

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

Bases & Depots

Item number: 33/11/1

Title: No 3 Australian Base Reception
Camp

February - June 1919



AWM4-33/11/1

Original



Aust Base Reception Camp N^o 3.

From 19th Feb 1919 - 9th June 1919

Checked by
[Signature]

original

AUSTRALIAN BASE RECEPTION CAMP NO.3
- - - - -

INTRODUCTORY

The A.B.R.C. No.3 was formed on the 17th. Feb. 1919 in Camps No. 22 and 23 at ROUELLES near HAVRE - FRANCE - the camps previously occupied by the 1st. A.C.D.- for the twofold purpose of withdrawing the arms and equipment of all A.I.F. personnel proceeding to U.K. for repatriation etc. and for generally cleansing the men.

Lieut. Col. J.P. CLARK D.S.O. of the 44th. Battalion was appointed Commanding Officer with Lieut. W.E.M. THOMPSON 6th. Battalion Adjutant and Lieut. H.G. HARRIS 12th. Battalion as Quarter Master. The majority of the staff of the 1st. A.C.D. were absorbed in the new establishment, the balance being obtained from Units in the field and G.S. reinforcements passing through the base.

Additional buildings were erected by the R.E's in Camp 22 for the delouser and equipment store, the accommodation for Units passing through consisted of Nissen Huts and Bell Pattern Tents for accommodation of officers and men in Camp 22. Camp 23 was composed of all Nissen Huts. Accommodation was provided for 2,500 other ranks but the greatest number in the depot at any one time was about 1,900 other ranks.

The Depot ceased to function on the 10th. June 1919 and the "B" Cadre were transferred to the Australian Staging Camp on the 17th. June 1919.

The number of officers and other ranks that passed through the Depot from the 17th. Feb. to the 10th. of June 1919 was 2,721 officers and 53,793 other ranks.

ESTABLISHMENT

The provisional establishment was 15 officers and 333 other ranks with A.A.M.C. personnel of 2 officers and 7 other ranks and 1 other rank A.A.P.C. attached making a total establishment of 17 officers and 341 other ranks.

Schedule "A" attached sets forth the detailed establishment. This establishment was confirmed on the 8th. April 1919, but permission was obtained to increase the establishment of officers by the addition of one messing officer and 1 assistant Q.M. for the equipment store.

The Depot was divided into four sections, viz:-
(a) Delouser

Under the supervision of Capt, R.C.N. ANDERSON 39th. Battalion with one other officer and 72 other ranks for personnel. All men passing through the depot went through the delouser where they were (1) Medically examined, (2) Bathed, (3) Service Dress fumigated, and (4) Issued with clean underclothing and socks.

About 300 men per hour could be put through this building. The greatest number that passed through in any one day being on the 24th. April when 2,287 other ranks were bathed etc.

In addition to bathing the men, all blankets brought to the base by Units, used by Units during their stay in Base Camps, and on their passage to England, and by Base Depot personnel were treated in the delouser.

Schedule "B" attached hereto shows the number of articles fumigated by the delouser whilst functioning.

(b) Equipment Store

Under Lieut. A.S. STEFANSON 17th. Battalion and a staff of 45 O.Rs. with 1 Staff Sgt. attached from D.A.D.O.S. for the purpose of checking all officers equipment and equipment of technical Units and L.of C. Troops. The arms and equipment of all Units were withdrawn and a Q.1 form kept of all ranks checked as the men passed through. The arms and equipment thus withdrawn were sorted out, packed and returned to Ordnance.

The Units passing through the store in the beginning were not in possession of Q.1 forms therefore consolidated Q.1 forms showing material returned by each Unit could not be prepared. A consolidated return showing as far as possible total withdrawals to be credited to each Unit has been forwarded to A.D.O.S. A.I.F. FRANCE.

Schedule "C" attached hereto shows the number of articles of equipment etc. withdrawn while this Section was functioning. All equipt. withdrawn was returned to Ordnance Havre.

(c) Depot Staff

Comprising Headquarters and Q.M. Department for the purpose of administering and rationing units passing through.

