

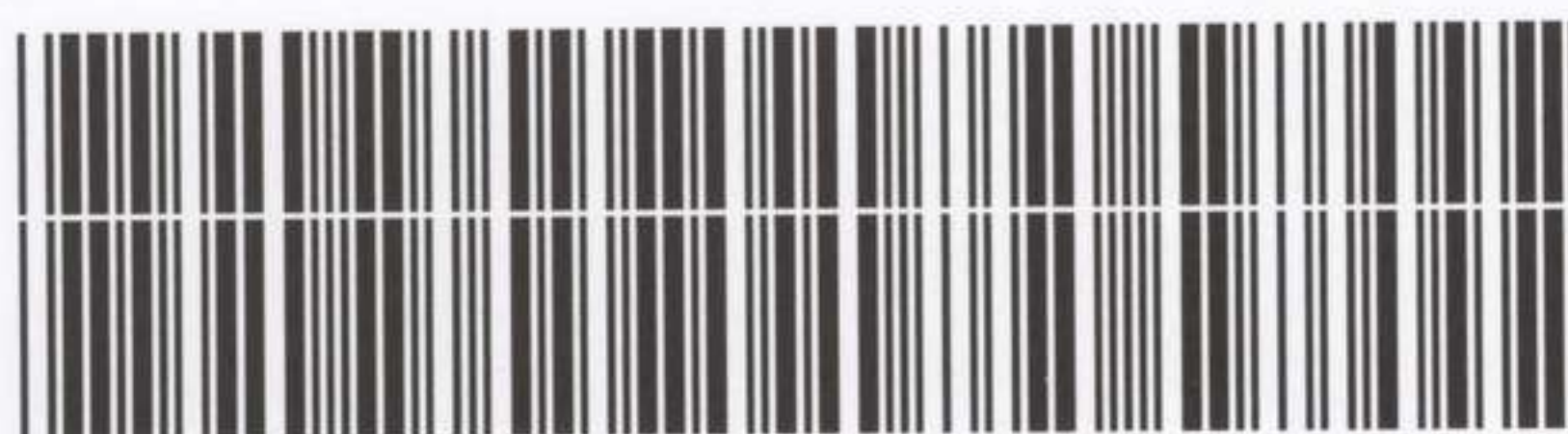
**AWM4**  
**Australian Imperial Force unit war diaries,**  
**1914-18 War**

Medical, Dental & Nursing

**Item number:** 26/30/2

**Title:** Assistant Director of Medical  
Services, AIF Depots in United  
Kingdom

September 1917



AWM4-26/30/2



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.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Tidworth	1.9.17	9am	No entry M.C.	
Tidworth	5.9.17	7.30pm	Have spent several days investigating personally the conditions of reinforcements arriving from Australia on 25 <sup>th</sup> & 26 <sup>th</sup> August in Borden, Bellona, Suvic & Hororata. Report to D.M.S. (Appendix 1)	a Appendix 1.
Tidworth	7.9.17	5.30pm	Training School for officers ex above named ships is progressing. Lectures are being given, and company & stretcher drill being taught. Twenty three (23) officers are attending the school, of whom twenty (20) will be fit for transfer overseas. The remaining three are over age. Dental work. Number of Dental units is 55, number of cases completed, week ending Sept 15 is 1935, total number of units (dentally) is 8795.	
Tidworth	8.9.17	10. am	Officers Boards. By orders of the D.M.S. A.I.F. all officers in A.I.F. Depots U.K. are to be boarded at Tidworth, instead of at Headquarters Horseferry Road. Only officers classified for return to Australia are to be boarded in London	
Tidworth	10.9.17	3pm	The 17 <sup>th</sup> Brigade is now dentally fit, inoculated, and as far as the Medical Service is concerned is ready to proceed overseas.	



