

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

Engineers

**Item number:** 14/36/18

**Title:** 1st Field Squadron, Australian  
Engineers

November 1917



AWM4-14/36/18



WAR DIARY

or

~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.~~

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| Place  | Date 1917 | Hour | Summary of Events and Information  | Remarks and references to Appendices |
|--|-----------|------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Beersheba<br>Syria<br>Jerusalem.<br>1/250 000<br>G 10. | Nov 1.    |      | <p>The Squadron worked for the month with HQ and two papers per troop at DHQ. the remainder of A. B and N.Z. Troops detached to 1<sup>st</sup> A.L.H Bde 2<sup>nd</sup> A.L.H Bde and N.Z.M.R. Bde respectively - Detailed diaries from the troops are herewith, the following work was carried out by Sqdn HQ detachment:-</p> <p>1. Developing water supply at Beersheba and withdrawing charges of dynamite, gelignite, and kindred explosives from the wells. Practically every well was mined, but the enemy apparently had insufficient time to fire the charges - Usual charge was a case of gelignite lowered down the well on a rope. Coaches and trucks in railway yard were also mined and prepared for electric ignitions.</p> <p>2. Continued work - Commenced developing water at Bir Hassan el A'atham</p> <p>3. Continued work at Bir Hassan el A'atham - poor supply about 250 gals per hr. - depth 80 ft - diameter 8 ft - Working party from D.A.C.</p> <p>4-5 - ditto -</p> <p>6. Developing Bir Salem Abu Irgeig in addition to A'atham.</p> <p>7. Moved into Beersheba and took over all water supply for the corps</p> <p>8. 0230 Trekked Beersheba to SHERIA via IRGEIG - Reached SHERIA 0900 developing water in WADI excellent supply at about two feet but very boggy.</p> <p>9. Trekked BUREIR via AMIEDAT</p> <p>10. Trekked to HILL 331 East of MEDJEL - Trekked on to HAMAME</p> <p>11. Ran steam engine at mill working on deep well pump, also developed water at various wells in village.</p> <p>12. At HAMAME - Dred guncocks for demolition of railway North of LUDD.</p> <p>13. Left HAMAME for ESDUD 0800 thence through MURRA to YERNA arriving 2200. Arranged watering at wells at ESDUD and erected troughs on WADI SUKERIER for watering en route of Divisional troops.</p> |                                      |

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## or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

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| Place   | Date<br>1917   | Hour  | Summary of Events and Information  | Remarks and<br>references to<br>Appendices |
|---|----------------|---|--|--|
| YERBNA<br>Syria<br>Jerusalem<br>1/250 000<br>F2 | Nov            |   |  |  |
|   | 14             |   | Left YERBNA 0730 trucked to ZERNUKUH with 1 <sup>st</sup> L.H. Bde then to KUBEIBE<br>arranging watering facilities in orchards.   |  |
|   | 15             |   | Left KUBEIBE 1430 for BIR SALEM - watered horses using ramming plant<br>erected for irrigation of Germans Orphanage -<br>Detachment proceeded to LUDD picked up one officer and twelve men from<br>'A' Troop and covered by Screens (1 of 18 OR) from 1 <sup>st</sup> A.L. N. Bde destroyed<br>railway for about one mile, three miles North of LUDD.  |  |
|   | 16             |   | Watered Divisional Troops at Bir SALEM (about three miles West of RAMLEH) Erected signboards<br>in towns of RAMLEH   |  |
|   | 21             |   |  |  |
|   | 22             |   | Moved into JAFFA occupied billets in Jewish Settlement. Made temporary<br><del>arrangements</del> arrangements for watering.   |  |
|   | 23             |   | Took over Water Supply and ran engine for village  |  |
|   | 24             |   | Detachment pushed on to JERISHEH, built bridge of boats over NAHR-EL-AUDA. at<br>mill - material on ground at 1900 - Span 100 ft - <sup>Eight</sup> bays - Saddle built in<br>each boat - boats moored to chain cable forward and 3" rope aft - Completion with<br>Six foot roadway for infantry in file at 0500 - Working party Equip 1 of 1 WO 8 sappers<br>1 officer 25 OR infantry - / localities sketch here with - |  |
|   | Night<br>24/25 |   | Developed water supply on beach at JAFFA   |  |
|   | 26             |   | Reconnaitred roads - SELMEH - SARONA, SELMEH - IBN IBRAK   |  |
| 27  |                | Marked all roads in our sector particularly YASUR - SARONA Road East of<br>town of JAFFA in order to keep transport out of town - |  |  |
| 28  |                | Investigating water supply SELMEH, IBN IBRAK, SAKIA   |  |  |
| 29  |                | Investigating fumigating plants RAMLEH, RICHON, SARONA.   |  |  |
| 30  |                |   |  |  |