The Administration of the quotas was not taken out of the hands of the C.O. quota but the O.C. Cadre Coys. remained in close liaison with the O.C. of the quota Coy. attached to them and arranged with him for the attendance at the delouser and equipment store of his Coy. at the required hour.

(d) 5 Cadre Coys.

Four Coys. for the purpose of administering the quotas and one Coy. for administering details passing through for early repatriation, N.M.E. etc.

PROCEDURE

On a quato entraining at CHARLEROI or in the case of the 3rd. Division at GAMACHES a telegram was sent by C.O. quota to Australian Base Depot notifying them of such entrainment. This telegram was passed on to the Reception Camp. Arrangements were then made for the reception of the quota. Telegrams were sent en route by the C.O. quota advising of progress of the train, but as these telegrams often did not come to hand until after the arrival of the quota in the Depot it was found necessary to station an officer at SOQUENCE - TRIAGE - the detraining station situated about 4 kilometres from the camp - for liaison purposes. This officer had 3 guides attached to him for the purpose of bringing the troops to camp. On arrival at the detraining station a quota was met by the liaison officer, the C.O. handed a copy of the camp standing orders and the quota figures obtained for transmission to camp by telephone. He then arranged for the Q.M. of the quota to collect blankets and baggage which were sent to the Camp by motor lorries, 6 of which met each quota. While this was being done the men were supplied with a hot drink by the Y.M.C.A.

-3-

The adjutant of the quota left the station in advance on one of the lorries with all quota papers to enable arrangements to be made for the allocation of quota to the 4 Depot Cadre Coys. that dealt with quotas.

On arriving in the camp the quota was formed up on the Depot parade ground and subdivided into 4 Coys. in accordance with allocation previously arranged by quota and Depot Adjutants. This procedure was not necessary in case of quotas arriving organised into 4 Coys. In this case the various Coys. were met on arrival in the Camp by Cadre Coy. Commanders and straight away led to their respective Coy. Lines.

They were then given hot cocoa and a light meal and their blankets issued to them. No further work was done that day but at 0800 hours the following morning one Coy. of the quota commenced to go through the delouser in batches of 200.

On arrival at the delouser the men were given a short lecture on the procedure they were to follow while in the delouser so as to expedite their passing through. They then proceeded in single file to a window where they were each handed a numbered bag in which to place their valuables and two numbered discs - one to be attached to their boots and the other to be worn round their neck as a receipt for their bag of valuables. On passing on to the undressing chamber each man was shown a rack, the number of which corresponded with the number on discs and bag. On this rack he hung his greatcoat his puttees in the pocket, service dress and hat. The underclothing, socks and towel were discarded in the provided place just prior to the man entering the Medical Officers Room. Before entering he handed in his bag of valuables at the window of room provided where it was placed in the numbered pigeon hole to await his exit from the baths. His boots were also handed in at another window and placed in a numbered compartment situated opposite the exit from the bath room. On entering the Medical Room in a state of nudity he was examined by the M.O. and his name checked on the Medical Roll, any disease or complaint that he may be suffering from being set forth against his name.

He then proceeded through another door and entered the bath chamber. On leaving the showers his boots were returned to him and he proceeded to a window where a clean towel was issued to him. The drying room was next door and after drying himself the man entered the dressing room and was shown where his clothes would be hung after fumigation. Usually they were ready for the man on his arrival in the Dressing Room. He was then given a white sea kit bag containing clean underclothing and socks. While the man was passing before the M.O. and through the showers etc. his clothes, hung on the numbered rack had been without about 50 others racks placed on the trolley and wheeled to one of the 6 fumigating chambers, in which chamber they remain for 20 minutes at a temperature of 130° centigrade. At the expiration of this period the trolley was taken out of the chamber and wheeled to one of the doors opposite the dressing room. The racks of clothing were taken off the trolley and hung on the numbered pegs to await the arrival of the men from the drying room.

After dressing he left the building and proceeded to the valuable issuing window where on handing the numbered disc the valuables bag with the corresponding number was issued him. No complaints were ever received regarding the wrong bag being reissued or that they had been tampered with.

