

AWM4

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

Medical, Dental & Nursing

Item number: 26/90/6

Title: Australian Army Medical Corps
Detachment, Suez Government
Hospital

August 1918



AWM4-26/90/6

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Australian Imperial Force.

WAR DIARY

OF

A. A. M. C. Detachment - Suez Govt. Hospital.

FOR

Augt. 1918



Signature of Officer compiling

Wood
Capt ASMC

Signature of Officer Commanding

Wood
Capt ASMC.

War Diary

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A. A. M. C. Detachment Suez Government Hospital.

Month of Augt. 1918

Augt 1st Embarked three New Zealanders in Lariat today - Ptes Wier, Smith, & Kemp. (See Appendix XXVII) - on Hospital ship Karoola - for return to New Zealand. There still remain in Hospital two men who have been boarded for return - one an Australian, Gnr S. H. Price, and the other a New Zealander, Pte R. Howell (Appendix XXVII).

Today the reduction in beds at the disposal of the Military came into force, the numbers now being at the disposal of Officers and Other Ranks.

General Hospital Officers 20 in place of 24.
Other Ranks 100 in place of 276

Infection Hospital Off + O.R. 100 (unchanged)

This bears out what I indicated previously about the number of beds being reduced to 120. It will be noted however that the reduction applies to the General Hospital only, the beds in the Isolation Block being unchanged.

Augt 2nd Nil of importance

Augt 3rd Transport- Port Lytleton arrived today with E. E. P. Reinforcements

Australians 6 off 100 O.R.

New Zealanders 8 off 1 W.O 281 O.R.

The number of patients admitted to Hospital was 9 New Zealanders and 2 Australians - a proportion of 2.75% of the troops on board.

The diseases from which they were suffering were
1 Syphilis : 2 Syphilis + 8 Gonorrhoea.

ms

War Diary - Suez Govt Hospital - Augt (contd). (3)

Augt 4th All E.E.F. troops admitted to Hospital yesterday evacuated today to No 2 Stationary Hospital Inoascar.

Augt 5th S/Pls D. Lund transferred today to No 14 P.H. for medical treatment. She has been suffering from intense headaches on account of which she was relieved from duty on the 3rd inst, although not admitted to Hospital here.

Augt 6th Nil of importance

Augt 7th S/Nurses Bentley, Fitzpatrick & Cushman returned tonight from leave to Alexandria.

Augt 8th Pte Conchman of this unit admitted to Hospital today suffering from Shingles Itch.

Letter written today to A.D.M.S.

Australian Headquarters, Cairo, pointing out the extensive nature of the services & the ^{tendered} military by the P.M.O. of this Hospital - A. Crawell - and suggesting that these services should be recognized in some way. - Appendix XXXII

Augt 9th & 10th Nil of importance.

Augt 11th S/Pl Bradley of this unit admitted to Hospital today suffering from Cellulitis of Foot.

Today an order was received from the O.C. of the Motor Transport Dept at Port Suez withdrawing the remaining Ambulance. When this unit originally arrived at the Hospital, there were two Motor Ambulances stationed here. One was withdrawn some time afterwards, and now the other. The order I understand applies to the various Hospitals stationed in this area; the ambulances being now ~~located~~ ^{located} at Port Suez. This will make the position awkward should any serious accident occur in the neighbourhood of the Hospital, as the Port is about two miles away. The position would
be

War Diary - Suez Govt. Hospital - Augt. (contd) 4³
would have been untenable had the Australian
Camp still been in existence as frequent demands
for an ambulance were made from there at
all hours of the day and night. This matter
should receive consideration in the event of any
fresh arrangement being entered into at any time
subsequently, by the Australian Authorities. As it
is, the Hospital is now left without any form of
military transport.

Augt 12th Memo. received today from D. A. G.
3rd Echelon G. H. Q. E. E. F. (MFC/3493/257(R))
intimating that a request had been sent to
the O. C. R. A. M. C. Base Depot to despatch
to this Hospital 1 Corporal and 7 R. A. M. C.
Privates (~~R. A. M. C.~~) to relieve the A. A. M. C.
Personnel here. This reduced number of staff is,
I understand, in conformity with the arrangement
entered into for the reduction of beds, which took
effect on the first day of the month.

Today two V. A. D. Nurses arrived at
the Hospital to take up duty. They are in
the employ of the Egyptian Government, and in
no way connected with this Unit.

Augt 13th The R. A. M. C. Personnel arrived today
to take over - one N. C. O. and 7 Privates, as
alluded to above.

Wire received today from Matron in Chief
Cairo to say that six British Nurses would
arrive at the Hospital on Thursday to replace the
Australians. Wire to A. D. M. S. Aust.
Headquarters Cairo to ascertain whether only
six of the Australians could leave. In the
meantime it has been decided provisionally that
three Nurses going on leave tomorrow will not
return, and three others will be despatched. Have
had

wired to Headquarters for instructions regarding ^{54.}
their destination.

