

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

Engineers

Item number: 14/14/21

Title: 2nd Australian Pioneer Battalion

February 1918



AWM4-14/14/21

CONFIDENTIAL.

ORIGINAL.
DUPLICATE.
TRIPLICATE.

2ND AUSTRALIAN PIONEER BATTALION.
No. 2/69
Date 4/3/18

105

Australian Imperial Force.

WAR DIARY

OF

2nd Aus Pioneer Bn

FOR

February 1918

Signature of Officer compiling

C. Bennett Lt

Signature of Officer Commanding

W. J. ... Lt Col

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118.

February 1918

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.

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

2nd Aust. (Erase heading not required.) Pioneer Bn.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Dramoutre	1st		4 N.C.O's sent to Pioneer Training Bn. for 6 mths tour of duty.	app 1.
	2nd		Weekly works progress report (App I).	
	3rd		Lt. W. O. TOOLE to hospital sick - Lt E.M. HOLDER 4 days' leave to Paris -	
	4th		Ten days' course at Br. N.C.O's School commenced - 6 NCO's from each Coy in attendance	app 2
	5th		Syllabus of lectures (App II)	
	6th		Lt A.E. DEWEY 14 days' leave to U.K. - 6 O.R. rejoined from hospital - 7 O.R. from 4th, 5th, 8th & 9th Dpts.	
	7th		C.O. proceeded to ROUEN for inspecting course of Pioneer Training at R.E. School near CHAMPS de COURSE, ROUEN on 7th, 8th & 9th; An excellent school conducted on good sound lines, giving a very useful course in field engineering.	
	8th		Lt O. TOOLE and 6 O.R. rejoined from hospital - Lt C.J. Bruce from seconded list (wounded) -	
	9th		Lt P.S. ROBINSON 14 days to NICE.	app 3
	10th		Weekly works progress report (App 3)	
	11th		Major Grant and Lt Hope 4 days' leave to Paris	
	12th		Following upon request from 2nd Div ⁿ that we report upon effect of A.R.O 1710 (i.e. decrease of horse rations by 2 lbs grain per head); C.O. reported that such reduction had caused a loss of at least 50% in condition of animals of this unit.	
	13th		4 O.R. rejoined from hospital - 5 O.R. from 4th, 8th & 9th Dpts.	
	14th		Capt J.A. ARMITAGE rejoined unit from seconded list (P.T.B.)	
	15th		C. Coy relieved by 10th Labour Coy. R.E. and moved from DE SEULE to BIRMINGHAM CAMP (M30 b.1.8) for one week's rest and training (App 4)	app 4
			Conclusion of 1st Course of N.C.O's School - Examination paper (App 5).	app 5
			Capt NEWNES and Lt CLERKE 14 days to U.K. - 6 O.R. rejoined from hospital - 2nd Course at N.C.O's School commenced	

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WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118.

Feb 1918.

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.~~

2nd ~~AUST.~~ (Erase heading not required.) PIONEER BN.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Dranoutre	16th		Weekly works progress report (App 6).	App 6.
	17th		Major DONNELLY & Major RUTLEDGE 8 days to NICE.	
	18th		Capt AHLSTON 14 days to NICE - 3 O.R. joined from hospital - 11 O.R. joined from 7th, 8th & 9th Rpts 1 O.R. from Pioneer Training Bn.	
	20th		8 O.R. from hospital - 2 O.R. from 5th & 8th Rpts. Capt NEVEIN 8 days to MENTONE - then to R.E. training School ROUEN - a month's course.	
	21st		Lt N.H. MALCOLM to hospital sick. C.O. proceeded to ROUEN by order of 2nd Div. to attend	
	22nd		conference of C.O.'s and seconds in command of Pioneer Bn at R.E. School ROUEN. C. Coy took over D Coy's works. The latter Coy. to rest and train - Operation order for this transfer App 7.	App 7.
	23		Weekly works progress report Capt DIMANT proceeded to England for 6 months tour of duty with Pioneer Training Bn commencing on 1st March.	App 8.
	24th		Lts. J. RIDE and H.A. BROWN 14 days to U.K.	
	25th		Chaplain Rev D. SHERRIS 8 days to Paris and NICE. 2nd Course at NCO'S School concluded by written examination similar to 1st Course - 5 O.R. joined from hospital - 3 O.R. from 8th Rpts.	
			Sent sketch & written description of Collapsible Footbath as made & used by this unit to D.A. Q.M.G. Australian Corps.	App 9.
	26th		4 Representatives (as under) from this unit with their seconds & two trainers (Lt Proctor in charge of whole party) left for HENNEVEUX via DESVRES to compete in Div. illumination contest of Australian Corps Boxing Competition :- Middle Weight 3644 Lt Cpl D. SMITH Walter Wt. 3077 Sgt R.J. CROSS. Light Wt. 459 Pte F.C. HALLAM Feather Wt. 2364 Pte G.A. ELLIOTT.	
			All four successful and to represent 2nd Aus Div in these weights at Corps competitions on March 1st	App 10

Col. [Signature]

WAR DIARY

or

July 1918

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.

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

2nd Australian Pioneer Bn. (Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
DRANVOTRE	27 th	=	<p>H. O. R. left for 6 months tour of duty with Pioneer Training Bn. ^{with 7000 lbs}</p> <p>Health report for month (App 11) - Discipline Report for month (app 12)</p> <p>Report on work of transport for month of Feb. App 13</p> <p>Quartermaster's report for month of Feb (App 14)</p> <p>Report re Band and Concert Party - Recreation (app 15)</p> <p>Graph showing fluctuation in Bn strength during ^{past} month App 16</p>	<p>app 11</p> <p>app 12</p> <p>app 13</p> <p>app 14</p> <p>app 15</p> <p>app 16</p>

Ch. Bennett

WAR DIARY

OFOR

February 1918

FOR

2nd Aus Pioneer Bn

1918

LIST OF APPENDICES.