EQUIPMENT

While one Coy. was passing through the delouser another Coy. attended the equipment store where they handed in their arms, equipment and spare underclothing.

To facilitate the working each man prior to entering the store had taken apart his equipment and placed same in pack or haversack, if he had one. On his name being called out he entered the store and emptied the equipment on the counter. One clerk grouped and called out the articles returned while another clerk checked same off on a Q.1 form. All returns and shortages were thus set forth on the form and the man concerned signed for same.

There were eight groups of clerks operating at once, therefore eight men at a time could pass through the store. About 300 men per hour could be dealt with in this store.

After Q.1 forms were signed by the individual concerned they were ruled off, signed by the Q.M. and forwarded to the Depot from which the man would embark for England. Subsequently duplicate Q.1 forms would be returned by such base to the equipment store for consolidation. After consolidation the duplicates were forwarded to H.Q. A.B. Depot.

Liaison was maintained by the different Cadre Coys. so that there would be no time lost at either the delouser or equipment store in waiting for succeeding Coys. to pass through.

After Coys. had passed through delouser and equipment store they drew three clean blankets per man which blankets were retained during their stay at the base.

The quota then paraded at a given time and marched out to either A.B.D. No.1 or A.B.D.No.2 for preparation of embarkation, nominal rolls etc., and transfer to England. The average stay of a quota in the A.B.R.C. No.3 was under 20 hours.

ARRIVAL OF QUOTAS ETC.

There was no regular time for quotas to arrive in the depot. Some quotas would arrive on the day they were due at midday and others not until about 0900 hours on the day after they were due. If a quota train arrived at SOQUENCE TRIAGE Station after 22 hours they would not be detained until 0500 hours the following day. This was a regulation framed by the D.A.D.R.T. HAVRE. Most of the quotas arrived at the Camp between 1700 hours and 2100 hours on the day they were due. All quotas with the exception of the last three were well satisfied with the rationing arrangements en route. The last three did not have any hot meat meals on the way down owing to the closing of the Staging Kitchens. This Depot was not notified that the kitchens were being closed but after the first quota reported that they did not

have a hot meal en route, a hot meal was prepared and given to the other quotas immediately on their arrival in camp.

CONDITION OF UNDERCLOTHING RECEIVED FOR ISSUE

Very little new underclothing was issued to men passing through, most of the articles being received from the Area Laundry ABBERVILLE to which Laundry all dirty underclothing was sent. The general state of cleanliness of this clothing was not satisfactory and after numerous complaints made by the C.O. A.B.R.C. No.3 supported by the Depot M.O. clothing was obtained from the Area Laundry - BOULOGNE with more satisfactory results.

HEALTH

There were no outbreaks of sickness amongst the troops passing through the depot but on average 4% of the troops passing through were sent to hospital after Medical examination, the disability in most cases being scabies or V.D., the percentage of the latter cases being very small. The scabie patients usually returned in 24 or 48 hours thus being in time to embark with their quota or draft.

AMUSEMENTS

The stay in the Depot of the quotas and details was usually of such short duration that the men were occupied the whole of the time. Arrangements were however made with the Y.M.C.A. representatives for the general amusement of the men and this consisted of athletic displays given by the Y.M.C.A. Gymnastic Team, pictures, basket ball matches with American and inter-base Depot Teams and dancing. Two dances per week were held in the Y.M.C.A. Gymnasium to which members of the Q.M.A.A.C. and G.S. V.A.D (girls) were invited. Owing to the limited number of girls that could attend and the lack of accommodation - which only enabled about 120 couples on the floor - a general invitation to the details passing through the depot could not be extended. The Adj. of the quota passing through at the time was furnished with a given number of tickets for his quota and he disposed of them as he considered fit. In addition to these bi-weekly dances, there was dancing in the gymnasium each morning from 0930 hours to 1130 hours. This daily dance was extremely popular with the men, the gymnasium usually being filled with male dancing couples.

DISCIPLINE

During the process of demobilisation the conduct of all ranks passing through the Depot ~~of~~ was exemplary.