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| Beersheba | 1/11/17 |      | A TROOP moved with 1 <sup>st</sup> L.H. Brigade to Beersheba and prepared watering arrangements pools in Wadi bed at Bir-el-Kamam.  |                                      |
|           | 2.      |      | Troop moved from Bir-el-Kamam and joined up with 1 <sup>st</sup> L.H. Brigade at Beersheba and trekked with Brigade to Ain-Kohleh. - unable to water Brigade.   |                                      |
|           | 3.      |      | Trekking back with Brigade to Beersheba - cleaned out 2 wells 1/2 mile east Beersheba on Wadi Saba. poor supply insufficient to water Brigade, reserved for drinking only. - erected troughs at Wells A1 & A2 of Beersheba Groups.  |                                      |
|           | 4.      |      | Trekking with 1 <sup>st</sup> L.H. Brigade to Sharia.   |                                      |
|           | 5.      |      | Trekking with Brigade to Ameidat  |                                      |
|           | 6.      |      | Developed and made watering arrangements for Brigade, in Wadies Kuleika and Kuggaba.  |                                      |
|           | 7.      |      | Located pumping plant at Kh Jemmama & made necessary repairs, and watered 1 <sup>st</sup> L.H. Brigade  |                                      |
|           | 8.      |      | Anzac D.T.O., Aust Div. & part of Geo. Div. -   |                                      |
|           | 9.      |      | Handed over plant in good running order to 20 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (9/11/17) Trekking from Kh Jemmama   |                                      |
|           | 10.     |      | to el-ekbej-del & located steam plant, put same in working order & connected to pumping plant Babcock Wilcox Blue Boiler - area 3' x 4' x 5' diam. 15' long. 40 lbs. per sq. in. - Engine English & Make Horizontal Single Cylinder 25 H.P. 8" stroke 10" dia Cylinder (Belt drive) pump. Three throw Vertical Plunger with 4" cylinder 3" delivery. - Well 78' deep 6' 6" diam. depth of water 6' 6" - yield 2,500 gal. per hour. 2 reservoirs 16' x 17' x 5'  |                                      |
|           | 11.     |      | Moved from el-ekbej-del and joined Brigade at Esdud. - Moved to Beach and developed water for Brigade dug 3 Sumps.  |                                      |
|           | 12.     |      | Brigade moved to Beach - Put down necessary water supply gear & watered Brigade   |                                      |
|           | 13.     |      | Developing water on Beach 2 miles west of Sidiet-el-Haririyeh (Square C.19. Sheet 16 Palestine) Sunk 3 Sumps 30' x 10' x 3' (Dr. Weedman reported & took command from Lt. Bradberry of Troop)   |                                      |
|           | 14.     |      | Troop moved with Brigade on trek and camped at Yebnah. Troop moved with Brigade from Yebnah on trek to Khurbet Deiran: Watered Brigade at chain colony well. (Well 12 feet diam. 100 feet deep fitted with 3 throw Vertical Plunger Pump driven (Belt drive) by a 12-15 H.P. Deutz Horizontal Suction Gas Engine. 3" Delivery - yield 2000 gallons per hour and well in orchard 1/4 mile east of chain well. - Well and Plant similar to chain well but Engine in bad repair, 3" delivery yield 1500 gal. per hour. | 11/19<br>10/19<br>10/19              |