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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Tidworth	1917 11 Sept	6 pm	<p>General health of troops in pt. Salisbury Plain is good. Admissions to hospital have risen slightly in last three weeks. No of sick admitted to hospital week ending 6 Sept 796. No of deaths 2. No of sick in hospital (excluding V.D. &amp; Infectious) 1104. Venereal diseases are slightly decreasing no in hospital 1052. Early treatment of Gonorrhoea in Trench battalions is apparently very satisfactory, and well reported on by all Regimental Medical Officers. A.D.M.S. today inspected Sutton Veney. The soil is sandy &amp; should make a good winter camp.</p>	
Tidworth	12 Sept	6 pm	Dental Work. The 16 <sup>th</sup> Brigade is now dentally fit.	
Tidworth	13 Sept	6 pm	Officers School finished to day with lecture on Venereal Disease at I.A.D.H. Bulford. Twenty (20) officers are now trained and ready for overseas.	
"	15 Sept	8 pm	Fifteen officers have been warned to be prepared to go overseas. Reboarding of the 16 <sup>th</sup> and 17 <sup>th</sup> Brigades has been ordered, with consequent moves of medical officers. No 2 Command Depot Weymouth is now full and no further patients are to be sent there for the present.	
"	16 Sept	10 am	Owing to the large numbers at no 2 C. Depot Weymouth, all closed B.I.A. (temporarily) except for less than 6 months are to be sent to other Command Depots, without receiving leave.	



WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118.

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(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Tidworth	17:9:17	10 am	General health of troops is good, little respiratory disease, no pneumonia. Preventive measures against Venereal Disease are satisfactory. Total cases in hospital 1039 (1.89%). 2425 soldiers reported for early treatment, 221 were sealed up and 101 cases successfully aborted. Chaplain Archdeacon Ward and Capt Nagan same are lecturing on Venereal disease.	
Tidworth	18:9:17	3 pm	Outbreak of Diphtheria at 9: Training Battalion at Larkhill, 3 positive cases, and 9 suspects not yet confirmed. Outbreak occurred in the Sergeants mess. Usual precautions of isolation, swabbing, disinfecting rooms & blankets have been taken.	
Tidworth	19:9:17	6 pm	Above outbreak of Diphtheria is lessening, four more cases are found to be positive and two doubtful.	
Tidworth	20:9:17	10 am	Due to overcrowding at No 2 Command Depot men of B1a class are being transferred to other Command Depots see appendix.	Appendix II
Tidworth	22:9:17	6 pm	The 16: Field Ambulance has marched to Parkhouse prior to demobilisation. The 17: Field Ambulance has moved from Windmill Hill to PARKHOUSE intact. Two brigades 16: & 17: have now been split up into three training battalions and are at HURDCOTT. Medical details have moved accordingly.	



WAR DIARY

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(Erase heading not required.)

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	1917			
Tidworth	24 Sept	2 pm	New Command Depot opened at Parkhouse no 1 camp today, thus relieving the overcrowding at Weymouth, 900 other ranks proceeded to new command depot.	
Tidworth	25 Sept	6 pm	Preparing for 900 men to be put on new boat roll from Command Depots at Parkhouse and Godford. Sixteenth Field Ambulance is now disbanded.	
Tidworth	26 Sept	6 pm	General health of troops is good. Total cases in hospital 2486 (4.5%). Number of cases sent to hospital last week 804. Infectious cases in hospital 314, including measles. Mumps have increased during the last week 76 being admitted to hospital nearly all among cases in segregation from troopships. Cerebro spinal fever 2 positive cases. Number of contacts of infectious diseases is 2597.	
Tidworth	28 Sept	8 pm	No 2 Command Depot Weymouth is now able to take cases. In the future all NCOs & men for transport duty are to be stationed at A.P.M.C. Training depot PARK HOUSE is to wait for transports.	go to hospital for A.P.M.C. for A.P.M.C.
Tidworth	30 Sept	10 am	Cases for Australia are now being sent to WEXMOUTH, and vacancies thus made in other command depots are being filled up with lighter cases from WEXMOUTH.	
Tidworth	1 Oct	9 pm	Boarding of Officers commenced at TIDWORTH today, only officers to be sent to Australia are now examined at A.I.F. Headquarters Horseferry Road LONDON	



## APPENDIX 1

AMS 24390/46/11

6th September 1917.