APPRECIATION

The C.O. of the A.B.R.C.No.3 desires to set on record his appreciation of the valuable assistance rendered by the C.O. and officers of quotas and details passing through in facilitating the rapid passage through the Depot of the Units under ~~their~~ command.

Lieut. Col.
Commanding - Australian Base Reception Camp No3

-----oOo-----

	Offs.	W.Os.	S/Sgts & Sgts.	Cpls.	Rank & File	Horses	Cycles
Commanding Officer			1			1	
Adjutant (Captain)			1			1	
Quarter-Master			1				
Captains i/c Coys.			5				
Capt.i/c Delousing Plant			1				
Lieutenants (Coys.)			5				
Lieutenant (Delousing Plant)			1				
R.S.M.			1				
C.S.M. (H.Q. Office)			1				
C.S.M. (Companies)			5				
R.Q.M.S.			1				
R.Q.M.S. Delousing Plant			1				
R.Q.M.S. (Equipment Store)			1				
OrR. Sergeant				1			
C.Q.M.S. (Q.M. Store)				1			
C.Q.M.S. (Delousing Plant)				1			
C.Q.M.S. (Rifles & Equipment)				1			
Sergeants (Delousing Plant)				4			
Sergeants (a)				24			
Corporals (Delousing Plant)					6		
Corporals (b)					22		
Regimental Police						10	
Privates (Delousing Plant)						60	
Buglers						2	
Privates (c)						175	2
Batman						15	
Groom						1	
TOTAL (Less attached)	15	10	32	28	263	2	2
<u>Attached</u>							
A.A.M.C. (d)	2		1	2	4		
A.A. Pay Corps (e)			1				
TOTAL (with attached)	17	10	34	30	267	2	2

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>(a) Depot Orderly Sgt. 1
 Depot Provost Sgt. 1
 Coy. Orderly Sgt. 5
 Coy. Duty Sgts. 5
 Sergeants Q.M. Store 2
 Sergeants (Rifles & Eqpt.) 2
 Sergeant Cook 1
 Pioneer Sergeant 1
 Sergeant Officers Mess 1
 Caterer Sergeants Mess 1
 Sgts. i/c 4 Mess Huts 4
 <u>Total 24</u></p> | <p>(b) Depot Orderly Corporal 1
 Depot Provost Corporals 1
 Company Orderly Corporals 6
 Corporal Clerks H.Q. 2
 Sanitary Corporal 1
 Corporals Q.M. Store 2
 Corpls. (Rifles & Equipment) 2
 Corporal Butcher 1
 Corporal Tailor 1
 Corporal Boot-maker 1
 Corporal Cook (Off. Mess) 1
 Cpl. Cook Sgts. Mess 1
 Cpl. Cook (2 mens kitchens) 2
 Cpl. Supervising batman 1
 <u>TOTAL 22</u></p> |
|--|--|
- (c) Clerks (H.Q.) 4. Clerks (Equipment withdrawal) 20. Runners 4. Telephone 2. Sanitation 20. Q.M.S. Store (Rations) 4 Blankets and clothing 4. Fatigues 2.) 10. Company Clerks (1 per Coy.) 5. Mess Huts (4 per Hut) 16. Butcher 1. Carpenters 2. Cooks (2 kitchens) 18. Cooks Fatigues 12. Bootmakers 2. Barbers 4. Tailor 1. Cooks (Off. Mess) 3. Waiters and fatigues (Off. Mess) 12. Cooks, waiters and fatigues (Sgts. Mess) 10. Stokers for mens kitchens 4. Sorting, cleaning and packing rifles and equipment 25. Total 175.
- (d) 2 M.O's (1 for Delousing Plant) 1 Sgt. Dispenser 2 Corporal Clerks, 2 Dressers. 2 Hospital Attendants.
- (e) 1 Pay Sergeant.

Return

WEEKLY RETURN
SHOWING UNDERCLOTHES AND BLANKETS PUT THROUGH FUMIGATING
CHAMBERS AT DELOUSER, 3RD. AUST.
BASE RECEPTION CAMP.

