

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

Engineers

Item number: 14/17/36

Title: 5th Australian Pioneer Battalion

February 1919



AWM4-14/17/36

Confidential Original

War Diary

For

February 1919.

5th Australian Pioneer Battalion

275

McKinnison

Major

Compiled by A. DUKE Capt.

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118.

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.

or
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

275

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
BEAURIEUX	1 st FEB	4 ^{PM}	Padre opened the "Diggers Club" in Solre. It is chiefly for the use of our two Coys who are billeted there. Band played at the "Educational School Concert" in Solre during the evening.	
"	2 nd	4 ^{PM}	"Diggers Club" Beaurieux opened today by the C.O. The building was originally part of a German Hospital in Solre. The C.O. had it shifted out here & erected. All the furnishings in this club & in the one at Solre were bought by the Padre from "Salvation Army" Funds. Lieut's Part & Gray left for England for a course under the educational scheme.	
"	3 rd	4 ^{PM}	Tanwell Concert to draft in the "Diggers Club" C.O. spoke on demobilisation. Dance held in the Club during the evening.	
"	4 th	4 ^{PM}	Lieut. Cunningham M.C. & 82. O.R. marched out for return to Australia. C.O. held meeting of Coy. Commanders & decided to bring No. 1. Coy back to Beaurieux. Started Bn. officers mess in the Chateau. Another fall of snow.	

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BEAURIEUX.	FEB			
	5 th		2 nd Lt. Shedly joined Bn. from O.T.B. Band gave a concert in the "Diggers Club." Heavy fall of snow.	
	6 th		Owing to working parties being required in Sabre No 1. Coy will not move out here until work is finished. More snow. Trams not busy on the roads with snow bloughs.	
	7 th		General Finny visited the unit today & inspected the newly opened "Diggers Club." Frosty & exceedingly cold day.	
	8 th		Band gave a concert in the "Diggers Club" during the afternoon.	
	9 th		C.O. gave a lecture on Demobilisation & expected moves in the near future. Padre held voluntary church parade after the lecture. Still cold & frosty.	
	10 th		Capt. Meagher our new M.O. joined up today from the 15 th Field Ambulance.	
	11 th		Another band concert in the "Diggers Club" lovely weather bright & sunny days with hard frost at night	

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BEAURIEUX	FEB. 12 th		Lieut Palmer left for U.K. to do a course under the Educational Scheme. Lieut Duke from Paris leave & Lieut Edgley from U.K. leave.	
"	13 th		"Fancy Dress Ball" in the "Diggers Club" during the evening a most good show & quite a large percentage in costume. Big attendance of civilians. Lieut Knuckey returned from Brussels.	
"	14 th		Band Concert in the Club during the afternoon. The phaw has set in at last.	
"	15 th		Band gave a concert in Salve, large attendance. Still phawing. Lieut Fox went on U.K. leave.	
"	16 th		Visiting day at the "Club." All the boys bring their civilian friends along to the band concert. Hot cocoa & biscuits provided for all. Paddy held Church service during the forenoon. Weather mild & raining.	
"	17 th		St Sheverson went on U.K. leave - Capt Paterson returned from 15 days 1914 leave & took command of No 2 Coy (BTD). Very little work as we have very few men available. Day dull & mild - all snow disappeared.	
"	18 th		New C.R.E. Major Tolly came out during morning & went round village with C.O. & adj. Day wet. Fancy dress in afternoon at "Club" & a dance was held in evening - most of the civilians attended & much appreciate the entertainment.	

D. D. & L., London, E.C.
(A10266) Wt W5300/P713 750,000 2/18 Sch. 52 Forms/Cat: 8/10.

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275

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BEAURIEUX	FEB 19 th	C.O.	Everything as usual - Day dull but fine. CO. was going to visit party under Lt Jackson at Thuilles but C.R.E. did not turn up. Big start. mail in - first for over 4 weeks. No 1 Coy A+C held by trench tournament at Diggs Club in Solre-le-Chateau. Padre Harwood went in after dinner.	
	20 th	C.O.	Got another job of fixing Solre-Lessies road - No 1 Coy to do it. First lot of stuff got away to the A.D.O.S. i.e. Bn. Equipment & technical stores. Dance held at Diggs Club Beaurieux in evening - Band played & great success. Padre went to U.K. on leave. Word through about Rt Hon W.M. Hughes visit to the Division on 24 th inst - we are to supply the Band at Solre-le-Chateau.	
	21 st	C.O.	Day dull very little doing - usual. Road work by No 1 Coy.	
	22 nd	C.O.	Mr Hughes to address troops at Solre tomorrow instead of 24 th . Major Wilkinson & Capt Vidal went into Div. to make arrangements. Gen. Bidwood to visit 14 th Bde. on 24 th inst. All senior officers to attend.	
	23 rd	C.O.	Bn. paraded for Solre. Band played about 100 men in from Beaurieux at 10.30 am. No 1 Coy. paraded about 60 strong under Capt Keir. Very good turn out & Mr Hughes made splendid speech & got a most enthusiastic reception from the diggers. Col. Chancars turned out a guard of honour. In evening Major Murray D.S.O. Div sports officer dined with Gen at Beaurieux.	
	24 th	C.O.	Very little work doing - C.O. Adj. Capt Vidal & two or three others paraded for Gen Bidwood at Sivry with 14 th Bde. All officers were introduced & he explained the delay in demobilization. Major Wilkinson got leave for six days to Cologne & leaves in morning. Several new road jobs from C.R.E. for No 2 Coy. Day fine but dull.	