Augt 14th Sisters Cobcroft S/nurses Sinclair and
Nicholas left this morning on 10 days leave to
Alexandria.

Two members of the Unit who had been in
Hospital here were evacuated to No 2 Stationary
Hospital Mousas - Tpt Bradley + Pte Cushman.
The other members of the Unit - 1 Cpl and 10
Pls - marched out in the forenoon for the Detach
Camp at Mousas. Before their departure they
were addressed by the P.M.O. and thanked for the
services in Hospital. He also complimented the Unit
on the excellence of its work.

In the forenoon a telephonic communication
was received from Headquarters Cairo to the effect
that six nurses were to be evacuated to 31st
General Hospital Cairo the following day, and the
remainder to No 14 AGH the day after. The
P.M.O. refused to agree to this on account of the
disorganization of the staff caused thereby, and also
because only six new nurses were to arrive. A
wire to this effect was despatched to the A.D.M.S.
Stralis. The P.M.O. would only agree to the
despatch of three nurses for 31st General Hospital
the following day.

Augt 15th I omitted to add that
yesterday the P.M.O. wired to his own Dept. in
Cairo pointing out that the Australian authorities
required their nursing staff withdrawn at once,
and asking that four additional British nurses
be sent at once, the establishment of the
Hospital being fixed at 10 since the reduction
of beds came into force.

At 11.00 S/nurses Sharpe Jeffrey
and Bentley left for 31st General Hospital
now

War Diary - Suez Govt Hospital - Augt/Sept (5)
Cairo. A wire to ^{Head} ~~Head~~ dispatched to the Major of
the 31st and also to A.D.M.S. Stralis. Later on
a telephonic communication was opened up with
Cairo, and the attitude of the P.M.O. explained
to Capt Joyce, A.D.M.C. who was also informed
that Spruice Fleming, and Whitehead, would leave
the following day for No 14 Regt. The latter has
been here in a relieving capacity - temporarily
attached for duty. There will still remain
Spruice Broadfoot, Libpatriks, Ashurst and Pines.
The first three will go to the 31st General, and the
last to No 14 Regt, when they are relieved.
The three who went on leave on the morning of
the 14th will return direct to No 14 Regt. An
intimation to this effect has been forwarded to them at
Alexandria, and they have been asked to apply to
No 14 Regt for their Railway Warrants.

This afternoon six British nurses
arrived to take up duty in the hospital.

The number of Australians in transit in
hospital has reduced to one, who has been
boarded and awaits return to Australia. There
are still 6 New Zealanders in transit remaining,
of whom one has been boarded for return to New
Zealand.

There is still no word of the transfer
of the Australian M.Os. from the hospital, but
they anticipate being relieved soon.

In compiling the final pages of my War
Diary it is a matter of regret to me that I
am unable to submit a return, as an
Appendix, showing the actual number of Australians
in transit treated in hospital since the
establishment of the unit, but unfortunately at
the present moment I have not got access to
hw

War Diary - Suez Govt. Hospital - Augt (cont) 9

Copies of my War Diary. Although the numbers fell considerably short of expectations, yet at times the volume of work was very large. Fortunately as has been already noted the death rate has been small.

Looking back, I am sure that the Unit has amply justified its existence. I have already dealt elsewhere with the merits of the Scheme generally, and before concluding I should like to briefly touch upon one or two features of interest.

Capt Taylor A.E., of this Unit has rendered faithful and conscientious service throughout. When a change of staff was mooted, a request was submitted by the P.M.O. that he be permitted to stay on in Suez.

The Standard of Nursing on the whole has been excellent and the nurses have responded well to the calls made upon them. Sister Burns who arrived with the original contingent, under the impression that she was in charge, handled the situation well throughout.

I have already made reference to the action of the services rendered by Dr. Crowell - the P.M.O.

There are one or two suggestions, which I should like to append which might be of assistance at some future date, in the event of an Australian Personnel being stationed here at some future date. The possibility of such a contingency has been in my mind throughout, and on that account I have elaborated my Diary, in a way that I could not otherwise have done.

I do not think the interests of the patients are always sufficiently safeguarded by a native Personnel. Some of the Egyptian orderlies are good, but many are incompetent. Personally I
had

War Diary - Suez Govt Hospital - Augt (Contd) 9

Should like to see members of the A R M C acting as
ward orderlies.

Now at times the food problems has been a
difficult one to deal with. At times numerous
complaints have been heard, but still the scale of
diet compares favourably with that of Australian
Hospitals in Egypt. The bread seems to have been
the main bone of contention. That supplied by the
Egyptian Govt. generally is hard and dry, and is
not liked by the men. I think myself that the
position of affairs would be very much improved if
the scheme were instituted that I understand exists
in No 14 Regt, and a special Red Cross Cook
was provided to prepare delicacies for men, who are
really ill. This would be a big step in the
right direction. I should also like to see the
scheme for the distribution of the Red Cross Comports
put on a different footing. At present this comes
under the jurisdiction of the Matron, but I think
that this should be run as an entirely different
Dept. to which the Sisters should have access
at all times, and associated with such a
Dept, there should be a special Cook, as
alluded to above.

