

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

Formation Headquarters

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Title: Intelligence, General Headquarters,
Egyptian Expeditionary Force

September 1917



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EXTRACTS FROM WAR DIARY
OF
INTELLIGENCE G.H.Q., E.E.F.,
SEPTEMBER 1917.

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1st.

Palestine Front. Gaza Sector.

Considerable movement observed in rear of Bagdad Trench System on 29th instant. At least 6 parties of infantry, each 60 strong, observed at X20 centre, going northwards. Also two squadrons of Cavalry observed moving N.E. from GAZA.

HAREIRA SECTOR.

Column of troops reported to be half a mile long, were moving along BIR SABA - HAREIRA road towards HAREIRA at 8.30 a.m. 1st inst.

MORAL.

There are indications that the enemy is feeling somewhat uncertain regarding his left flank. Particular attention is being paid by him to reconnaissance and observation in that part of his line.

2nd.

PALESTINE FRONT, GAZA SECTOR.

28th August, 26th Division took over portion of Sector previously held by 54th Division.

4th.

HEJAZ.

Reported by escaped Harb tribesman no more rails left in MEDINA. Practically all houses have been pulled down by Turks to provide fuel for the engines.

Fahkeddin said to have been ordered to send all his Camel Corps to JERUSALEM; he replied that if this were insisted on, surrender would be his only course.

According to 10 Turk deserters from Abu Main (77 m. N. W. of MEDINA) Fahri has ordered the station to be burnt.

6th.

SYRIA L. of C.

HEBRON.

Report states towards end of July, everything normal HEBRON and vicinity. A few troops and gendarmerie patrolling roads.

7th.

Note. On 28.7.17 the strength of the sixth Army was estimated at 23,340 rifles, 1730 sabres and 136 guns.

MESOPOTAMIA.

Enemy Intentions. Rumours indicate an impending movement by the Turks down the EUPHRATES from ALEPPO. The arrival of troops is reported to DEIR EL ZOR (176 miles E.S.E. of ALEPPO), but this is as yet unconfirmed.

HEJAZ.

Turks as well as Arabs continue to desert to the Sherif's forces. Deserters reported to be in a weak condition, and state

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on account of the destruction of the railway and the consequent stoppage of trains, the MEDINA garrison is quite disheartened and will surrender within one month.

According to reliable information 326 rails and 6 small bridges were destroyed on 23.8.17. between MUDURRIJ (65 miles S.E. of MEDIAN SALEH) and kilo 1103/127 m. from MEDINA).

8th.

HEJAZ.

There are reliable indications that IBN RASHID is in difficulties. He arrived at MEDIAN SALEH on 16.8.17 with a force of about 1000 men, 100 horses and several hundred camels.

He was discredited by his recent reverse and had been deserted by most of the SHAMMER and ANAZEH. His demands for reinforcements to enable him to recapture TEIMA have so far remained unsatisfied.

Turks are meditating further operations in the W. MUSA - SHOREK area, against the local tribesmen who are reported to be disaffected. The moral of the Turkish forces, however, appears to be bad and the enemy is uneasy about the defence of MAAN and the possibility of an attack on EL ULA.

9th.

PALESTINE FRONT.

GAZA SECTOR.

Reported that on 7th instant there was marked activity along the trenches and redoubts from BAGDAD SYSTEM to SANA REDOUBT.

10th.

PALESTINE FRONT.

HARIERA SECTOR.

Between 9.15 a.m. and 2 p.m. on 10th instant, enemy occupied a line from Point 630 EL GIRWEIR to spur N. of BEIT ABU TAHA, with a force estimated at 6 squadrons of cavalry and 8 camel and mountain guns. EL BUGGER and KHASIF were shelled by enemy from Points 630 and 720.

HEJAZ.

In MAAN area the Turks are expecting to be reinforced by a cavalry regiment. The situation still viewed by them with anxiety as further disaffection among the Arabs in this district seems probable.

TURKEY.

