

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

Chaplains

Item number: 6/3/8

Title: Senior Chaplain, Presbyterian,
Headquarters AIF, London

August 1918



AWM4-6/3/8

Senior Presbyterian Chaplain's
(Australian)

WAR DIARY

Rev. W. F. Shannon
Aust. Adm. Hdqrs.
London.

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.

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	August 1918		<p>Chaplain Rev. E. G. Petherick (5th Battalion) has done remarkably good work since his arrival in the Brigade three months ago. Church Parades, have been held whenever possible. Two Brigade Parades were held, one of which included all units of the second Brigade. Genl. Birdwood was present and distributed military honors at the close. His thoughtfulness for the men's comfort was well exemplified by his order that in Brigade Parades the men were not to be kept in drill formation but gathered as closely as possible in "sit easy" fashion around the padre. Great harmony exists between the Chaplains of the Brigade. Several voluntary services have been held, - in farmhouses, barns, or village schools. Twice they had to be abandoned owing to orders to "stand by" or to resume a march. In spite of the fact that many of the movements take place on Saturday or Sunday nights, the attendance at voluntary services has approached 300. Communion is observed at most or all services, and also occasionally in small meetings. After one of the voluntary services for the Brigade 120 waited for Communion.</p> <p>No regular Bible Classes have been held, but the padre discusses with the men frequently on topics they are intensely interested in, such as "Christianity and the War," "Union of the Churches," "Armageddon," "Death & the Life Hereafter," etc. When the Battalion is out of the line it is well supplied with concert parties organized by the Y.M.C.A. Several concerts have been held packing the great marquee; a biography has been worked in cellars and barns; with these the padre has had little to do, most of the work being done by the Y.M.C.A. Various inter Battalion and inter-Company Cricket & football matches have been played, the material being supplied by the Y.M.C.A., the Aust. Comforts Fund, etc. Swimming has been a popular recreation, and swimming competitions arouse the keenest interest. Enthusiastic teams take part in athletic sports, basketball, "deck tennis", etc. The Padre has also assisted at the Y.M.C.A. canteens; a cocoa stall was established well forward, and men coming from or going into the line were supplied with hot cocoa, biscuits & cigarettes. And these are mightily appreciated specially by men who have been in the line for days and nights with a constant strain on the nerves followed by a "hurry up bombardment" on being relieved. Cocoa is also supplied to fatigue parties passing by.</p>	

See in Presbyterian Chaplain's
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		August.	<p>As many as 1400 officers and men being supplied one night between 9.30 and 3 o'clock.</p> <p>The padre has found it an anxious task getting magazines and books + papers for the men. A lending library would be a great boon, but transport of the books would be an obstacle. This padre thinks that the chaplains baggage allowance should include transport for a case of books.</p> <p>Also that a chaplain should have a tent for his own use where men could speak privately to him, which at other times could be used for reading or writing. Mr. Pettrick visits the men before an attack and supplies them with any comforts he can get, receives their recently written letters, takes care of keepsakes handed to him, &c. He has been at times attached to advanced dressing stations, as for instance in Bayonvillers on Aug. 9-11 when the numbers of patients treated (British and enemy) were about 1040. The walking patients passed through the chaplains room, and through the kindness of the Red Cross + YMCA, all were supplied with hot Bovril or cocoa and cigarettes. He has had a considerable number of burials - the majority in military cemeteries, while others were laid to rest in shellholes whilst enemy shells were falling around. At all times the men try to give their late comrades proper solemn funeral rites, & in this the Chaplains are one with them. Much correspondence is of course carried on with relatives of the killed, wounded, or missing; and many inquiries as to graves have to be answered. Careful records are kept as far as is possible. The Battalion has been busy since on 6th Aug. it left St. Omer for Longpré, marching to Bettancourt, thence to Camon, then on to Lamotte, attacking the enemy at Harbonnières and Lihons on Aug. 9, 10. Resting from 15th to 18th marched to Hamlet, rested till 21st, and on 23rd captured St Martin Wood, and was relieved on 26th in need of a rest.</p> <p>Chaplain the Rev. Smith MacBain (4th Battalion) The month was one of great movement, hurrying down from the Meuse front towards the Somme. Only on two Sundays were parades possible, on Aug. 11 the 9th + 12th Battalions, and on Aug. 18th the Pioneers, Engineers, and 9th Battalion. The padre visited the patients in Casualty Clearing Stations, at Warfusée, Bayonvillers, + Morecourt Ambulance stations. He wrote to 96 relatives of dead or wounded men, and buried at Morecourt six bodies of men killed in action, two of whom belonged to the 3rd Field Ambulance.</p>	