- | No. | Subject. |
|-----|---|
| 1. | Progress Report of works for week ending 2nd Feb 1918. |
| 2. | Syllabus of Instruction for a ten days Course at Bn N.C.O's School. |
| 3. | Progress report for week ending 9th Feb 1918 |
| 4. | Movement Order entailing relief of C Coy by 10th Labour Coy R.F.E. |
| 5. | Examination paper for 1st course at N.C.O's School |
| 6. | Progress report for week ending 16th Feb 1918 |
| 7. | D Coy relieved by C Coy. Operation order. |
| 8. | Progress report for week ending 23rd Feb 1918 |
| 9. | Sketch & description of Collapsible footbath. |
| 10. | Boxing Competition - Australian Corps - |
| 11. | Health report (Monthly) with 2 graphs |
| 12. | Discipline report (") |
| 13. | Transport report (") |
| 14. | Quarter Master's report (") |
| 15. | Band & concert party report & recreation. |
| 16. | Graphs showing Bn strength daily (all ranks) |

Ch. Bennett

105
PROGRESS REPORT FOR WEEK ENDING 2:2:18.
=====*app I*

35 men employed on 300 yards of improvement to Permanent Way.
Ballasting and packing. At Clapham Junction.

70 men - 250 yards raising, packing and ballasting permanent
way at Paddington Junction.

36 men - 350 yards raising, packing and ballasting. Party for
loading and unloading ballast supplies at M.24 central.

169 men attached to No. 4 Coy 8th C.R.T. for maintenance to Railway.

110 men employed on maintenance to Corps Light Railways.

130 men attached to No. 8 C.R.T. for maintenance and construction
of Light Railways.

Ch. Bennett

SECOND AUSTRALIAN PIONEER BATTALION.

APPENDIX 2. 105

SYLLABUS OF COURSE FOR BATTALION N.C.Os. SCHOOL - 4th to 13th FEBRUARY, 1918.

Date.	Subject.	Instructor.	Morning.	Afternoon.	Remarks.
4:2:18	Object of School.	Capt. Patterson.	9 a.m. to 10.45 ^{9.45} a.m. Lecture.	1 p.m. to 2.30 p.m. Practical Work.	
	Wiring.	Lt. T. Smith.	10.45 ^{9.45} a.m. to 11 a.m. ¹⁰ Smoko. 11 a.m. ¹⁰ to 12 noon. ^{11 a.m.} Lecture on wiring. 11 a.m. ^{11 a.m.} to 12 noon. ^{11 a.m.} Practical Work	2.30 p.m. to 2.45 p.m. Smoko. 2.45 p.m. to 4 p.m. Practical Work.	
5:2:18	Sighting and laying out of Trenches.	Capt. Nevein.	9 a.m. to 10 a.m. Lecture "Principle of sighting trenches" 10 a.m. to 10.15 a.m. Smoko. 10.15 a.m. to 10.45 a.m. 10-15 a.m. to 12 noon. Practical work as above.	1 p.m. to 1.45 p.m. Lecture. "Organization of Working Parties." 1.45 p.m. to 2 p.m. Smoko. 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Practical work as above.	
6:2:18	Knotting and Lashing.	Lieut. Dewey. Lieut. Malcolm.	9 a.m. to 9.45 a.m. Lecture. 9.45 a.m. to 10 a.m. Smoko. 10 a.m. to 12 noon. Practical work.	Practical Work.	This subject includes Blocks and Tackles.
7:2:18	Bridging. (Trestles).	Lt. Dewey. Lt. Malcolm.	Same as above.	Practical Work.	This subject includes Cyns, Derricks and Sheers.

Approved by
 Lt. Dewey
 9

Date.	Subject.	Instructor.	Morning.	Afternoon.	Remarks.
8:2:18	Field Geometry.	Lt. Kitchin.	9 a.m. to 9.45 a.m. Lecture. 9.45 a.m. to 10 a.m. Smoko. 10 a.m. to 12 noon. Practical Work.	Practical Work.	Using tapes and working per Manual of Field Engineering and easy methods.
9:2:18 and 10:2:18	Map Reading and Field Sketching.	Lt. O'Toole.	Times as above.	Practical on roads in vicinity.	All available prismatic compasses and protractors to be brought to school.
11:2:18	Demolitions	Lt. Robinson.	Times as above.	Practical. Laying of charges, etc.,	Visit to bridges, buildings and railways in vicinity of camp.
12:2:18	Road Construction and Repairs.	Lt. Murrell.	Times as above.	Practical Work.	
13:2:18	Railway Construction.	2/Lt. Martin.	Times as above.	As above.	
14:2:18	Organization of Shed-holds Defences.	Lt. Col. F.W.G. Annand.	Times as above.	As above.	

NOTE:- N.C.Os. attending school to bring rough note book, also special note books for writing up notes; the latter will be examined at close of school.

Only keen N.C.Os. should be chosen to attend course, and should not be those likely to go on leave during school. No leave will be granted to members of school.

C. B. Sturson

Capt. & Adj.

*Approved by the
Adjutant-General
17*

PROGRESS REPORT FOR WEEK ENDING 9:2:18.
 =====

100 men employed on :-

aff 3

11,100 yards of embankment from S.11. central to T.2.c.2.6.

190 yards of packing, average 9" at N.8.a.2.0.

Loading trucks near Bailleul with ballast and off-loading same and distributing over job.

170 Sleepers loaded near Bailleul and off loaded at Clapham Junction S.12. central.

155 men attached to No. 4 Coy 8th C.R.T. for maintenance on Light Railways.

100 men maintaining Corps Light Railways.

40 men improving De Suele Camp.

100 men attached to 8th C.R.T. for maintenance and construction of Light Railways.

Ch Bennett

COPY.

SECOND AUSTRALIAN PIONEER BATTALION.

App 4

Battalion Headquarters,
Feb. 8th 1918.