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(Ato:66) Wt W3300/P713 250,000 2/18 Ser. 52 Forms/C21:8/16.

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BEAUFRIEUX	FEB 25 th		Major Wilkinson left for Cologne & Capt Vidal in Command of Bn. We had several small parties out on various road jobs. Also we had charge of 60 Prisoners who were breaking stone & repairing Nivoy - Solre le-Chateau road. Two f.3. wagons carted stone. Capt Vidal attended meeting at AMex D.H.G. He move etc. We go to Reulies on 8 th March. Band left for five days trip to Brussels per Louy under Lt Scriven. Lt Knuckey left for U.K. non-mil. work.	
	26 th		No 2 Coy again on road Nivoy - Solre - No Boche turned up. We carted & spent a considerable amount of metal. Lt Knuckey left for employment in U.K. 2/11/44. appointed Education officer for ten. Several men getting ready now for early re-patriation etc. In evening Capt Chapman of 14 th Bde came to dinner & afterwards gave very interesting lecture on "Waterloo", which was well attended & appreciated. We are busy preparing to get rid of all ammunition - were going to dump it tomorrow but Div. cancelled order. CO. (Capt Vidal) & Lt Campbell rode over to Reulies to have a look at new quarters. Dancing Club held in afternoon in Recreation Hall. Lt England returned from U.K. leave - 11 months he got married & officer gave him salute with all names engraved thereon.	
	27 th		No 2 Coy working on Nivoy - Solre road but progress is slow as we have so few men available - no prisoners or lorries turned up. Capt Vidal went into Solre in morning & saw Div. re road work - They are satisfied with same. We are to dump ammunition & f.3. on Mon. 3 rd Mar. Maximum Daily Strength 699, average Daily Strength 618 minimum Daily Strength 593.	
	28 th		Average number of men off duty daily 4.	

275

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----- APPENDICES -----

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to

W A R

DIARY

for

FEBRUARY 1919.

5th, Aust. Pioneer Battalion.

1. REPORTS BY -

- Commanding Officer
- Quartermaster
- Medical Officer
- Transport Officer

2. PROGRAMME of RECREATION HUT. BEAURIEUX.

275

C.Os.Report.

The Demobilisation of the Battalion is only going very slowly owing to strikes in the United Kingdom holding shipping up.

Chaplain Harewood has done excellent work in furnishing Diggers' Clubs. One in Solre le Chateau and one in Beaurieux. Both these Clubs have been much appreciated by all ranks and the Dances, Euchre and Whist tournaments have caused endless amusement to the men.

The Band, under Band Sgt Hedges has done wonders in helping to pass away a weary time, and the Battalion Band is without doubt the best Band in the Division at the present time.

The whole tone of the Battalion is good and the men realize that the authorities are doing all in their power to get them home quickly.

The Educational Scheme is working well, but the men get tired of waiting for Non-Military Employment in England, as only a very few of those who filled in forms have got away.

The discipline of the Battalion is good, very little crime exists and that only amongst the same old few who have always been bad eggs.

275

QUARTERMASTERS REPORT.Account with D.A.D.O.S.

	<u>Drawn</u>	<u>Credit.</u>
Breeches M.S.	25	38
do D.S.	40	19
Boots, Ankle	83	20
Badges, Hat	100	
do Australia	140	
Brushes, Tooth	70	
do Shaving	8	
Bags, Nose	50	
do Ration	500	
Braces	100	
Cogs, Frost	300	
Covers, Mess Tin	20	
Comforters, Cap	100	
Coats, Great	10	
Combs, Hair	100	
Discs, Identity	400	
Forks, Table	70	
Holdalls	70	
Housewives	80	
Helmets, Steel	12	
Jackets, S.D.	49	40
do Cardigan	320	
Knives, Clasp	240	
do Table	32	
Lifts, Heel	100	
Lanyards, Clasp Knife	240	
Laces, Boot	300	
Nipples, Bicycle Wheel	24	
Nets, Hay	50	
Puttees	50	31
Paint, Black	28	
Plates, Heel	60	
Rugs, Horse	20	
Shoes, Horse	126	
Spoons, Table	40	
Soles, Billed $\frac{1}{2}$	450	
Soda, Crystals	224	
Sheets, Ground	---	69
Tins, Mess	50	11

Bootmakers Report.