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	August, 1918		<p>Chaplain the Rev. R. J. W. G. Crawford (20th Battalion) The Brigade being almost continuously on front line duty during the month, there were only two Church parades possible. One was held on a Wednesday (21st) in a secluded spot near Fouilloy, about 70 being present; the other was held on Sunday (25th) and about 150 were present, composed of all the Brigade units. A communion service was held afterwards. His padre worked mostly at the Advanced Dressing Station during the offensive; conducted several funerals, sought information about missing lads, & cooperated with YMCA in giving comforts to the men in the front line. River sports and three organized concert parties were held and these proved sufficient for the circumstances of the Battalion during the month.</p> <p>Chaplain the Rev. R. C. Foyle (31st Battalion) has been kept busy since his arrival in the Battalion to relieve Chaplain Malcolmson who had been evacuated because of being gassed. While the Battalion was on the move he was with the nucleus, and gave a very good entertainment in the YMCA hut, with amusing competitions, and distribution of cigarettes. These were scarce, and he had to travel a long way to procure them. Three Church Parades were held during the month; one on 11th representing the 8th, 14th & 15th Brigades; some on the 18th with an attendance of about 200; on 25th a small parade of two companies of 31st Battalion. No Bible Class was possible during the month. The padre acted as Brigade representative at Sports Conference, organized a brigade team for league cricket tournament; managed the brigade team in the athletic sports, & acted as secretary for the inter-brigade Committee; and acted as brigade sports officer all the time. He held several song-services in the YMCA; accompanied the Battalion in chasing the Huns back to the Somme, mixing with the boys as much as possible. Censored letters for the whole Brigade while at the nucleus, and was fully occupied.</p> <p>Chaplain the Rev. E. N. Merrington (AIBD Havre) Parade services were held regularly, and on two occasions reached 300. The Anniversary of the war was celebrated by a special service. The Anglican Chaplains declined to make it a combined parade, and so far as is known the Australian depots at Harfleur were the only places where the C. of E. Chaplains held aloof on such an occasion.</p>	

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Semin. Presbyterian Chaplains
(Australian)

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	August 1918		<p>Voluntary services are held every Sunday afternoon in "the Dell", conducted mostly by the Methodist padre, but Chaplain Merrington takes part, they are splendidly attended. He has also held services in the British lines every Sunday, and at the Contact's camp where many Americans are quartered; they appreciate these services very much. The British seem to be short of non-Anglican Chaplains at the Base in Havre; and the duty of looking after the men of the non-episcopal denominations devolves more than usual on the Australian Presbyterian and Methodist Chaplains.</p> <p>Drafts going to the front have been supplied with comforts from the Australian Comforts Fund, & services have been conducted for them. On these occasions new Testaments are distributed, and there is a great demand for them. Dr. Merrington visits the Base Hospital, Convalescent Camp, Casino, and the Quai d'Escale regularly. He also usually takes the early morning French newspaper into the Base Hospital and reads the latest news in each ward. This is looked forward to by the men. He has given his illustrated lecture on Anzac to large audiences in nearly all the Camps round Havre, and has repeated it at H.A.I.B.D. and at the Convalescent Camp. Dr. Merrington started a Philosophy Class in view of the Education Scheme of the A.I.F. but had to discontinue it on receiving intimation of a new appointment, but was able to give a lecture to the Library Club on "Psychology and the War".</p> <p>Correspondence has taken up much of his time, and he had many interviews of a helpful nature in the lines and in his own room. A meeting of non-episcopal Chaplains was held in the A.P.C.'s office under the chairmanship of Chaplain Marsh, who has taken the place of Chaplain Colonel Campbell: a discussion took place on "Venereal Diseases." And as a result the A.C.G. and the A.P.C. called a Conference of all chaplains in the area, of all denominations, with some of the Medical Officers of the 39 Hospital, the A.P.M. and some of the official medical officers of the French Administration at Havre.</p> <p>This was held under the presidency of Bishop Taylor Smith, Chap. General, on 26 Aug. and</p>	