To/-
O/C., C Company.

10th Labour Coy will move on 14:2:18 to DE SEULE CAMP; an advance party will report to 'C' Company 2nd Aust. Pioneer Battalion there, on the afternoon of 13:2:18 to take over quarters and work.

'C' Coy 2nd Aust. Pioneer Battalion will move after work on 14:2:18 to BIRMINGHAM CAMP (M.30.b.1.8.) for one weeks rest and training, after which it will relieve another Company of the Battalion upon orders to be issued by Bn.H.Qrs. by arrangements direct with A.D.L.R. (4) South.

O/C., C Company will detail an officer and a N.C.O. to report at BIRMINGHAM CAMP (M.30.b.1.8.) on afternoon of 13th instant and take over camp.

Ch. Bennett

G. P. Patterson
2nd Aust. Pioneer Battalion.

Capt. & Adj.

app 5-

EXAMINATION PAPER N.C.O.'S SCHOOL 2nd COURSE

oo

- (1) State briefly the principles to be observed in choosing sites for Wiring,
- (2) Name the points to be observed in choosing a ^{site} ~~sight~~ for a line of defence
- (3) How do you find the weight a rope will carry providing the rope is in good condition.
- (4) How would you regulate the SPLAY on legs of a TRESTLE.
- (5) What lashing would you use to lash a transom to a leg and how would you commence it, and where.
- (6) Name a simple method for laying off a right angle from a straight line of trench.
- (7) Reduce the following bearings from Magnetic to True bearings.
- (8) (1) $263^{\circ} 30'$ (2) $97^{\circ} 30'$ Magnetic Variation $13^{\circ} 30'$ West.
- (9) Show by a rough sketch how you would connect four mines for instantaneous explosion naming stores required.
- (10) Give a sketch of cross section for a first class road.
- (11) Assuming levels to be given state how you would proceed with work through a cutting.

Ch. Bennett

PROGRESS REPORT FOR WEEK ENDING 16:2:18.
 =====

100 men per day engaged on :-

Claphma Junction.

Off-loading and stacking rails and 500 Sleepers at

Junction. Raising, packing and ballasting permanent way at Paddington

Unloading sand and metal ballast.

Making drains between T.1. central and T.3. central.

155 men attached to No.4 Coy 8th C.R.T. on maintenance to
 Light Railways.

97 men attached to 8th C.R.T. for maintenance and construction
 of Light Railways.

100 men employed on maintenance to Corps Light Railways.

40 men on improvements to De Seule Camp.

C Coy moved to Birmingham Camp (M.30.b.1.8.), being relieved
 by 10th Labour Coy.

Ch. Bennett

app 6

SECOND AUSTRALIAN PIONEER BATTALION.PROGRESS REPORT FOR WEEK ENDING 23:2:18.
=====*app 8*

<u>Brulooge</u>	Excavating for Siding.
<u>Siding.</u>	Loading and Off-loading ballast, rails
M.30.d.central.	and sleepers.
M.24.central.	Raising, packing and ballasting permanent way.
to	Unloading ballast.
N.13.central.	
Clapham Junction.	Loading and off-loading rails, sleepers, etc.,

Average number of men employed 100
Hours worked per day $7\frac{1}{2}$.

Ch. Deemy 140 men attached to 8th C.R.T. on maintenance work on
Light Railways.

98 men attached to 8th Canadian Railway Troop for construction
and maintenance of Light Railways P. and V Lines, Wytchaete.

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C O P Y.SECOND AUSTRALIAN PIONEER BATTALION.Battalion Headquarters,
Feb. 25th 1918.

To/-

D.A.Q.M.G.
Aust. Corps.

Submitted herewith is a sketch to scale of a Collapsible Portable Footbath, as made and used by this battalion.

Each Coy is issued with one of these articles, and the following advantages are claimed for it :-

(1) Being completely collapsible it can be easily carried with other stores on a G.S.Wagon, occupying but little more space than a field stretcher. It weighs approximately 20 lbs.

(2) It is capable of accommodating 8 men comfortably, and 10 men at a pinch.

(3) Being built solely from timber, iron and canvas, all of which stores are easily procurable, its construction entails no undue expenditure nor lengthy labour. Estimated cost 10/-.

The Corps Baths Officer has seen this article and agrees as to its simplicity, portability and usefulness.

C. P. Fatterson

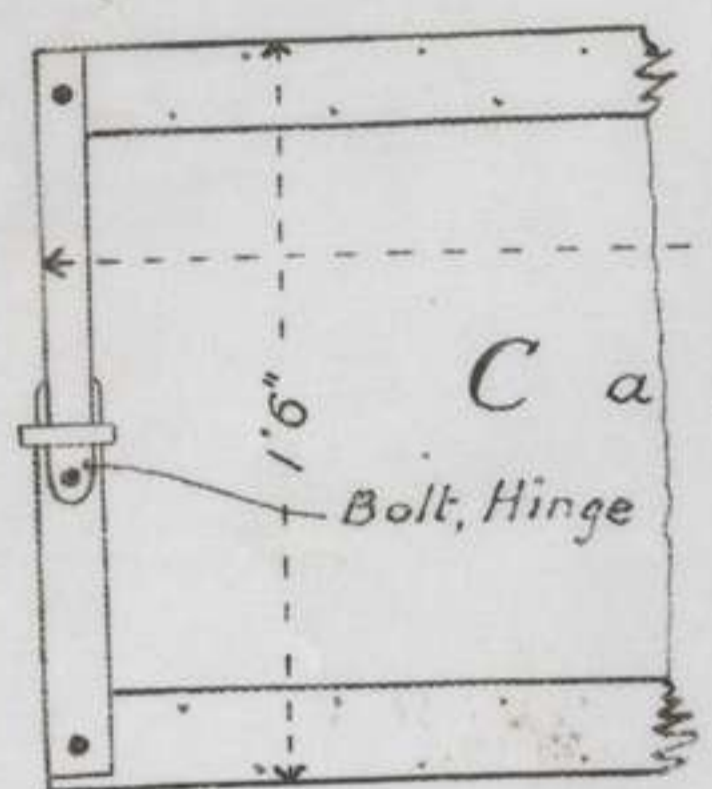
Capt. & Adj.