Agents report (reliability unstated)
(1) The following movements took place Eastwards from HAIRDAR PASHA during the first two weeks of August:-

Troops. 2000 troops from DARDANELLES (Note ? 24th or 42nd Division), 300 Austrian gunners and officers, 300 German troops (mostly Engineers). 48 German officers, 400 men from 66th Regiment, 200 men from 38th Regiment, about 6000 newly equipped recruits. Total 8600 Turkish troops, 648 Austro-Germans.

Guns.

8 large Austrian Howitzers

13th. (a) Ammunitions.

It is reported that on the 23rd July and 17th August there passed S. through

/the

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the RAYAK munition depot, 1209 tons of ammunition. In this depot on the 17th August, there remained a supply of 4,546 tons.

(b) Anti-gas masks.

Reported on 23rd July, 2 12-ton trucks of anti-gas masks passed through RAYAK for TEL-EL-SHERIA and again on the 13th August, a similar quantity, destination not stated.

The enemy appears to be contemplating further operations against WADI MUSA which may require two Infantry Battalions though he is not certain whether their transfer from the MAAN-FAWILA line would not leave the latter dangerously weak. Pending a decision on this subject, diplomatic methods are likely to be employed in order to detach the WADI MUSA Arabs from the Sherif. Owing to his fear of disturbance in MOAB which would deprive the MAAN force of its supplies, the enemy appears to be circulating a report that he intends to turn Turk the Arab position with a division moving in part from N. of TAFILA and SHOEBEK, and in part down the WADI ARABA from the S. end of the Dead Sea.

The Turkish Force in the MAAN area is receiving German rifles, and S.A.A.1898 model in exchange for it TURKISH mausers. Meanwhile, its moral does not appear to be good. The Mule Mountain Regiment, and the Artillery contain many untrained men while the M.G. Company at AMMAN had recently no officers at all.

14th.

PERSONALITIES.

(a) Reported that JEMAL PASHA (The Great) has been recalled from the command of the IV Army This is said to be owing to his refusal to agree to the present strategic plans.

(b) Reported that ENVER PASHA left CONSTANTINOPLE recently on a visit to the PALESTINE FRONT.

ARABIA.

MAAN DISTRICT.

The 7th Cavalry Regiment has reached the MAAN area and the enemy will probably soon resume operations against WADI MUSA.

15th.

HEJAZ.

MAAN AREA.

There is evidence to show that the enemy force at MAAN is very badly off for clothing and boots.

It appears to be the enemy's present intention to concentrate a force about SHOEBEK and HISHE, while undertaking offensive operations against WADI MUSA.

16th.

Unit.	Date	Pos. & Move.	Source	REMARKS.
7th Army	19.8	ALEPPO	Agent.	Mustafa Kiamil arrived from C'PLE to take over knew Command.

It is said to comprise the troops between RAS-EL-AIN and BAGDAD and is also (?called) "EL FRAT" (EUPHRATES RIDGE).

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NOTE. MUSTAFA KIRMIL Pasha was formally G.O.C. 3rd Turkish Army on the CAUCASUS FRONT, and is said to be a capable leader.

17th.

SYRIA L. of C.

(a) Garrisons. Certain of these are reported as follows:-

DERAA - Less than one battalion.

AMMAN - About 400 rifles.

JERUSALEM - Some 200 camelmen and few Gendarmerie.

HEBRON - Few gendarmerie.

SHAHERIYEH - Few men of Labour Battalion.

(b) Roads.

JERUSALEM - JERICHO - AMMAN. Surface generally in fair condition, used by light motor cars. The JORDAN bridge is reported suitable for light wheeled traffic only. Guard. 1 German, 6 Turks.

(c) Water.

It is reported that there is plenty of good water at ESSALT, and AMMAN

19th.

PALESTINE FRONT.

Hareira Sector.

That a new cavalry regiment has arrived in this Sector is now confirmed.

ARABIA-HEJAZ.

On the night of the 15th/16th, Arabs attacked HEJAZ railway 2½ kilometres S. of RAMLEH (Kil. 555 - 95 kilometres S. of MAAN) and destroyed 37 rails. They attacked MUDAWARA but were repulsed by troops sent from TEBUK.

