great credit and commendation from the higher Command and has placed the Battalion very high on the Honour List of the A.I.F. I trust that this same spirit will animate you all under the new regime and that the same loyalty which has always been characteristic of the Battalion will be given your new C.O. I am proud to have my name associated with such a magnificent unit.

Hoping that your own return to Australia will not be very long delayed and looking forward to the 14th February 1920 when I expect to meet you all at our annual dinner.

I am

Yours very sincerely.

SGD.- W.J. CHEESEMAN Lieut-Colonel.

Headquarters.
10-3-19.