2nd Australian Pioneer Battalion.

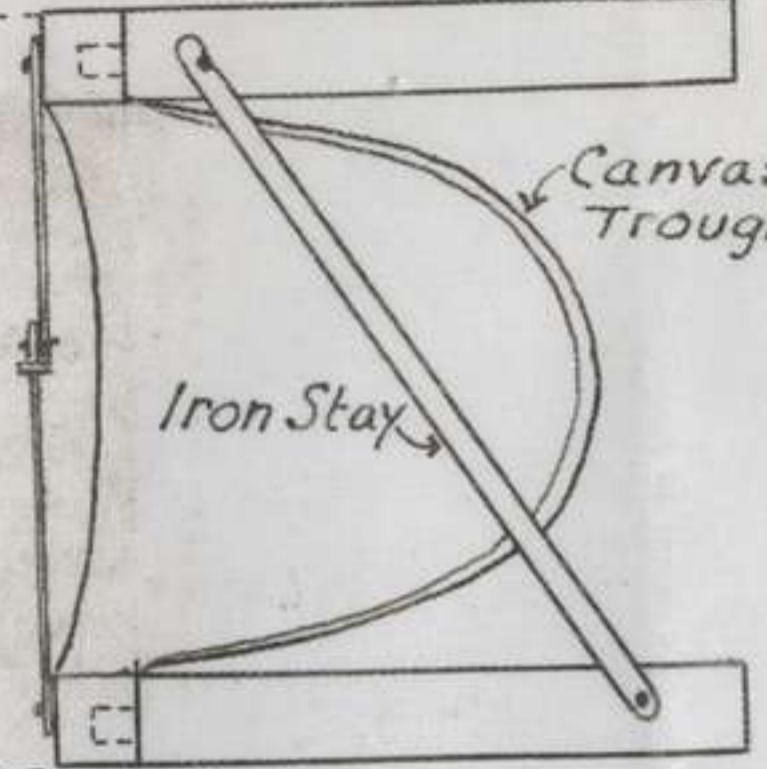
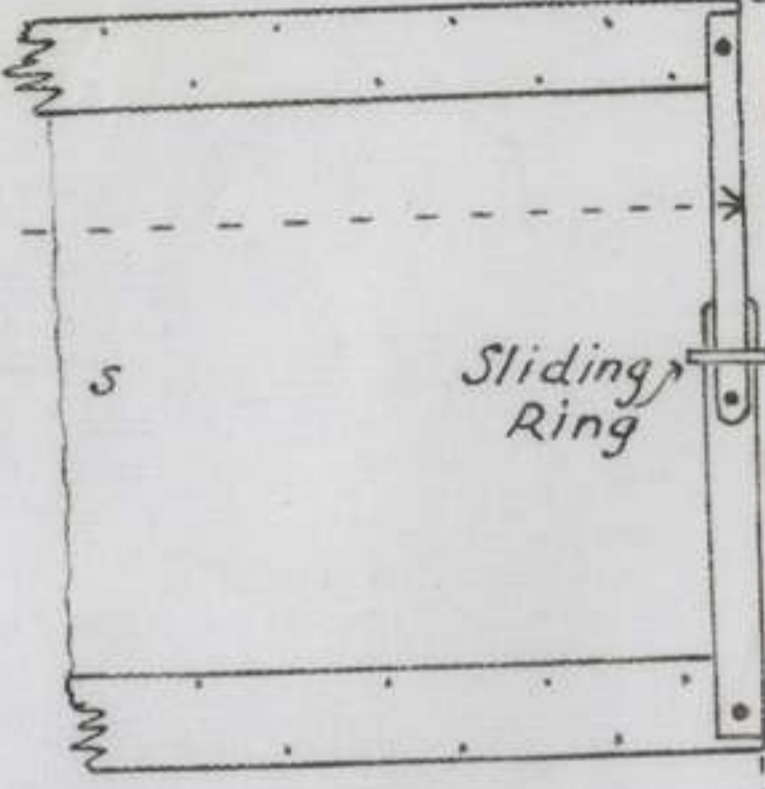
Ch. Bennett

App 9

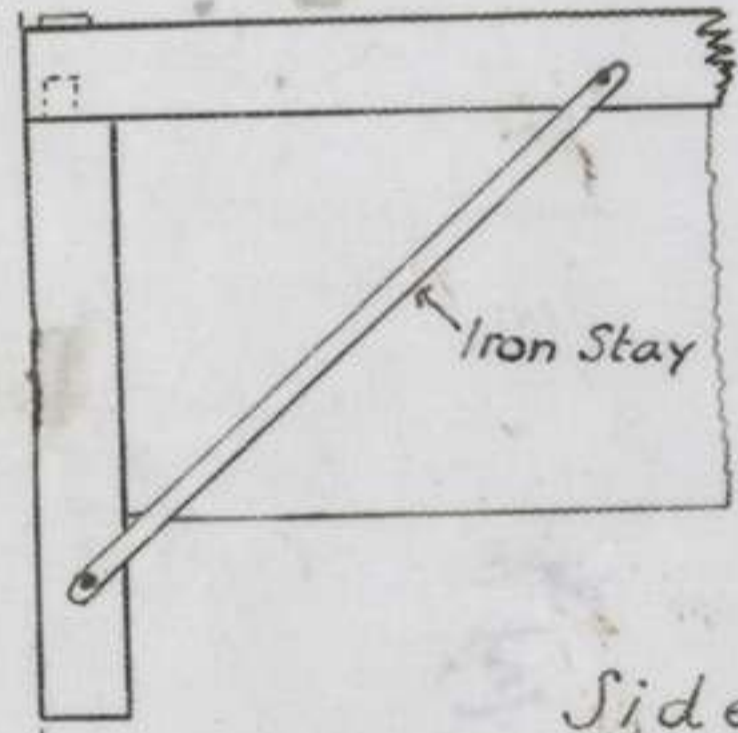
SKETCH OF
**Collapsible Portable
Footbath**
made & used by 2ND AUST. PIONEER BATT.