During the month the following repairs were effected:-

95 Boots Repaired
 -- do Renewed Clump soled.

Tailors Report.

Nil

Battalion Tailors on draft for Australia.

QUARTERMASTERS REPORT (continued)

Rations,

The rations drawn from the A.A.S.C. have been excellent both in regard to quantity and quality.

Comforts.

During the month 60 Cases etc of Comforts were distributed proportionately.

MEDICAL OFFICER'S REPORT.

The health of the troops continues to be satisfactory. There have been but eleven cases evacuated to Hospital during the month, and of these several have since rejoined the unit.

Of infectious cases there have been none, with the exception of one case of Diphtheria.

Venereal disease is happily non-existent in the Battalion. The Area appears to be free, for of our few cases all have been contracted by men on leave.

The early treatment and Prophylactic Department nevertheless receives its daily or nightly patronage.

It is unfortunate that health considerations have forbidden congregations for the men derived a great deal of pleasure and not a little exercise from a series of dances in their Recreation hut.

Unfortunately the health of the surrounding civilians is very bad. In this and surrounding villages there are a very large number of sick people, there being at least one case of Measles.

My duties as R.M.O. have been somewhat increased by the necessity of a preliminary examination of all men prior to their being boarded.

As there is a Typhoid Area, there has been a large number of men to inoculate.

During the month I have established a "rest hut" in connection with my R.A.P. where men with minor disabilities can lie up with a medium of comfort.

By far the major portion of my work however, has consisted of attending civilians.

Amongst them my practise has grown to such an extent that I am utterly unable to cope with it.

I have spent eight hours in one day scouring the country for miles around, tending the needs of these unhappy people.

This is a most disheartening task, for their ignorance, poverty, and blank disregard for all the laws of Hygiene and Sanitation frequently render one's best efforts inutile.

TRANSPORT OFFICER'S REPORT.

Number of Waggon's turned out during month	150	Total period worked	600 hours
Average hours per waggon	4		
Number of G.S. Limbers turned out during month	110	Total hours worked	330
Average hours per limber	3		

<u>SADDLER</u>	Repairs with new leather and sewing.		
	14 sets of Traces	26 Head Collars	12 sets of Breechings
	8 Bridles and Reins	10 Breast Collars	8 Riding Collars
WHEELER	<u>WHEELER.</u> General repairs to 9 G.S. Waggon's.		
	do	do	5 G.S. Limbers
<u>FARRIER.</u>	Horses re-shod	35	Mules re-shod
			56

275

----- THE DIGGERS CLUB -----
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Rue de Solre. BEAURIEUX.

PROGRAMME.

- THURSDAY FEBY 6th. 6 p,m, Dance. Band supplying part Music. Beaurieux Ladies invited. (135 present)
- SATURDAY FEBY 8th. 2 P.M. Band programme. Local inhabitants invited.
(A good attendance)
- SUNDAY FEBY 9th. 11 a.m. Church Service. (A good attendance)
- MONDAY FEBY 10th. 6-30 p.m. Dance. (Band Music) (140 present)
- TUESDAY FEBY 11th. 2-0 p.m. Band providing Musical Programme.
- WEDNESDAY FEBY 12th. 6-30 PM. Euchre Tournament. (76 players)
- THURSDAY FEBY 13th. 6-30 p.m. Fancy Dress Ball. (A great success over 200 present.Prize won by Pte Richards)
- FRIDAY FEBY 14th. 6-30 p.m. Quoit, Domino, and Ludo Tournament.
- SATURDAY FEBY 15th. 2-0 p.m. Learners Class. (45 present)
- SUNDAY FEBY 16th. 11 a.m. Lecture by C.O.on Demonilisation.
(Large attendance)
- MONDAY FEBY 17th. 2 p.m. Concert.Civilians invited. (Full House)
6 p.m. Whist Drive. (63 players)
- TUESDAY FEBY 18th. 6-30 p.m. Dance.(Piano & Violin. 156 present)
- THURSDAY FEBY 20th. 6-30 p.m. Dance.(Band & Piano.173 present)
- SATURDAY FEBY 22nd. 6-30 p.m. EUCHRE TOURNAMENT. (72 players)
- SUNDAY FEBY 23rd. 2-0 p.m. Band Concert.Civilians invited.(Full House)
- MONDAY FEBY 24th. 6-30 p.m. Euchre Tournament. (84 players)
- TUESDAY FEBY 25th. 6-30 p.M, Dance (Piano.173 present)
- WEDNESDAY FEBY 26th. 6-30 p.m. Lecture"Waterloo" Capt.J.A.Chapman(Full house)
- THURSDAY FEBY 27th. 6-30 p.m. Dance.(Band & Piano. 120 present)
- FRIDAY Feby. 28th. 6-30 p.m. Whist Drive. (50 players)

E.J.HAREWOOD. Chaplain.Captain.