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| Place              | Date     | Hour                      | Summary of Events and Information   | Remarks and references to Appendices |
|--------------------|----------|---------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| Beersheba          | 15/11/17 | A TROOP Cont <sup>d</sup> | Watered Brigade in morning as per 14 <sup>th</sup> inst. - Moved with Brigade through Ramleh to Rudd. located main pumping plant. - 12-15 H.P. Deutz Horizontal Suction Gas Engine driving (Belt drive) 3 throw Vertical plunger pump 4" delivery - yield 2500 gals. per hour. - Well 12 feet diam 92' deep One officer and 12 of reported to Captain Allen (H.Q. Troop) and moved out along Railway line for a distance of 3 miles north of Rudd and demolished 1 mile of Damascus to Jerusalem Railway line and returned to camp at Rudd. |                                      |
|                    | 16.      |                           | Watered Brigade at Rudd. and moved with Brigade to Safiriye and watered Brigade from 3 wells worked by wheel and endless Bucket conveyor - yield of each well 700 gal. per hr. Well No 1. 120 feet deep. No 2. x No 3. 90 feet deep.  |                                      |
|                    | 17.      |                           | Located well with pumping plant at Beit Dejan. Well 105 feet deep fitted with 3-throw Vertical Plunger Pump 6" delivery driven (belt drive) by 12-15 H.P. Rowston-Proctor Horizontal Suction Gas Engines - yield 4000 gal. per hour. watered Brigade in 1 1/2 hours.  |                                      |
|                    | 18.      |                           | Watered Brigade at Beit Dejan, moved to Gasur and located 2 wells 80' deep fitted with  |                                      |
|                    | 19.      |                           | endless Bucket Conveyor driven (belt drive) by 3 1/2 - 5 H.P. Deutz Horizontal Suction Gas Engine Yield 1800 g.   |                                      |
|                    | 20.      |                           |   |                                      |
|                    | 21.      |                           | Moved with Brigade back to Jebnah and camped - water supply poor.   |                                      |
|                    | 22.      |                           | Moved ahead of Brigade and developed sumps on beach 2 miles West of Sidvet-el-Haririye (Square C. 19. Sheet 16 Palestine)   |                                      |
|                    | 23.      |                           | Dug 3 sumps on Beach each sump 30 x 10 x 4. and capable of carrying one 600 gal. trough   |                                      |
|                    | 24.      |                           | 6 Sumps in all watering brigade in 2 1/2 hours. - Put down 2 1/2 Spear points for drinking water  |                                      |
| Sidvet-el-Haririye | 25.      |                           | Repairs to Troop Equipment and Supervision of watering arrangements   |                                      |
|                    | 26.      |                           | Troop supervising watering arrangements and repairs to equipment.   |                                      |
|                    | 27.      |                           | 1/2 troop on beach supervising watering arrangements for 2 <sup>nd</sup> L.H. Regt.   |                                      |
|                    | 28.      |                           | Lt. Weedman and 1/2 troop moved ahead of Brigade to prepare watering arrangements at Ayan Kara  |                                      |
|                    | 29.      |                           | Located well 12' diam. 95' deep (PS to water) Pump 3 throw Ver. Plunger. - Engine 12 B.H.P. Hornsby Engine Suction Gas. Both pump & engine in good order & repair. Concrete Res. 20000 gal. Yield 1400 gal. per hr. - Erected 4 troughs   |                                      |
|                    | 30.      |                           | Supervising watering arrangements at Ayan Kara & Rudd. - Carried out water reconnaissance at Wady Raubin  |                                      |
|                    |          |                           | Khurbet Surafend. and found watering areas as per attached Report.  |                                      |
|                    |          |                           | Supervising watering arrangements at Ayan Kara and Rudd. - as per instruction from P.H.Q. reported on facilities for erecting disinfecting plant at Rudd. - as per instruction from P.H.Q. reported on facilities   |                                      |