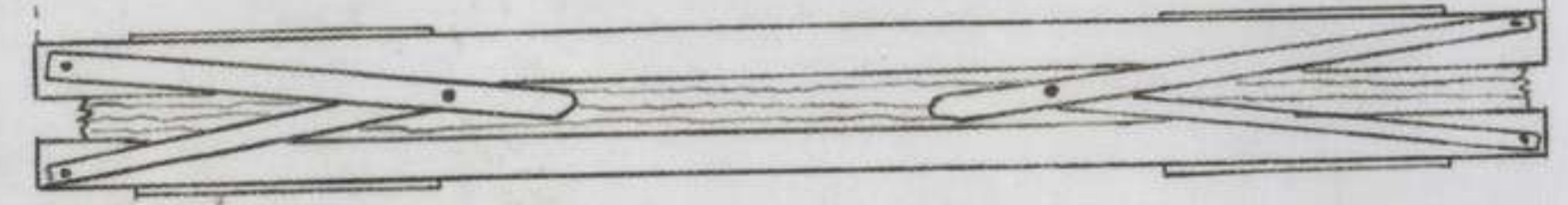
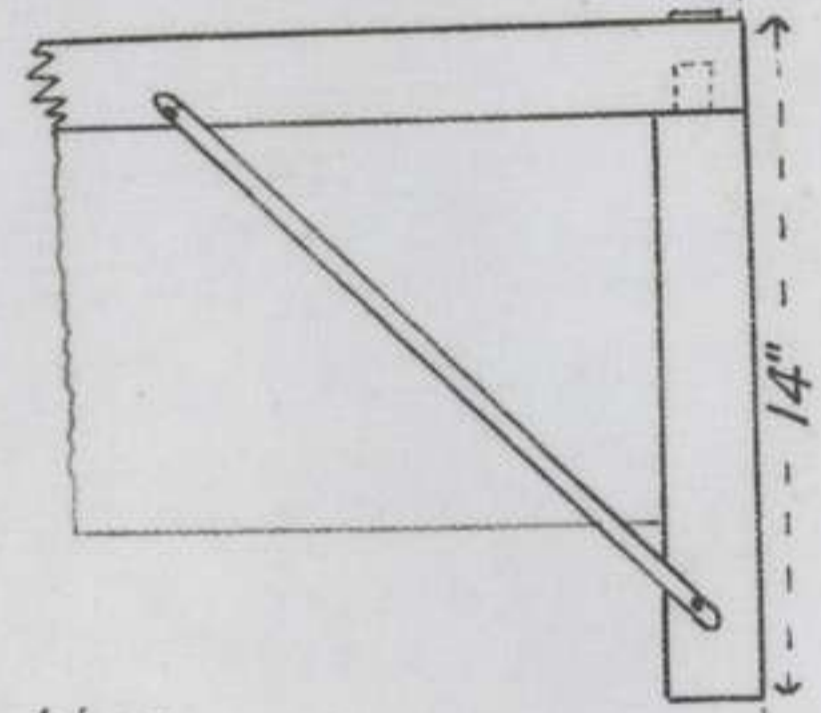
Plan