Week Ending	Shirts	Vests	Drawers	Sox	Cardigans	Towels	Blankets
Feb. 22	807	540	944		7	293	180
Mar. 1	615	218	295	994		271	2500
Mar. 8	1035	699	885	754	8	517	11290
Mar. 15	5030	2905	4553	4736	58	3221	20481
Mar. 22	9671	5609	8498	8273	67	5617	17180
Mar. 29	3713	1544	3769	5526	102	2761	21714
Apr. 5	7785	3844	6694	8799	242	5418	44135
Apr. 12	7853	2841	6983	6678	159	5229	44670
Apr. 19	5686	2159	5156	4470	142	4352	32889
Apr. 26	7959	2997	6558	6211	248	5289	43530
May 3	3348	1096	2023	1334	39	1479	36460
May 10	6019	3426	4284	4821	170	4350	25560
May 17	3983	2215	3795	3360	195	2862	24450
May 24	2460	1498	2262	2298	77	2585	19340
May 31	2326	1521	2122	2298	114	1850	8250
June 7	812	554	735	785	66	555	8250

WEEKLY PROGRESSIVE TOTALS.

Feb. 22	807	540	944		7	298	180
Mar. 29	20064	10975	18000	20283	235	12387	73165
Apr. 5	28656	15359	25638	29082	484	18103	117480
Apr. 12	36509	18200	32621	35760	643	23332	162150
Apr. 19	42195	20359	37777	40230	785	27684	195039
Apr. 26	50154	23356	44335	46241	1033	32975	238569
May 3	53502	33452	46358	47575	1072	34452	275029
May 10	59521	36878	50642	52396	1242	38802	300629
May 17	63504	39093	54437	55756	1437	41664	325079
May 24	65964	40591	56699	58054	1514	44249	344419
May 31	68290	42112	58821	60352	1628	46099	352669

Schedule C

8

SUMMARY OF OFFICERS AND OTHER RANKS MARCHED INTO AUST.
BASE RECEPTION CAMP FROM 19th. FEBRUARY 1919 TO
9TH JUNE 1919

Date.	Quota No.	Division	Offs.	O/Ranks	Remarks
19.2.19	part 12	3rd.	27	372	
20.2.19	do.	do.	10	423	
21.2.19	do.	do.	13	119	
26.2.19	Details		2	51	
2.3.19	do.		13	558	
3.3.19	do.		11	108	
5.3.19	do.		6	84	
7.3.19	do.		3	168	
8.3.19	Qta 13	4th	48	982	
9.3.19	" 14	5th	34	1206	includes details.
10.3.19	" 15	Mixed	23	1107	-do- -do-
11.3.19	Details		2	125	
12.3.19	Qta 16	1st.	19	1323	-do-
13.3.19	Details		16	243	
14.3.19	Qta 17	2nd.	27	976	
	Details	2nd	4	83	
15.3.19	do.		2	72	
16.3.19	do.		3	73	
17.3.19	18	3rd.	43	904	
	Details		5	93	
18.3.19	do.		7	188	
19.3.19	do.		1	101	
20.3.19	do.		3	116	
21.3.19	do.			32	
22.3.19	do.		2	269	
23.3.19	do.		3	19	
24.3.19	do.		11	162	
25.3.19	do.		7	55	
26.3.19	Qta.19	4th	47	923	
	Details		3	65	
27.3.19	Qta.20	5th.	26	975	
	Details		5	346	
28.3.19	Details		5	218	
29.3.19	Quota 21 part	Corps & Echelon	18	603	
30.3.19	Details		4	69	
31.3.19	Quota 22	1st.	59	940	
	Details		71	215	64 Offs. for Transport duty.
1.4.19	do.		61	88	47 Offs. do.
2.4.19	Qta.23	2nd.	49	948	
	" 24	3rd	49	949	
	Details		43	37	42 Offs. do.
3.4.19	do.		6	113	
4.4.19	Qta. 25	4th.	42	950	
	Details		7	120	
5.4.19	Qta.26	5th.	24	983	
	Details		7	284	
6.4.19	Qta.27	1st	41	961	
	Details		3	115	
7.4.19	do.		9	123	
8.4.19	Qta.28	2nd.	56	948	
	Details		4	121	
9.4.19	Qta.29	3rd.	57	967	
	Details		12	422	10 Offs. 359 O.Rs. Egyptian Draft.
10.4.19	Qta.30	4th.	42	939	
	Details		2	50	
11.4.19	Qta.31	5th.	40	965	
	Details		5	233	
12.4.19	do.		3	43	