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	August 1918		<p>lasted all day, & much useful information was elicited. The subject allotted to Rev. Dr. Merrington was "The moral and the medical aspect." Prophylaxis and "maisons tolerées" were considered in the light of Ethics and experience. The main plea sustained at the conference was for increased co-operation between Chaplains and medical men to combat this dread scourge. Chaplain Merrington has also visited frequently the Depot Detention Camps.</p> <p>Chaplain the Rev. J. E. Nicholls (1st Aust. General Hospital, Rouen) has been kept very busy during the month owing to the very large number of patients passing through the Hospital as a result of the big offensive now proceeding. The Church parades are all voluntary, & are held every Sunday morning and evening - morning attendance about 30, and evening about 50. The hospital is at present practically a clearing station in nature, and the patients who are out of bed are few in number. Nurses and orderlies have been kept very busy. For a considerable time the chaplains have been much hampered by lack of a quiet spot for services and for meeting the friends of lads who had died in hospital. This has now been remedied by the setting apart of a Church Tent in a quiet part of the grounds; new tarpaulins were put down for a floor, + a platform with altar, communion rail, &c. + carpet, has been fixed up, - with organ, electric lights and 50 chairs purchased by the Commanding Officer. It can be used for holding services during the week. Instead of services at the YMCA the padre will be able now to concentrate his work more upon this unit, while a brotherly "interchange of pulpits" with the Americans + others can still be carried out as desired. The Tuesday night Bible Class has an attendance of about 20. Sports and concerts and recreations of various kind are well organized + arranged every week by committees in which the padre takes his share. Plenty of religious + some secular literature is distributed, + a library is run by the Red Cross. Visiting of the wards is carried on every day. Dangerous and serious cases have been so numerous lately that the padre had little time left for any other work; prayers by the bedside; and correspondence up to 30 letters per day has been more than occupied.</p>	

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	August 1918		<p>Chaplain the Rev. Hume Robertson (2nd Aust. Genl Hospital, Boulogne) returned to the Hospital from leave on 5th inst. & because of the large number of patients passing through, has been kept fully occupied. He wrote during the three weeks 186 letters for and about patients; bringing up his total number of letters since 5th April (when he arrived for duty) to 980. He conducts evening prayers in the Ymca hut within the Hospital every evening when there is no concert in the Ymca. On Sundays he holds service at 11 and 4, and takes his turn at services in Christ Church Wimmeroux, & in the Ymca hut at Wimmeroux. Attends a weekly meeting of Chaplains at the Office of the A.P.C. Boulogne. Does his share with the C of E Chaplain in censoring letters of the staff; pays systematic visits to the wards & has almost constant interviews with patients and members of the staff. He holds a Christian Fellowship meeting on Wednesday evenings which is well attended. He tries to help the patients by distributing (+ often buying) chocolate, fruit, cigarettes, writing paper, &c. He also lends books in addition to the Red Cross library, & conducts burials as required - He also visits Australian patients (as far as time permits) in No 8 stationery, No 14 General, and in the Anglo American Officers Hospital. But there are many Australian patients in other Hospitals in Boulogne who would appreciate a visit from an Australian padre if one were available. It has been suggested that a padre, with permission to visit all Hospitals, should be stationed in Boulogne, but whether such an arrangement would be acceptable to those in control of British Hospitals is uncertain. At any rate the majority of patients in the 2 A.G.H. are not Australians, but this padre is unable to extend his work any further in the way of visiting adjacent Hospitals: to show the activity of this Hospital, there were during the last week of this month 990 admissions and 476 discharges. In Hospital on 28th 1249 patients. During July (which was a slack month) there were 1250 admissions, and 1884 discharges. Chaplain Robertson who has a great genius for statistics has sent along a very interesting series of figures showing in support of the contention above how few Australian troops, compared with other British units, were admitted to this Hospital during</p>	

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information				Remarks and references to Appendices																																																		
	August 1918		<p>the 8 months of this year - 1st January to 31st August. Total Australians admitted 2,821. Total of other British troops admitted 18,404. An interesting comparison of the denominational numbers of those admitted during the same period is also supplied :-</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>C. of E. Australians</td> <td>1,538</td> <td>Other British troops</td> <td>12,361</td> <td>total</td> <td>13,889</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pres. Australians</td> <td>412</td> <td>Other British troops</td> <td>2,168</td> <td>total</td> <td>2,580</td> </tr> <tr> <td>R. C. Australians</td> <td>522</td> <td>Other British troops</td> <td>1,814</td> <td>total</td> <td>2,336</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Meth. } Bapt. } Wesl. } Cong. } S. A. } Se. }</td> <td>Australians</td> <td>343</td> <td>Other British troops</td> <td>1,999</td> <td>total</td> <td>2,342</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Jews</td> <td>Australians</td> <td>6</td> <td>Other British troops</td> <td>75</td> <td>total</td> <td>81</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4"></td> <td>total</td> <td>21,228.</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4"></td> <td>In addition there were foreigners</td> <td>239</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4"></td> <td></td> <td><u>21,467</u></td> </tr> </table>				C. of E. Australians	1,538	Other British troops	12,361	total	13,889	Pres. Australians	412	Other British troops	2,168	total	2,580	R. C. Australians	522	Other British troops	1,814	total	2,336	Meth. } Bapt. } Wesl. } Cong. } S. A. } Se. }	Australians	343	Other British troops	1,999	total	2,342	Jews	Australians	6	Other British troops	75	total	81					total	21,228.					In addition there were foreigners	239						<u>21,467</u>	
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<p>Chaplain the Rev. Fred. J. Paton (1st Command Depot, Sutton Army) Church Parades were held usually in wet weather and had to be indoors, & the attendances were approximately on the four Sundays, 500, 600, 400, 500. Communion services followed the parades. On week days Mr Paton took a Bible class in Camp, a meeting at O.T.B., preached in a local Congregational Church, and at a Baptist Church, and at an English Y.M.C.A. At these meetings there were hundreds of soldiers present. He also held three Bible classes, the subject of the study being "The Kingdom in the Pacific" (by Frank H. L. Paton). Every night when not taking a service Padre Paton attended at the N. A. Club which is packed full of men, & thus meets religiously with hundreds of men.</p>																																																									