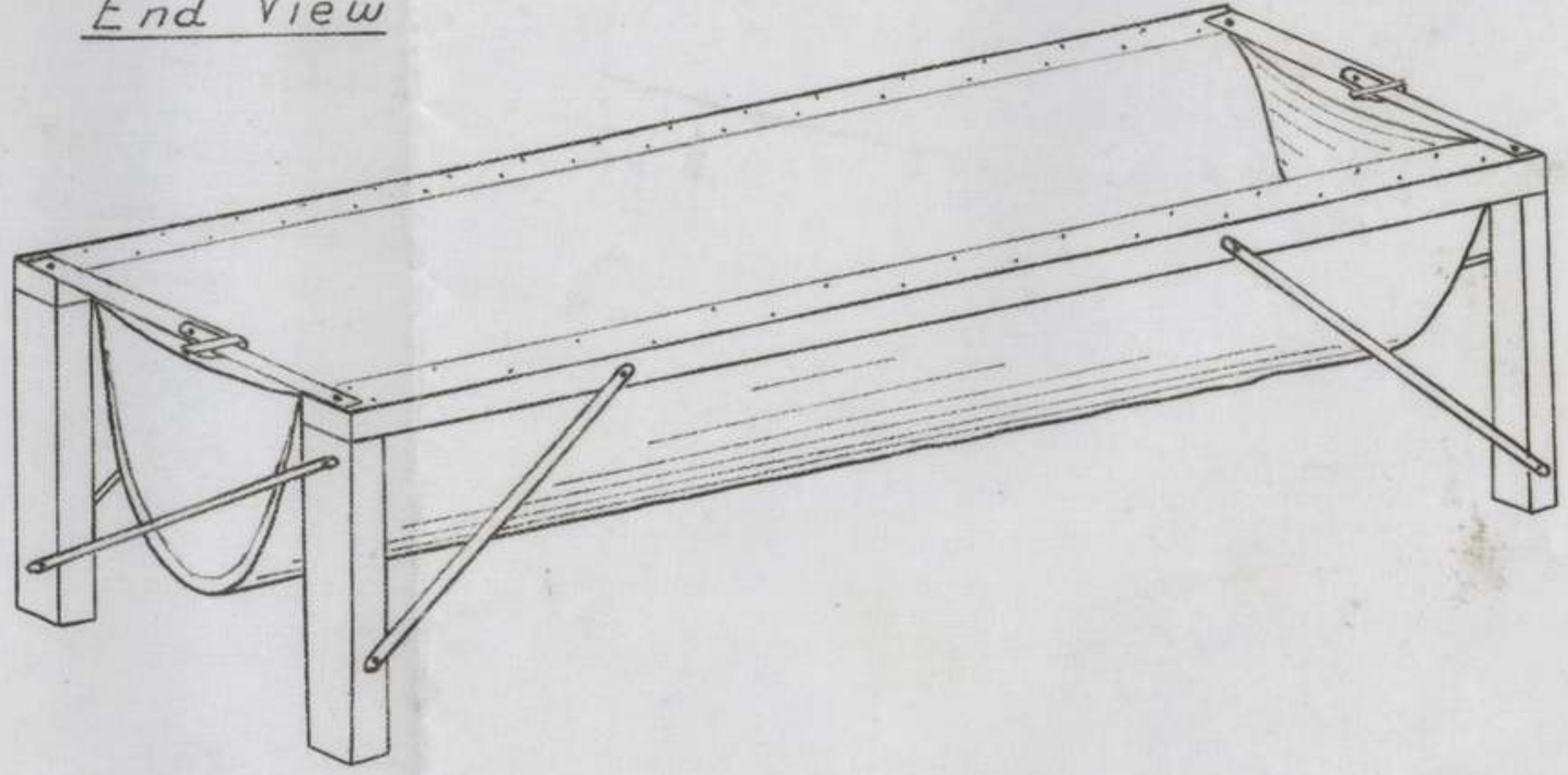
End View



Side Elevation



Collapsed for transport



Ch. Bennett

Appendix 9

105

10.

App 10

COPY.

Second Australian Pioneer Battalion,

Battalion Headquarters,
Feb. 14th 1918.

To/- O/C., A Company.

- B "
- C "
- D "
- R.S.M. (for H.Q.Details)

B O X I N G.

Arrangements have been made for a Boxing Competition open to all members of the Australian Corps, to be held on 1st and 2nd March at the Aerodrome, ~~53rd~~ Squadron A.F.C. near BAILLEUL.

The following contests will be held and it is proposed to send one competitor from this Division for each contest :-

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 1. Heavyweight Championship of the Aust. Corps | - over 11st.6 lbs. |
| | or 73 kilos. |
| 2. Light Heavyweight | - do - - 12st 7 lbs. and under. |
| | or 80 kilos. |
| 3. Middleweight | - do - - 11st. 6 lbs and under. |
| | or 73 kilos. |
| 4. Welterweight | - do - - 10st. 7 lbs. and under. |
| | or 67 kilos. |
| 5. Lightweight | - do - - 9 st. 9 lbs. and under. |
| | or 61 kilos. |
| 6. Featherweight | - do - - 9st. and under. |
| | or 57 kilos. |

ARMY AND NAVY RULES.

Nominations to reach B.H.Q. not later than 6 p.m. on 15th instant.

After receipt of nominations the Division will arrange eliminating contests in order that an entry may be submitted for the Aust. Corps Championship for each weight.

Name of any officer who desires to compete in contests for officers in above weights should also be submitted. If sufficient entries are forthcoming Officers Championships will be arranged.

Bl. Hengst

G. P. Stammers Capt. & A.D.J.
C

Monthly Health Report - Feb 1918

app II
 The health of the men of this unit for Feb'y has been satisfactory. Compared with Feb'y 1917 the past month shows a decided decrease in the number evacuated to hospital, and it appears that the men exercise more care in looking after themselves, resulting in a decrease in V.D and Scabies.

Following figures indicate the evacuations for the month :-

Infectious Disease	1
Diarrhoea	2
Accidental Injuries	2
Scabies	5
V. D.	6
Other Causes	27
Total	<u>43</u>

In addition to these -
 6 men were paraded
 to the A.D.M.S who
 classified them as
 unfit for further
 active service. These
 men were despatched to the Base