From A.D.M.S. A.I.F.  
TIDWORTH.

To G.O.C.  
A.I.F. Depots in U.K.  
TIDWORTH

and

D.M.S. A.I.F.  
Administrative Head quarters,  
130 Horseferry Road,  
S.W.

Report on Soldiers Arriving From Australia  
in August 1917.

The following Transports arrived in England as follows:-

"Suffolk"	16.8.17	With	150	Troops on Board	"	"	"
"Borda"	25.8.17	"	1544	"	"	"	"
"Beltona"	25.8.17	"	500	"	"	"	"
"Hororata"	26.8.17	"	1745	"	"	"	"
"Suevic"	26.8.17	"	1569	"	"	"	"
			<u>Total</u>	<u>5568</u>	<u>Troops.</u>		

1. MEDICAL UNFITS.

I have to draw attention to the large number of soldiers among these troops who are quite unfit for any Military service. Medical Unfits ex "Suffolk" are not included.

I have personally examined 269 of these unfits and have recommended 14, who are permanently unfit for Infantry work, for service in Railway Units or in the A.A.M.C.

Of the remaining 255: 251 have been medically boarded permanently unfit for General Service, 4 have been boarded unfit for General Service for more than 6 months (3 of these being also unfit for Home Service).

I have attached a Nominal Roll with my remarks about each of these 255 unfits, and am only reporting cases concerning whom there can be no difference of medical opinion as to their unfitness for General Service.

208 of these soldiers are being transferred to No. 2 Command Depot, Plymouth, Fortwith, for return to Australia as soon as accommodation is available on Transports.

47 have been classed fit for Home Service and are available for service in England if so required, but there are already in the Command a large number of Home Service personnel in excess of requirements, who are being returned to Australia as



transports become available.

The chief disabilities are as follows:-

Senility :	155
(49 of whom are suffering from such complications as Bronchitis, Rheumatism etc)	
Surgical Disabilities: (Fingers or Thumb absent, stiff elbows, old fractures of leg, Inguinal Hernia, etc)	41
Feet Deformities & Disabilities:	9
Medical Disabilities: (Heart & Lung Troubles, and Defective Physique)	41
Defective Vision:	7
Deafness:	1
Mental Deficiency:	1.

Senility.

With regard to Senility, the majority are weak old men, not only permanently unfit for General Service, but quite unfit for employment on any Military Duties whatsoever, in England, and who require to be returned to Australia before the winter commences.

As a result of statements made to me by these soldiers, I have ascertained that the following appear to be the chief reasons for the inclusion of such a large number of soldiers over Military age in these drafts:-

- (1). In very many cases they have very much understated their real age on enlistment.
- (2). Many of the men state that they have been encouraged to so understate their correct age by Recruiting Sergeants, and Recruiting Officials, although these Recruiting Sergeants and Officials know well that the men concerned are far over the Military age.
- (3). In one instance a soldier states that he gave his correct age as 49 and that this was knowingly entered up as 44 at the Recruiting Office.
- (4). Another soldier states that the Recruiting Committees are encouraging these understatements of age, and that the idea has therefore grown up among the Public that old men should state their "Military" age as opposed to their Real age, in order to enlist.

I have given instances of such statements on the attached detailed report of Medical Unfits with localities where they are stated to have occurred.

- (5). Some old men have enlisted under their wrong age and state they did this in order to encourage young men to enlist.
- (6). Some old men, who say they are under 45., are so obviously at least 50, 55 or over, that they either do not know their correct age, or else are persisting in their false statement of age.



