

**AWM4**

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

Bases & Depots

**Item number:** 33/16/2

**Title:** No 1 Australian Command Depot

April 1917



AWM4-33/16/2



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Perham Down,  
10th. May, 1917



To;- Headquarters,  
A.I.F. Depots in U.K.  
T I D W O R T H

Herewith report for month of April, 1917;-

	Officers	O/Ranks.
Strength of Depot, 31/3/17.....	61	2887
Total arrivals at Depot.....	274	2919
<u>Departures:</u>		
Overseas.....	Nil	Nil
Other Depots.....	247	3110
London for duty....	Nil	39

*See form*

DISCIPLINE: The internal discipline is good. The report from the Provost Officer is attached, which shows a large number of cases disposed of. The majority of offences are committed away from the Depot, (while in Hospital or on Furlough) and are sent here to be dealt with. Apart from that the general discipline is good. The number of falsified passes for the month shows a big decrease. This charge is dealt with in a most vigorous manner. 41 cases were remanded for D.C.M. for the month, the majority of which, were illegal absentees.

ADMINISTRATION: The Administration is carried on with the minimum of economy to maintain efficiency. As men that are employed become "A" class they are eliminated from the Staff, and as far as possible only men of B2a. and C1. category are employed on duties in the Depot.

TRAINING: The present system of training carried on is the hardening process, particular care is given to this work, there were approximately 850 men under training daily last month, and are segregated into platoons according to their state of fitness and exercises regulated as follows;- No.2 Platoon is made up of Bla2 men, and undergo the following training;- Modified Physical exercises and short Route marches. No.3 Platoon is made up of Bla3 men and under the following training;- Physical Drill, Route Marches and Company training. No.4 Platoon is made up of Bla4 men and undergo the following training;- Physical Drill, Route Marches, Company Training and Rifle examination.

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HUTMENTS: The considerable congestion experienced during the past months was greatly relieved last month. Men become physically fit much more quickly owing to the weather conditions being more suited for training, and the 17th. Infantry Brigade having absorbed every available man becoming fit.

SANITATION: Every opportunity is taken, now the weather conditions are suitable, to have every Hut and all Barrack equipment thoroughly scrubbed, blanket airing parades are carried out each suitable day.

ABSENTEES: All absentees are posted to the strength of one, No.4 Company, which is practically a paper Company. This Company is worked very efficiently with a small Staff. Considerable work is entailed tracing absentees, by firstly forwarding a notification to the soldier. If the man in question does not reply or report to the Depot within a reasonable time after notification has been sent him, Army Form W.3111 is posted to the Police, giving the man's full particulars and address.

It is found from the results attained the work fully justifies itself. Frequently men report to Hospital while on leave, and are admitted without any advice being sent here. Such men are invariably traced by a Roneoed form of letter to the Hospital after receipt of the Police reports.

MESSING: The messing for all troops receives very close attention, and every consideration is given. Every precaution possible is taken against the waste of food. Attached is a report from the Messing Officer giving full details for the month.

ANZAC DAY: To commemorate Anzac Day the following routine was carried out;- Full Parades of all ranks as under;-

- (1) N.C.O's and Other Ranks who had been decorated for valour in the Field, Etc.,
- (2) N.C.O's and Other Ranks who were present at the first landing at Anzac.
- (3) N.C.O's and Other Ranks who served on Gallipoli after the Landing.
- (4) N.C.O's and Other Ranks who served in France.

At 9-30.a.m. the Commandant addressed the Troops. At the conclusion of the Commandant's address, Roman Catholic and Other Denominations, whose religious feelings precluded

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them from participating in the Church of England Service, fell out in their respective Denominations ten (10) paces in the rear of the lines. On conclusion of the Church of England Service, these men rejoined their respective categories.

At 9-40.a.m. an escort of one Officer, one Sergeant, and two Military Police paraded at the Church of England Hut to escort the Church of England Chaplain to the Parade Ground.

At the conclusion of the Church Parade, massed trumpeters and drummers were formed up in rear of the Chaplain, the Troops were brought to attention, and head-dresses removed while the "Last Post" was sounded and massed Drums beat a ruffle in honour of the fallen. On conclusion of the ceremonial Parade, the Troops were marched passed the Saluting Base in the following order:-

- Class (1) Officers, N.C.O's and Other Ranks who had been decorated for valour in the Field.
- Class (2) Officers, N.C.O's and Other Ranks who were present in the first landing at Gallipoli.
- Class (3) Officers, N.C.O's and Other Ranks who were otherwise on Gallipoli.
- Class (4) Officers, N.C.O's and Other Ranks who have served in France.

The remained of the day was taken up with Sports and Entertainments.

AMUSEMENTS: Concerts are held twice a week for the benefit of the Troops. On each ~~alternate~~ Tuesday night a regimental concert is arranged. On each ~~alternate~~ Friday night, Concert Parties are engaged from London and various towns.

Two Billiard tables have been established in the Depot, which are greatly appreciated by the Troops. Arrangements are in hand to have the Reading and Writing Rooms extended also a larger space for indoor games etc. Cricket materials have been supplied by the Red Cross. A Sports Committee have been formed to manage and conduct all Sports and Entertainments. The general impression is, that if good sports programmes and Entertainments are introduced, the men will appreciate same, and are not so likely to break camp and wander around the neighbouring villages.