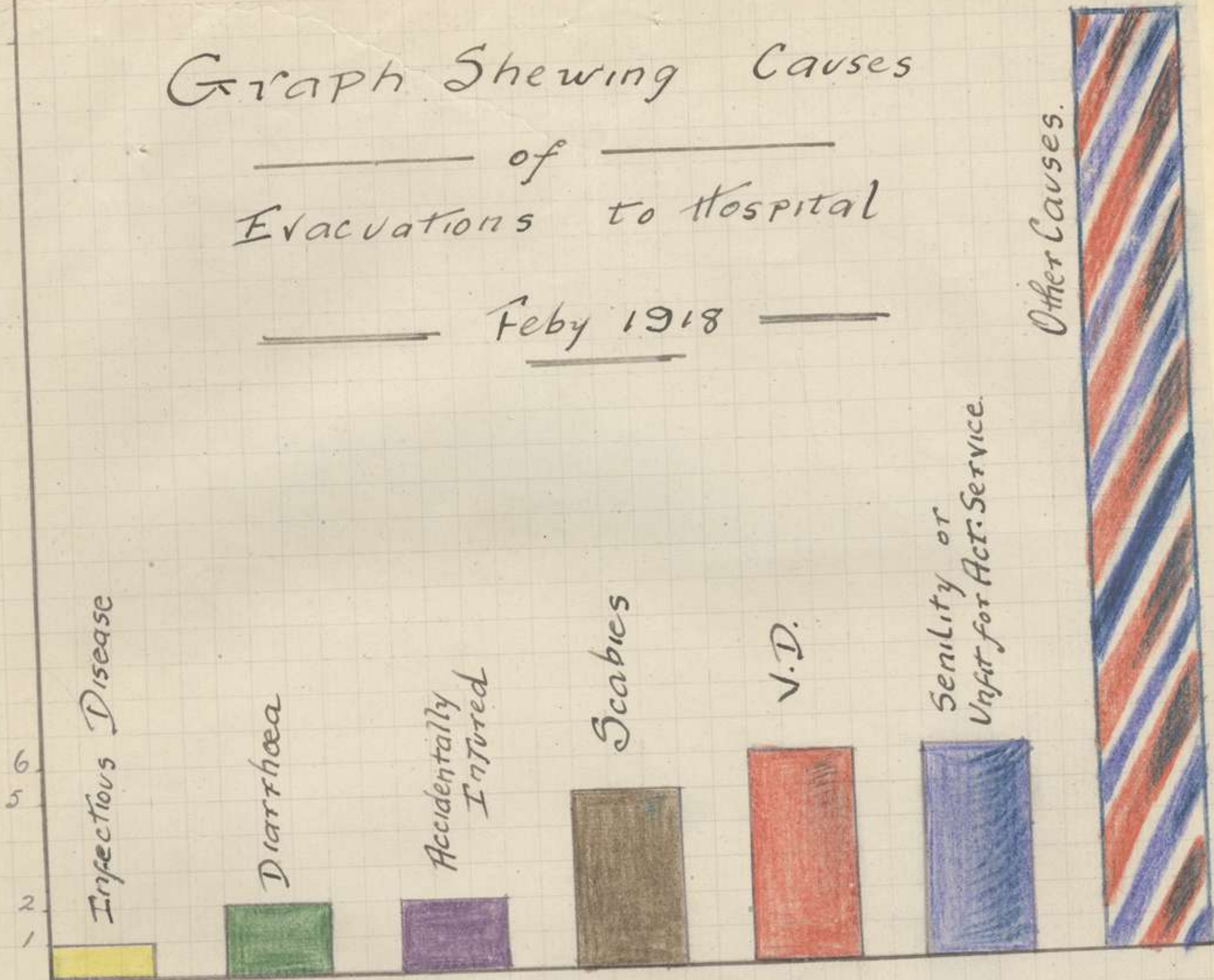
Ch. Bennett

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27

Graph Shewing Causes

of Evacuations to Hospital

Feby 1918



Total 49 Evacs.

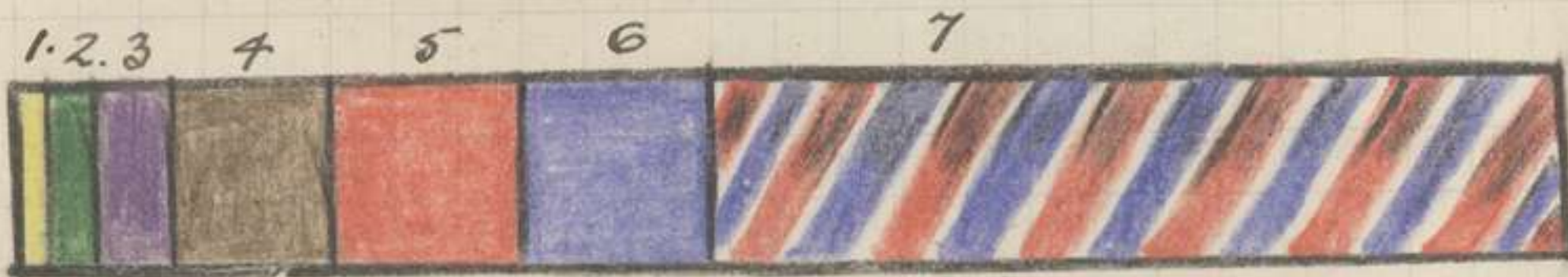
Ch. Bennett

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Graph Shewing Causes of Evacuations to Hospital

(by Percentages)

Feby 1918



1.	Infectious Diseases	2%	of Total Evacs.
2.	Diarrhoea	4%	"
3.	Accidental Injuries	4%	"
4.	Scabies	10%	"
5.	V. D.	12%	"
6.	Senility - Unfit	12%	"
7.	Other Causes	56%	"

Ch. Bennett

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 App 12 Monthly Discipline Report Feb 1918

Discipline for the past month has been satisfactory, there being only one serious charge viz: "Stealing", which was referred to a F.G.C.M. resulting in an award of 90 days F.P. No 2.

There were 12 cases of overstaying leave in V.K. and Paris - one of which was for a period of 3 days, the man being awarded 28 days F.P. No 2 by the C.O.

Minor charges such as "Being out of bounds without a pass" - "Having a dirty rifle" - "Improper language" - "AWL for - hrs" - etc amounting small to 19 cases were disposed of by the C.O. the awards ranging from a forfeiture of 2 days' pay to 14 days' F.P. No 2.

Ch. Bennett

Apr 13

Monthly Transport Report - July 1918

During the past month, the transport was principally concerned with the transport of quartermaster's stores to and from railhead or Ordnance & between the Bn and Coy Q.M. stores - It is calculated that they moved 4 1/2 tons of rations, fuel & equipment daily, with an average daily mileage of 10 mls - In addition to this, the requirements of the Bn. Canteen, made it necessary for the transport to carry 8 tons of canteen goods per week for a weekly mileage of 10 mls.

It is a regrettable fact that the decrease of 2 lbs of grain per head in the ration has been responsible for a perceptible decrease of 20% in the condition and efficiency of the animals, their general health being otherwise good.

During the month 3 heavy draughts and one light draught were evacuated for veterinary reasons

Ch Bengt

app 14

Monthly Report on Q.M. Branch Feb 1918

During the past month, owing to the 2nd Aus Div being out, resting & training, this Bn. has been attached to the 5th Aus Div for supplies.

The following figures give some idea of what has been received from Ordnance 5th Aus Div (Main items only being included).

Tunics 85 Puttees 104 pairs
Breeches 107 Boots 71 "

Soles leather 350 Flannellette 740 yds.

Soap 250 bars - an approximately equivalent no. of unserviceable returns being made -

The following returns have been made to ASC 5th Aus Div: -

Breadbags 193 Oat bags 197
Fat 1148 lbs Cardboard 187 lbs
Ch. lengths Paper 194 lbs.