Date.	Quota No.	Division	Offs.	O/Ranks	Remarks
13.4.19	Qta.32	1st.	49	949	
	Details		4	55	
14.4.19	do.		2	22	
15.4.19	Qta.33	2nd.	85	920	
	Details		8	71	
16.4.19	Qta.34	3rd.	54	967	
	Details		1	10	
17.4.19	Qta.35	4th	48	957	
	Details		6	184	
18.4.19	Qta.36	5th.	66	938	
	Details		7	21	
19.4.19	do.		4	48	
20.4.19	Qta.37	1st.	42	956	
	Details		2	40	
21.4.19	do.		2	28	
22.4.19	Qta.38	2nd.	57	933	
	Details		2	38	
23.4.19	Qta.39	3rd.	63	963	
	Details		5	183	
24.4.19	Qta.40	4th.	45	951	
	Details		10	125	
25.4.19	Qta.41	5th	54	933	
	Details		14	373	
26.4.19	do.		9	355	13 Offs. 360 O.Rs. for inc. in 42 Qta. 7 Offs. 310 O.Rs. for do.
27.4.19	do.		1	22	
28.4.19	do.		5	49	
29.4.19	Qta.43	1st.	35	956	
	Details		7	16	
30.4.19	do.		2	15	
1.5.19	do.		1	29	
2.5.19	Qta.44	2nd.	50	941	
	Details		1	20	
3.5.19	Qta.45	3rd	59	942	
	Details		2	38	
4.5.19	Qta.46	4th	49	949	
	Details		2	20	
5.5.19	do.		1	75	
6.5.19	Qta.47	5th	47	916	
	Details		39	30	39 Offs. for Transport duty.
7.5.19	Part 48	Mixed	21	416	
	Details		5	62	
8.5.19	Balance 48	Mixed	22	762	
	Details		9	107	
9.5.19	Qta.49	1st	43	932	
	Details		3	33	
10.5.19	do.		2	26	
11.5.19	Qta.50	2nd.	50	959	
	Details		18	460	5 Off. 320 O.R. Egyptian Draft,
12.5.19	Qta.51	3rd.	29	425	
	Details		2	66	
13.5.19	Qta.52	4th	58	940	
	Details		6	38	
14.5.19	do.		3	38	
15.5.19	do.		7	172	
16.5.19	Qta 53	5th	47	948	
	Details			36	
17.5.19	do.		5	92	
18.5.19	Qta.54	5th 1st.	53	950	
	Details		2	34	
19.5.19	do.		1	19	
20.5.19	Qta.55	2nd	45	938	
	Details		17	165	

Date.	Quota No.	Division	Offs.	o/Ranks.	Remarks. 1()
21.5.19	Details		3	68	
22.5.19	do.			38	
23.5.19	Qta.56	1st.	37	967	
	Details		2	40	
24.5.19	do.		3	15	
25.5.19	Qta.57	5th	37	948	
	Details		1	46	
26.5.19	do.		1	5	
27.5.19	do.			13	
28.5.19	do.		1	60	
29.5.19	do.			9	
30.5.19	Qta.58	1st & 4th.	38	865	
	Details		11	301	
31.5.19	do.		2	19	
1.6.19	Part 59	Mixed	16	233	
	Details			29	
2.6.19	do.		1	5	
3.6.19	do.		6	89	
4.6.19	do.		2	12	
5.6.19	do.			56	
6.6.19	do.		1	109	Draft from 5th. M. T. Coy.
7.6.19	do.		2	33	
8.6.19	do.		4	30	
9.6.19	do.			3	
10.6.19	STAFF A.B.R.C. No.3			156	
TOTAL			2721	53793	

W. J. Simpson

4 Lieut. Colonel
C.O. Australian Base Reception Camp No.3

HAVRE
12.6.19