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|---------|---------|---------|---|--------------------------------------|
| HORA.   | 1/11/17 |         | "B TROOP" Watered Brigade from pools in Wadi Hosa (stormwater) 2 drinks.  |                                      |
|         |         | 2.      | Watered from pools-troughs erected every time-marched out 1200 along Hebron road to point N.E. of Kharruneh - Brigade watered out of pools using buckets.   |                                      |
|         |         | 3.      | Put 2 pumps in Wadi Salamah 1/2 mile S.E. of Um Sirah. Made reconnaissance to point 3/4 miles S.S.E. of Tor-el-Sadan - result negative - country very rough & rocky tho' passable to vehicles in daylight.  |                                      |
|         |         | 4. & 5. | Watered Transport horses 1 drink a day at Khaktareh - small supply - (see Well Report).   |                                      |
|         |         | 6.      | Marched into Tel-el-Saba, sent horses into Beersheba for water - marched out 1730 toward Sheria   |                                      |
|         |         | 7.      | Broke G. S. Wagon wheel - converted others to our use.  |                                      |
|         |         | 8.      | Reached vicinity Sheria 1200. Camped caves Amiadat - waterless day.   |                                      |
|         |         | 9.      | Marched to Tel-el-kefile, running water in Wadi - Removed 530 slabs explosive from Railway Bridges  |                                      |
|         |         | 10.     | 1st Bridge - 3 charges in each of 2 piers facing, 2nd 2 charges in each of 2 piers facing - charges electrically connected and also fused with 5' instantaneous & 1 ordinary detonator - C/O Battery visible - Austrian officer dead (shot rifle) at 2nd Bridge, wiring not completed there - caught in act - |                                      |
|         |         | 11.     | marched out from kefile 1130 - camped near Burier.  |                                      |
|         |         | 12.     | Moved on to Ebdis - water very bad - erected and used Horn buckets, sent ropes & spare horn buckets   |                                      |
|         |         | 13.     | to near Beit Duves, Beit Affe, & Keratiya - used also small pump (hand gear) on hose near siding  |                                      |
|         |         | 14.     | on line N. of Es. Suafir-el-Sharbiye - yield from latter approx. 200 gals. per hour - marched out to Hamame.  |                                      |
| HAMAME. |         | 15.     | Watered on beach at potholes & with water buckets   |                                      |
|         |         | 16.     | Repaired to date 9 sand cart axles & 1 G. Gun stock for 5.L.H.  |                                      |
|         |         | 17.     | Moved to point South of Beit Duras on Railway line - Lt Bradbury reported from "A" Troop.   |                                      |
|         |         | 18.     | Moved to Jilia - watered Brigade at wells and Springs Ain-el-kekeenna   |                                      |
|         |         | 19.     | Kezaze, and Ain-el-Sejed (see well Report) 2 1/2 suction no good for 20' lift - perished.   |                                      |
|         |         | 20.     | Marched to Kubeibe watering at Diran village - Distillery and well.   |                                      |
|         |         | 21.     | At point 2000 N. of Naby Kunds and at Zernako.  |                                      |
|         |         | 22.     | Moved to Ludd - broke 1 G. S. Limber Pole & replaced with folding pole -  |                                      |
| LUDD.   |         | 23.     | Watering Brigade at Town Plant suction gas engine - procured olive oil for -  |                                      |

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|-------|-----------|-------|--|---|--|
| Ludd. | 18/12/17  |       | <i>B TROOP Contd</i> Procured olive oil for lubricant and charcoal for native engine driver erected 5 troughs and water bottle apparatus. Pump lifts 3000 gals. per hr. reservoir holds 25,000 gals. Iron tank on hill near Hosque 7000 gals. per hr. Arranged with Mudiv of Ludd to burn charcoal from stack of Turkish wood at Railway Station (collected in all 1 ton and terminated the arrangement) |   |  |
|       | x         |       |  |   |  |
|       | 19.       |       |  |   |  |
|       | 20.       |       |  | Detached Lt Bradberry and 5.0p. to orders by Col. Russell R.O. Descorps.  |  |
|       | 21.       |       |  | Marched to Yaszur watering Brigade at Plant belonging to & run by Wasif an English speaking Syrian also using well, at point S.E. of 275 Dhahr Selme 1 mile, with Suetton gas plant and 8000 gallon reservoir (orchard on hill)   |  |
|       | 22 to 24. |       |  | Procured charcoal and oil from Ludd - Lt Bradberry came back from Junction Station to where horses had been sent - Put up notice boards on road in vicinity of Yaszur.  |  |
|       | 25 to 26. |       |  | Moved to Orchard 1 mile S.E. of 275. watering whole Brigade - repaired belting 6 times.   |  |
|       | 27.       |       |  | Moved to Selme - being shelled out of previous camp & watering place - using plant and large reservoir on central west side of village - plenty of room for troughs using 2 regimental and 4 of troops also reservoirs and bottle filters. Got 3" to 2 1/2" reducing socket from Wagner - Jaffa. nipples 2 1/2" from Goussroman, Jaffa leather belting arrived from Col. Russell. |  |
|       | 28.       |       |  | To Ludd for charcoal and terminated arrangement - paid £1 cash for 1 ton received also paid for olive oil - receipt forwarded to S.O. through Brigade.  |  |
|       | SELMEH.   | 29-30 |  | Making crossing over Wadi (in square Jaffa 1-63360-071. L. 3. b. e.) 4' wider and rendering same safe - securing chaff from Sarona - some draught horses getting low am giving them any extra feed obtained - also to any foot riding horses  |  |