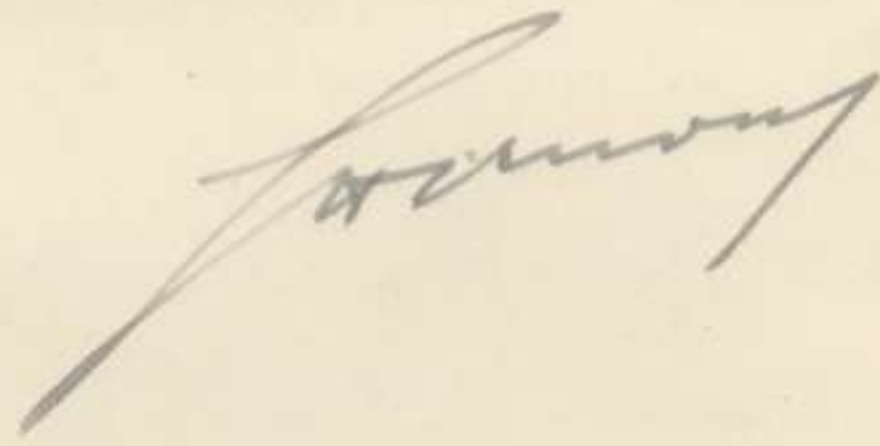
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BAND: The band continues to show a great improvement and is doing good work. All parades and funerals are attended, and programmes are played from time to time for the benefit of the Troops, and in addition the Band assists at the Regimental concerts. This is found to have an inspiring effect on the troops and helps in keeping the general conduct of the Depot good.

DRAFTS: As N.C.O's and men become fit they are regularly drafted to their respective units and Drafting Depot. N.C.O's and men who are not likely to become fit within six weeks are drafted to No.3 Command Depot, and over six weeks to Weymouth.

POSTAL SERVICE: The Depot Post Office is working very satisfactorily. The work of re-direction involves a great amount of extra work but it receives very close attention and all mail follows the man to wherever he goes to from this Depot. A detailed report is attached showing the volume of mail matter dealt with.



Lieut-Colonel,

(AT).

Commandant, NO.1 COMMAND DEPOT. A.I.F.



SUMMARY OF CHARGES FOR MONTH OF APRIL, NO 1 COMMAND DEPOT.

A.W.L.

accompanied with:-

Breaking Camp	56
Drunk	3
Irregular conduct	9
Neglecting to obey orders	10
Neglect of duty	10
Giving false address	1
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	89

A.W.L.

355

False statement	7
Irregular conduct	21
Drunk	20
Neglect of duty	4
Neglecting to obey orders	7
No identity	3
Destroying Government property	1
Trespassing	3
Absent from parades	29
Breaking out of hospital	3

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D.C.M.

41

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Perham Down,  
3rd May 1917.

(Signed) J.C. McCaul,  
Lieut. & O.C. Provost,  
No. 1 Command Depot.



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REPORT OF O.C., MESSING, for PERIOD 31/3/1917 to 31/4/1917. -

MEALS:- The number of meals served for this period was 213,111 under the new system of dieting the men, viz; 3 meals a day consisting of Breakfast - Luncheon - and Dinner.

With reference to this system of dieting, I have to report favourably. It was tried for a fortnight of the previous period and brought out the following points:-

FIRST: I was able to cut out the Supper meal which was not popular and use the stock which otherwise would have gone for soup in stews and gravy. The bread waste was also cut down.

SECOND: I found that any surplus food from my evening dinner came in very handily for a stiffening for lunch on at least three days in the week, when bacon was issued for breakfast, in the form of kedgeree, mince, or faggots; these items do not show on my diet sheets because they are an unknown quantity partly on account of the floating population of the Depot, and variety of mens' appetites, and were all the more appreciated when I could put them on.

On other days I was able to considerably augment the breakfast as well.

THIRD: I have been able to get better results from my Staff for the concession of time occupied in preparing and issuing ~~my~~ Supper, also my coal consumption is reduced.

It might be asked of me where the economy of this comes in since no return of 5<sup>d</sup> is made to public funds. I should like to state here that in reading this report it must be always borne in mind that my instructions have been to "feed the men well".

I have taken it, that so long as the food is not wasted, and my swill tubs and by-product return will prove that, and the men would eat their meals and were satisfied, I was at liberty to spend my available funds to the greatest advantage to them in getting them ready in the shortest time possible. Hence the three points constantly before me have been:-

- (1) To ~~supply~~ satisfy the mens' appetites.
- (2) To curtail all waste of food.
- (3) To put the men in best condition in the shortest time possible.

5<sup>d</sup>. ALLOWANCE. I am pleased to say my Canteen Steward has given me every assistance in supplies, and that I have been able to procure practically everything I have asked for.