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	August 1918		<p>A large number having gone to No 1 Com. Depot from No 3 Com. Dep. at Hurdcott, there are now over 6300 men at this No 1 Com. Depot. and the chaplains are kept very busy. Mr Paton has also visited regularly at the Clearance Hospital, + Sutton Army Imperial Military Hospital. He finds the work of a chaplain important in the building up of depressed men - men who under nervous strain brought on by the constant work at the front, have thought of suicide have been cheered and helped and soothed, and started on a new life in Christ, - These cases are not rare.</p> <p>Mr Paton attended a School of instruction for chaplains, held under the English Chaplain authority at Tidworth, and found the advantage so great that he recommends strongly that every Australian Chaplain within reach should have an opportunity of attending such schools in the future. While attending this Centre, Chaplain Paton held two parades and a communion service, and addressed the men at the Bulford Hospital M.C.A., on Missionary Experiences in the South Seas - which interested the men very greatly.</p> <p>In his ordinary work in his own unit he wrote over 100 letters for and about the men there.</p> <p>Chaplain the Rev. J. A. Malcolmson (3rd Command Depot, Hurdcott) was sent to this unit on 9th inst. in succession (temporary) to Chaplain Milbark who is returning to Australia soon. Church parades were held every Sunday morning, and voluntary services every Sunday evening and one week day every week. The Chaplains of the 3rd and 4th Command Depots combined for the purpose of awakening renewed interest in spiritual matters. Open air and indoor services were conducted, and the results obtained were said to be pretty fair, though not as good as was anticipated. He supervised for three days a fatigue party set apart for doing up the graves of our soldiers who are buried in the Compton Chamberlyne Cemetery. He censored on an average 350 letters every day, and had a very large number of interviews with men on a variety of matters, and in every case was able to render assistance and advice.</p> <p>Chaplain the Rev. R. Moorhead Legate (2nd Training Brigade, Forant) reports a very fine united parade service on 4th inst. for the Anniversary of the War, in which all the chaplains joined heartily - The address was given on "The Things that belong to Thy Peace".</p>	

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	August 1918		<p>Chaplain the Rev. P. A. Smith, (Tidworth Headquarters) took parade services at Park House Camp, on three Sundays as follows ① for Machine Gunners, Training Camp, Veterinary Corps, ASC Training Camp - with average attendance each Sunday of 300. ② for Convalescent Running Depot with average attendance of 35. And a parade at Tidworth on one Sunday for Light Horse (Canada), Officers and men attending schools of instruction (Canada), men attached to Headquarters guard at Bhurstport. Present 55. Total parades seven. He also held three voluntary services at Bulford V. D. Hospital - average attendance 45 (conducted in conjunction with the YMCA Secretary). He also visited the Delhi Military Hospital Tidworth eight times, and saw 80 patients; and the Bulford V. D. Hospital five times seeing 50 patients. The recreations for the men are undertaken by the British YMCA and the Regimental Canteens. Little writing on behalf of the men occupies a good share of his time.</p> <p>Senior Chaplain the Rev. W. F. Shammor (Adm. Headquarters London) in addition to the usual amount of administrative work visited Lewis Detention Barracks and had helpful interviews with a good number of the men detained there. It would be impossible to speak too highly of the Commanding Officer of the Barracks, who takes a personal interest in each of the men; and while strictly enforcing the most rigid discipline treats the men with kindness and the utmost consideration; and every encouragement is given to delinquents to turn over a new leaf and redeem the past, and lessons learned in this place are likely to be of considerable benefit to the men for all their future days. A Senior Chaplain of some denomination visits here every week and an opportunity is given to any man, irrespective of creed or church, to have a personal interview with this officer - an opportunity availed of by a large number of the men with beneficial results. Senior Chaplain Shammor also visited during the month the Australian patients in Northampton (3 hospitals), Leicester, Sheffield (two hospitals), Leicester Nottingham, Huddersfield (two hospitals), Shrewsbury (4 hospitals), Chester, Bangor, Colwyn Bay, Liverpool (4 hospitals), & King George Hospital London.</p>	

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