App 45

RECREATION - Owing to the fact that for the whole of the month the Battalion was engaged on works for the Australian Corps (with the exception of the relief of one Coy half way through the month) there has been no opportunity for anything in the nature of a Battalion Recreational Programme.

BATTALION BAND - The services of the Band were requisitioned to perform Guard duties, general fatigues etc., advantage also being taken by them of Paris Leave. This meant that Band performances and practices were impossible. The bandsmen have in their spare time done much individual practice.

CONCERT PARTY - Three concerts have been given during the month by the Pierrot Troupe belonging to this battalion. Two on behalf of the Y.M.C.A. institutes at LOCRE and LA CLYTTE, and one to the No. 1 Aust. Tunnelling Coy.

SPORTS, ETC. - The following sporting material was produced by the Padre from Aust. Y.M.C.A. Bailleul and was made full use of whenever possible :-

Footballs 9 (two varieties)
 Medicine Ball 1
 Boxing Gloves 2 sets.
 Cricket Sets complete 2
 Football Jerseys 6.

In addition to these the above-named Y.M.C.A. also provided approximately 300 magazines, several sets of indoor games, cards, chess, draughts and writing material - *Each Coy had a hut set apart for reading and games and with the help of the Y.M.C.A. Bailleul our Padre was able to get each Coy a miniature Cinema Show twice during the month.*

LEAVE During the month of February facilities provided for leave were very satisfactory as the subjoined figures indicate .

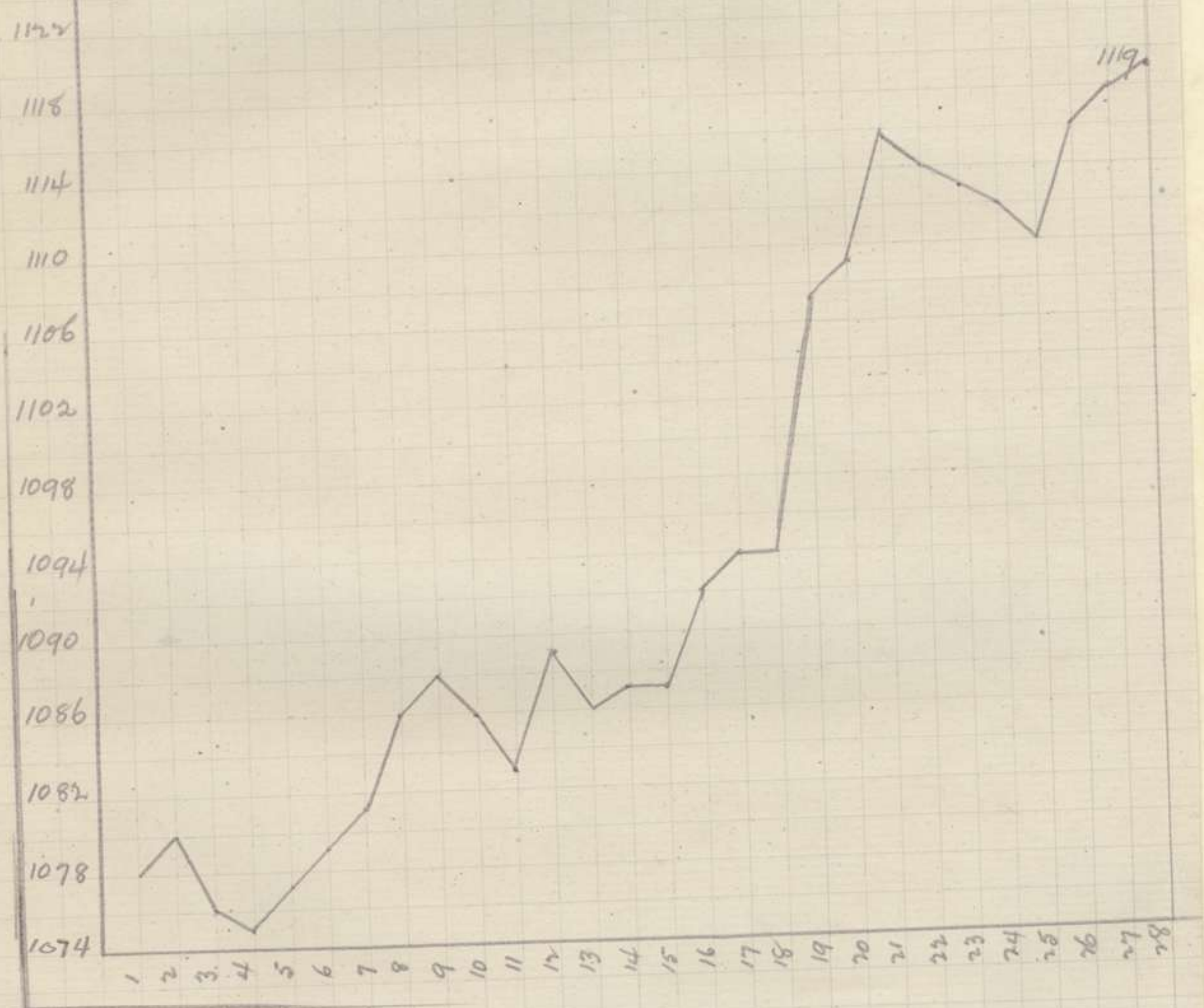
Destination.	Officers.	Other Ranks.	Total.
To Paris 4 days.	5	47	52
To Paris and South of France.	5	-	5
To U.K.	5	79	84
TOTAL	15	126	141

Ch. Henry St

Leave to Towns in the vicinity, such as Poperinghe, Bailleul, etc., was also made available at the approximate rate of 20-25 per day.

app 16

GRAPH
 Showing Bn. Strength
 (all ranks)
 Feby 1918



C. Bennett