MEAT:- Beef and mutton were drawn whilst 1,430 rations were under drawn. I have adopted the practice of boning my meat, or I should say beef, in my butchers shop. Sending the bone afterwards to the kitchen to which it belongs, likewise fat, for rendering into dripping. I have now a pie meat cutter in my butchery which supplies all three kitchens with pie or stew meat on those days that these items appear on the menu.



BREAD:- 1430 Rations of bread were underdrawn. Bread is cut in the Mess Huts, and a slice per man is placed on the table - other slices being handed round in baskets for the purpose as required - the greatest difficulty is to make the men understand that they must eat all they take or not take more than they can eat. Several lecturettes have been given on this subject in the various mess huts with wonderfully appreciable results in so much as the period under review shows that only 5½ Cwt of bread was sold as waste bread from 81922 men which includes all ranks, as against 22½ Cwt from 98356 ending previous period.

Being 7½ lbs. per 1,000 men as against 25½ lbs per 1,000 men.

DRIPPING:- I make a practice of putting ½ ration of dripping on the Mess tables at breakfast and luncheon, and tea on Saturday and Sunday, and also ½ ration of margarine. I find the men require more dripping than margarine, my proportion being 37 lbs margarine to 50 lbs of dripping per 1,000 men.

BY-PRODUCTS: I have established a small by-product depot for the purpose of getting all the benefit possible for the men from by-products, and the figures in the by-product report amply justify the effort in this direction. From the proceeds I have been able to place several great conveniences in the kitchen, such as Berkets bacon cutter, pie meat cutter, ladles, baskets for bread, granary jugs, boning knives, enamel mugs, meat dishes, aprons, chesters, overalls for all my Staff and Mess Orderlies.

The value of dripping saved (used and ~~unsold~~) during periods of this year is as follows:-

Periods.	Value of Dripping.	Men Rationed.	Dripping obtained per 1000 ration.
Dec. 30. to Jan. 26th.	£56-19- 1.	63,175.	48½ lbs.
Jan. 27. to Feb. 23rd.	£128-16-10½.	71,515	81 lbs.
Feb. 24. to Mar. 30th.	£213-18- 3¾	98,356.	88½ lbs.
Mar. 31. to April 27.	£174-14- 8.	71,037	106 lbs.
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During part of March and right through April the depot mentioned above has been working and the amount of fat and bones recovered has increased very considerably.

Weight of bones per 1000 men - 74½ lbs.  
Weight of fat per 1000 men - 106 lbs.

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STAFF: I am very pleased to report that all my Staff have worked excellently, and taken a keen interest in maintaining the good name of the Depot in their department. The great drawback under which we work is that so many of the Staff on becoming useful and proficient in their work are marched off as fit men.

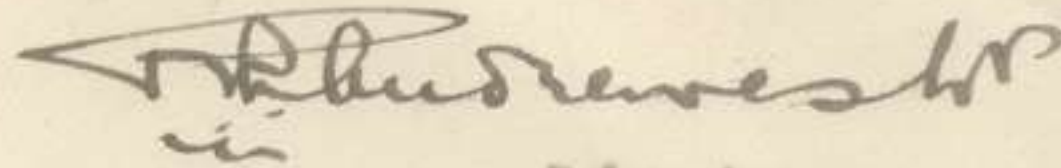
In my opinion it is a necessity that the kitchen Staff of at least 7 per 1000 men should be physically fit men and able to stand long hours of such a depot as this ranging from breakfast for drafts from 4.a.m. to cleaning up of dinner 6.p.m. attending classification parades regularly and medical inspection, all of which tends to dislocate the kitchen work, which in this Depot plays such an important part in bringing the men up to fitness, and I would ask that due consideration be given to this point when criticising the classification of the Establishment.



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For whilst every effort is being made to supply lower category men for B.I.A's, these are not always available and the efficiency of the department should not be lowered when so much is at stake. Diet sheets of the period are sent herewith.

Perham Down,  
5/5/1917.  
(AT).



Lieut.  
O.C. Messing. No. 1 Command Depot. A.I.F



MONTHLY REPORTApril 1917.Post Office,  
No. 1 Command Depot,  
Perham Down.


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	Sgt.	O.R.
Staff Strength	1	9
Temporarily attached from No. 3 Coy	-	6
Total	1	15

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MAILS RECEIVED & DESPATCHED.

In ward from Civil Post Office

9.30 am. 2 pm. 6.30 pm.

Sundays only.  
9.30 am.

" " A.F.P.O. 5 Camp.

9 am. 11 am. 5.30 pm.

9 am.

Outward to Civil Post Office

8.30 am 11.30 am 5.30 pm.

Sundays only

5.30 pm.

" " A.F.P.O. 5 Camp.

8 am. 1.30 pm. 5.30 pm.

8 am.

11 am. Direct to Wareham, Hurdcott, Salisbury  
B.P.O. A.B.P.O. London, Weymouth,  
4,5,6,7, Camps Perham.MAIL DELIVERY IN DEPOT

To Staff and Hut Orderlies 3 times daily

10 am. 2.30 pm. 6.45 pm.

Sundays only

10 am.

The amount of mail and parcels received for the month of April:

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Letters packets and newspapers approximately	45,000
Parcels	A.F.P.O. 472
	Civil P.O. 866
	<u>1,338</u>

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