Finally some fresh arrangement might
be entered into so far as the drug supply is
concerned. At present the Egyptian Govt is
unable to secure supplies of several drugs, but
some arrangement might be entered into with
the Military Authorities to overcome any
deficiency of essentials. For instance no
supplies of Ether for General Anesthesia have
been available for some time in this Hospital.
Augt 16th. At 1100 today S/nurses Fleming and
Whitehead left for No 14 Regt. I am still
had

War diary - Suez Govt Hospital - Aug/1918
remain the four Australian nurses - Prindfoot, Fitzpatrick, Ashurst and Perrier whom the P.M.O. declines to release, until they are replaced by British staff.

Augt 17th This forenoon telephone message received by Capt Wood from Capt. Joyce, Stralis, to say that Australian Sisters must be despatched following morning. Delivered message to P.M.O. who said he could not see his way to accede to the request. He subsequently changed his mind on receipt of a wire from Australian Headquarters, and replied that nurses would depart unless he heard to the contrary from his own Dept. in Cairo.

Augt 18th + 19th bit of importance

Augt 20th Cpl Brown left at 1100 today for Port Said - No 14 R.F.H. wrote to A.S.M.S. Headquarters regarding question of his rank. During his stay here, Brown held temporary rank, and I had already written to Stralis to inquire whether he would be established in his rank, but so far have had no reply.

In view of my impending departure and following apparently on the attitude adopted by the Australian authorities over the question of the removal of the nurses, the P.M.O. suddenly limited the scope of my activities, and made the position, so far as I was concerned, extremely anomalous, and I therefore felt justified in asking for my removal. (Appendix XXXIII)

Later in the day Capt Morrison R.A.M.C. arrived to take up duty in the Hospital.

Augt 21st Wrote this morning to Stralis pointing out that Capt Morrison had arrived, and asking for instructions. This wire was sent at the request of the P.M.O. who said that he himself would take no action in the matter.

Augt 22nd Confirmed my wire to Cairo by letter and asked for instructions.

Augt 23rd Phone message this forenoon to request Mr Creswell to wire to Australian Headquarters to say that he was keeping Capt Taylor and asking for instructions regarding Capt Wood. The arrangement apparently is that Capt Taylor is to be lent at any rate temporarily to this Hospital, although the unit is disbanded.

I have therefore come to the end of my own labours in my capacity as O.C. A.S.M.S. Detachment Suez Govt Hospital, and when these final pages of my War Diary reach the War Records Section of Australian Headquarters I shall simply subscribe myself as
William Wood
Capt A.R.M.C. LW

WAR DIARY

OF

A.R.M.C. Detachment: Long Gt Hospital

FOR

Augt. 1918

LIST OF APPENDICES.

No.

Subject.

XXXII

Letter n Simia of Dr. Crewell.

XXXIII

Cpy of Letter from Capt. Lorne to
A.D.M.S. Strick.

Appendix XII

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A. D. M. S.

A. I. F. Headquarters Cairo.

Before leaving Suez, I should like to be permitted to officially submit to your notice — for transmission to Col. Downes, who might, if he thinks fit, make a recommendation in the proper quarter — the nature of the medical services rendered by Dr. Creswell, the P. M. O. of this Hospital during the present war.

For the past 8 months, I myself have had an opportunity of judging and of forming a very high estimate of the work performed by Dr. Creswell in the service of the Military Authorities, both Imperial and Colonial. He has been absolutely tireless in his energy, and has always kept in close personal touch with all patients admitted to Hospital. He has also been accessible at any hour day or night to any patient in urgent need of his services, and has further acted constantly in a consulting capacity to members of a large number of units, military and naval, both stationed here and in transit.

These services have been rendered without any remuneration from the military, and in addition Dr. Creswell has sacrificed considerable periods of leave to which he is entitled.

I understand that the question of some special recognition has already been submitted to the High Commissioners by Col. Gibson of the Hedjaz Operations, who was a patient for some considerable time in this Hospital.

The Sultan recently conferred an honour upon Dr. Creswell, but it does not appear to me to be commensurate with the nature of

nature of the services rendered by Dr. Creswell during the period of the war, so I respectfully beg to submit the letter for your consideration.

Williams Ward
Capt. A.S.M.C.
O.C. A.S.M.C. Detachment
Suez Govt. Hospital

Appendix XXIII
 Suez Government Hospital
 20/8/18

A.S.M.C.

Australian Headquarters, Cairo.

In view of my impending departure, Mr Crowell
 the P.M.O. has relieved me of all
 responsibility so far as the R.A.M.C Personnel
 is concerned, and has also assumed full
 control over the Medical Office which was
 formerly under my charge. I therefore consider
 that my period of usefulness to the Hospital
 has now expired, and would be glad to
 be recalled at your earliest convenience.

William Wood

Capt A.S.M.C.