MEDICAL UNITS. (Cont'd)

In order to prevent a recurrence of the despatch Overseas of soldiers suffering from Senility, whether premature or otherwise, I recommend:-

- (1). That all possible action be taken to ensure that no ~~no~~ soldier whatsoever be allowed to proceed from Australia in Overseas Drafts who is over the age of 45.
- (2). That it be brought under the notice of all Recruiting Officials, that statements have been made by old men on arrival in England, that they have been encouraged by Recruiting Sergeants, Recruiting Committees and Recruiting Officials generally in Australia to give their Military age as under 45. If the statements made are to be believed, this practice of encouraging old men to falsely understate their age, has become widespread, and should be discouraged by all possible means.
- (3). That it be brought under the notice of all such Recruiting Officials, that all soldiers between 45 and 70 referred to on the attached Nominal Roll, less possibly a few cases of the 47 who have been found fit for Home Service, are being returned to Australia forthwith, and will be similarly returned to Australia if they are sent Overseas in future drafts.
- (4). That the futility of allowing feeble old men to proceed Overseas, simply because they say they are under 45 years of age, be recognised by all concerned. This requires that in all cases careful consideration be paid to the "apparent" age of the soldier. If this is done, it should not be possible for old men over 60, over 50, or even the majority of those between 45 and 50, to be sent Overseas for General Service. Such careful consideration to "Apparent" age is especially necessary in view of the practice which appears to have grown up, of understating ages.
- (5). That the previous paragraph be specially brought under the notice of Medical Officers. It is very hard to understand how Medical Officers have passed these old men as fit for General Service. They can have little idea of the conditions that prevail at the Front in Winter, or even of the severity of the English Winter.

Surgical Disabilities.

These include soldiers without a Thumb and Index Finger, without portion of all fingers of one hand, with marked limitation of mobility of elbow joint, with deformity of elbow and marked limitation and supination.

In all these cases an absolute inability to use a rifle is present.

Soldiers have also been passed fit for General Service with very badly united fractures of the leg with one or more inches shortening, with extensive injury of muscles of the leg and resultant marked weakness of leg, with an old injury to the hip joint causing limitation of mobility and lameness. In all these cases the soldiers are quite unfit for the marching required on ordinary service conditions.

It is hard to understand how these soldiers were passed by Medical Officers for General Service. They may have had the idea that such cases could be utilized on Home Service duties in England,



MEDICAL UNFITS (Cont'd)  
Surgical Disabilities (Cont'd)

but as already mentioned, the number of Home Service personnel in England is in excess of requirements. May it be brought under the notice of such Medical Officers that soldiers are expected to be able to march, use a rifle and fight?

GENERAL RECOMMENDATION.

I would recommend that all soldiers before proceeding from Australia in an Overseas draft be examined by a Medical Officer, who is familiar with the duties which soldiers passed for General Service are required to do, and who is also familiar with the conditions of warfare Overseas.

2. SOLDIERS UNDER AGE.

394 soldiers have been reported as under age. They are made up as follows:-

<u>Age</u>	<u>Number.</u>
15 to 15½	1
15½ " 16	3
16 " 16½	2
16½ " 17	6
17 " 17½	13
17½ " 18	55
18 " 18½	100
18½ " 19	234
Total.	<u>394</u>

Therefore 160 of these will not be able to proceed to France for periods extending from 6 months to over 2 years.

In this connection, I would recommend again, that Medical Officers in Australia take into careful consideration the "apparent age" of a soldier, as by so doing it might be possible to prevent the despatch of young boys Overseas.

3. DENTAL UNFITS.

Of 5530 cases examined, 2536 are Dentally unfit.

Of these 20% require Extractions  
 40% " Dentures  
 40% " Fillings.

Some of the cases requiring Extractions had mouths which were in a very septic condition, and which will require prolonged treatment before they are fit to receive Dentures.

Some of the Dentures in situ were badly fitting, due probably to being put in too soon after Extractions had been done.

Some cases showed signs of recent treatment, having had Extractions during the voyage.

I would ask that, if possible, more dental treatment be given before the troops arrive in England. If it is not possible to do more treatment in the way of filling and Dentures, I would at least ask that all necessary Extractions and preliminary treatment be carried out for all troops from Australia before they arrive in this Command.



4. INOCULATION AGAINST TYPHOID & PARATYPHOID.

I have again to report that it has been necessary to re-inoculate with Triple Vaccine all these Troops immediately on arrival.

I have made repeated representations that the methods of the inoculation in Australia be made similar to those which it is necessary to adopt here.