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| Bersheeba | 1/11/17 |      | <p>N.Z. TROOP marched into Bersheeba with Squadron at 0100. and camped for the night assisting all day with pumping plants and erected 2,600 gallon troughs</p>  |                                      |
|           |         | 2.   | <p>moved out to Elebala and joined N.Z. Brigade, and made watering arrangements for watering same, at this place there are a group of small wells averaging about 3' in diameter and 28 feet in depth about one half being lined. - Improved three wells by deepening. others could not be improved as they were in solid limestone</p>  |                                      |
|           |         | 3.   | <p>Improved a fourth well at Halah and searched for water in wadi. but the field was very small, only watered about 2 troops. no doubt after rain there would be plentiful supply in the wadi at a depth of 5 or 6 feet.</p>   |                                      |
|           |         | 4.   | <p>Watered the Brigade in morning, lifted all material at 1300 and moved out at 1500 for Kuwelfeh, arriving there 2200 &amp; camped for the night. The Irgeig Detachment joined up</p>   |                                      |
|           |         | 5.   | <p>Proceeded in a S.E. direction in search of water found several empty cisterns and at 1100 found the well Khat Reit holding approx. 6000 gals. water, observed the yield for some time while Australian troops were drawing water, which was not lowered. Notified the Bde. but they were unable to utilize as they were being relieved at 1700 and expected to proceed to Bersheeba. about 3 troops of A.L.H. watered at this well and a part of our Bge. drew drinking water from same. - During our search we captured an armed Turk and handed him over to A.P.M. - Moved into Bersheeba</p> |                                      |
|           |         | 6.   | <p>at 1300 moved out from Bersheeba for Jarwan arriving there 2100 &amp; camped for the night. Proceeded to deepen Ain Kihleh wells: the yield from one (at 1150 on Chap. 1. 125000) being only 100 gals. per hour and the other one only yielding approx. 300 gals. per hr. (Chap. 1. 125000 at Ain Kihleh)</p>   |                                      |
|           |         | 7.   | <p>During operations two enemy aeroplanes came over and machine gunned us, wounding 2 of Bge. working party and one of our Sappers (Sap Richie). also badly wounded 2 of our draught horses. continued work on these wells until we were recalled at 1600 by Sqdn. to Bersheeba - arrived Bersheeba 2300.</p>  |                                      |
|           |         | 8.   | <p>moved out 0200 for Sharia with Sqdn. - arrived Sharia 1800 and camped.</p>  |                                      |
|           |         | 9.   | <p>moved out from Sharia with Sqdn. 0530. - Sqdn leaving at Helkah to await orders.</p>  |                                      |
|           |         | 10.  | <p>moved from Helkah at 1000 to join Sqdn. - Arrived Elebil Chamim 2000 and put up hoisting gear on 200' well &amp; watered Divisional H.Q. &amp; our own horses also two troops Australian Division. -</p>  |                                      |