I am not permitted to allow a single soldier to proceed to France unless he has been fully inoculated with Triple Vaccine and unless the T.A.B. entries have been made in the correct way in Ray Books.

In order to prevent the re-inoculation of troops from Australia in this Command, which should be entirely unnecessary, I again request that the following procedure be carried out in Australia:-

- Paratyphoid A*
- (a). That Mixed Vaccine, Typhoid <sup>A</sup>, and Paratyphoid B be used.
  - (b). That this inoculation be carried out by the two-dose system, i.e.  $\frac{1}{2}$  c.c. followed by 1 c.c. 8 to 10 days later.
  - (c). That this inoculation be invariably entered up in Ray Books in the following form:-

<u>T.A.B.</u>	7.8.17	J.H.G.
2	17.8.17	J.H.G.

5. INTRODUCTION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE FROM AUSTRALIA.

The following cases of Infectious Disease were transferred direct to Hospital immediately on arrival of the Convoy:-

	<u>"Borde"</u>		<u>"Hororata"</u>		<u>"Suevic"</u>
Measles	12	Mumps	46	Mumps	37.
Mumps	13	C. S. M.	1		

The troops from all the Transports have been isolated, and all possible action has been taken to prevent the spread of these Infectious Diseases through the Command.

During the past week from these isolated troops, there have been 122 admissions to hospital for Mumps and the admissions to hospital are continuing.

*W. W. Whae* Colonel.  
A.D.M.S. A.I.F.



## APPENDIX 2

20768 / 11 / 1

18th September 1917.

From A.D.M.S. A.I.F.  
TIDWORTH.

To D.M.S. A.I.F.  
Administrative Headquarters,  
130, Horseferry Road,  
S. W.

I have to report that in view of the strain on the accommodation at No.2. Command Depot, it has become necessary to arrange for the transfer of all soldiers of B.1.a class from No.2. Command Depot to other Command Depots as soon as they have become B.1.a. class.

The Command Depots therefore now receive the following classes:

No.1. Command Depot Soldiers of B.1.a Class including those who are ~~not~~ likely to be fit for general service within 6 weeks, as heretofore.

Nos.3 & 4 Command Depots. All Soldiers of B.1.a class including those who are not likely to be fit for general service within 3 months.

No.2. Command Depot. Soldiers of B.1.b, B.2.a, B.2.b, C.1, C.2, and C.3 classes.

(Note : Soldiers of B.1.a class who were not likely to be fit for general service within 3 months were previously retained at No.2. Command Depot)

May this alteration in the distribution of the lower grade B.1.a class be brought under the notice of the Australian Auxiliary Hospitals, and the Classifying Medical Officers at Administrative Headquarters, please.

I would further bring under the notice of the D.M.S. the following facts with regard to the number of soldiers reporting at Command Depots, excluding soldiers moved between Command Depots.

For week ending:	No reporting at No. 1, 3, & 4 Cnd. Depots.	No reporting at No. 2. Cnd. Depot.
25.8.17	877	1046
1.9.17	777	1259
8.9.17	711	1220
15.9.17	400	1051

The number of soldiers reporting at No.2. Command Depot, far exceeds the Combined Number reporting at the other three Command Depots.

The S.M.O. No.2. Command Depot reports that 40% of the soldiers arriving at No.2. Command Depot after furlough are fit for immediate transfer to other Command Depots.



There is also plenty of spare accommodation at Nos.1, 3, and 4 Command Depots, whereas the accommodation at No.2.Command Depot is always being strained.

I wish therefore to request that Medical Officers who classify soldiers for distribution to Command Depots make all possible use of No.1, 3, and 4 Command Depots, so that the strain on No.2.Command Depot may be relieved to a certain extent.

For their information the following standard adopted at Weymouth for B.1 Class, (Temporarily Unfit for General Service for less than 6 months) is stated :

B.1.b. Soldiers requiring further Convalescence and not fit to take furlough.

B.1.a Soldiers who have recovered sufficiently to be able to take furlough.

*Stuart Whae*

Colonel.  
A.D.M.S. A.I.F.