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|-----------|----------|------|---|--------------------------------------|
| HAMAME    | 11/12/17 |      | N.Z. TROOP <u>Contd</u> Moved out 1000 for Hamame. arrived Hamame 1530  |                                      |
|           | 12.      |      | Moved to Beach W. of Hamame and dug 11 Sumps for N.Z. Bge. Water plentiful and just at from 2' to 3' in depth sinking in sand   |                                      |
|           | 13.      |      | Watered Bge on Beach detachment @ Mr Lockington and 40/R at pumping plant Hamame - moved out with Bge. at 1400 arrived KH SUKEIRIE 2200.  |                                      |
|           | 14.      |      | Moved with Bge. at 0800 watered in Wadi Thakhanat in large pools of fresh water without troughs in morning. - 1500 erected 4 troughs and one reservoir and watered Bge. from pools in Wadi.   |                                      |
|           | 15.      |      | Watered Bde. in morning and lifted all material at 1300 and moved forward with Bde. to Richon. where we erected 4 troughs at 30000 Gallon Reservoir in the Colony. and watered the Bde.   |                                      |
| AYUNKARA. | 16.      |      | Watered Bde. in colony at 1300 - moved one mile N.E. of Wine Factory and erected 4 troughs at concrete Reservoir contains 30000 gallons of water.   |                                      |
|           | 17.      |      | Watered Bde. at a reservoir and pumping plant - Has a 12 H.P. Hornsby Gas Engine with Langy Suction Gas plant attached. - The pump is triple plunger type capacity 4000 gallons per hour.   |                                      |
|           | 18.      |      | Watered the Brigade in morning. Lifted all material and equipment and moved forward with Brigade at 0930. arrived at 1300. erected 4 troughs and 1 reservoir in Waddi N.W. of Sarona. half mile N.W. also erected 4 Regimental troughs for Brigade and found pumping parties for the Brigade. |                                      |
|           | 19.      |      | 1 bpl. and 40/R. watered Brigade. Placed 1 bpl. and 40/R in Wagner Foundry and proceeded to effect repairs to Brigade material. secured charcoal for pumping plant.   |                                      |
|           | 20.      |      | Watered Brigade erected 6 bpl. R. troughs near their lines and put pumps in order 1 bpl and 40/R at Wagner Foundry on repairs to Brigade material. —  |                                      |

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|-----------|----------|------|--|--------------------------------------|
| AYUNKARA. | 21/11/17 |      | N.Z. TROOP Con <sup>td</sup> Watered Brigade 1 cpl. and 4 o/r. on duty assisting at Wagner's foundry attending Brigade affairs - Sign posts procured from Turkish stores 600' searchin for sign posts secured from Greek store (gave receipt) 20/8 10"x1" for sign boards. Completed 30 sign posts ready for painting. |                                      |
|           | 22.      |      | Watered Brigade 1 cpl. and 4 o/r. attending Brigade affairs Wagner's foundry. 2 o/r. repairing water pipe at Jewish Hospital. 2 o/r. (fitters) effected repairs chaff-cutter and got same working and cutting chaff for Brigade. - Paint secured from Wagner foundry & completed sign posts                            |                                      |
|           | 23.      |      | 1 cpl. and 4 o/r watered Brigade completed 14 sign posts & erected 10 of same 1 cpl at Wagner foundry attending Brigade affairs. Erected posts and roped in fresh water Reservoir area improving same by draining and graveling. -   |                                      |
|           | 24.      |      | 1 cpl. and 4 men watering Brigade. 1 cpl & 3 men at Wagner Foundry on Brigade work miscellaneous work in Camp.   |                                      |
|           | 25.      |      | Improved watering area 1 cpl. and 3 men at work Wagner Foundry. 1 o/r. repairing Pump at C.M.R. watering area.   |                                      |
|           | 26.      |      | Packed up all equipment and stood to ready to move & moved camp 1/2 mile S.W.  |                                      |
|           | 27.      |      | Erected 4 troughs and watered Brigade.   |                                      |
|           | 28.      |      | 1 cpl. and 4 o/r. repairing chaff cutter at Sarona Brewery. 1 cpl & 4 o/r watered Brigade at Canterbury M. R. watering area.   |                                      |
|           | 29.      |      | 4 o/r. cutting chaff for Brigade 1 cpl. & 4 o/r. watered Brigade & improved watering area at Canterbury M. R. watering area.   |                                      |
|           | 30       |      | 4 o/r. cutting chaff for Brigade 1 cpl. & 4 o/r. watered Brigade & improved watering area at Canterbury M. R. watering area. 2 o/r. at Wagner foundry on Brigade work.   |                                      |
|           |          |      | 4 o/r. cutting chaff for Brigade 1 cpl. & 3 o/r. erecting pumps & troughs at C.M.R. new watering area. 2 o/r. repairing pumping engine at C.M.R. water area 1 cpl. and 3 men at foundry on pipe work   |                                      |

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