On 15th September, Arabs destroyed line and cut wires between BUWEIT and BIR NASIF stations. BUWEIT is roughly 45 kilometres N. W. of MEDINA. BIRNASIF is about 10 kilometres further N.

21st.

ORGANISATION.

(a) It is reported that the Arab troops of the 27th Division are being drafted out to other formations and that they are being replaced by Turks.

(b) It is reported that when JEMAL PASHA (The Great) was recalled from Command of the LV Army, the number of troops in SYRIA was under 100,000. At that time the supply question was acute owing to shortage of transport, since then, however, 200 motor lorries have been dispatched to the PALESTINE FRONT.

22nd.

HAREIRA SECTOR.

During the past week considerable work has been done on the south-western defences. A new series of short, discontinued trenches has been constructed from H.29 d to Hill 1070 covering a distance of about 1,000 yds.

23rd.

MORAL.

Deserters.

During the period 16th/22nd September, deserters have come over to our lines as follows:-

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	<u>N.C.Os.</u>	<u>Privates.</u>
8th Cavalry Regiment.	1	-
19th Infantry "	-	1
32nd " "	1	1
59th " "	2	3
76th " "	-	3
81st " "	-	2
134th " "	1	-
138th " "	-	2
164th " "	-	1
TOTAL	<u>5</u>	<u>13</u>

25th. SYRIA L. of C.
Movement.

So far there have been no indications that the 48th Division has moved since the beginning of August when its Infantry units were distributed as follows:-

150th Regiment ABLAJ (near RAYAK)
151th " DERRAA
152nd " ABLAJ

27th. POLITICAL.

It is reported that on July 7th, ENVER PASHA ordered that the pay of British Officer prisoners should be discontinued.

28th. GAZA SECTOR.

(a) The Headquarters of General Kress von Kressenstein, G.O.C. SINAI FRONT, have been moved from HUI to HULEIKAT (6½ miles N. of HUI).

HAREIRA SECTOR.

(a) It is reported that the following cavalry and infantry units are now in BEERSHEVA and:-

81st Regiment at EL ARREIG - UM FARRATH
79th " " RAS HABLEIN - RIGM - TURBAN
(near point 10 yds.)
161st " " UM FARRATH-RIGM-TURBAN
(near point 10 yds.)

One Company, 79th Regiment RAS GHANNAM 3rd Cavalry Division between WADI-SABA and the SABA-DHAHERIYEH road, and thence towards the West

(b) 150 tents and shelters observed 2 miles N.E. of village in C.9 (R.F.C.28.9.17) Ref. sheet TEL EL SHERIA 1/40,000

PERSONALITIES.

(a) Towards the end of August, MACKENSEN was expected to shortly visit the PALESTINE FRONT.

(b) It is reported that FALKENHAYN visited DAMASCUS on the 9th instant.

29th. PERSONALITIES.

The Archduke Leopold Salvator, Inspector General of Artillery, Austrian Army, was due to arrive JERUSALEM on the 12th inst.
MORAL.

Desertion during the period 23rd -30th September inclusive; deserters have come over into our lines as follows:-

<u>Regiments.</u>	<u>N.C.Os.</u>	<u>Privates.</u>
32nd Regiment	-	1
47th "	-	1
59th "	-	2
76th "	-	6
138th "	1	-
TOTAL	<u>1</u>	<u>10</u>

/30th

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PALESTINE FRONT.

MAREIRA SECTOR.

No fresh work on defences at BEERSHEBA and IRGEIG since 26th September and 15th September respectively.

SYRIA L. of C.

Reports have been received from separate sources to the effect that a strong Turkish Force has been dispatched to TODMOR (90 miles E. of HOMS) during the past month.

ORGANISATION. Strength of units and formations. According to statements of 185 P. of W. and deserters interrogated during the period 1st May - 30th September 1917, the average strength of a Company on the SINAI FRONT is 128 rifles. Thus a battalion - 4 Coy. organisation - would have a strength of 512, a regiment - 3 battalions - 1536, and a Division 4608 rifles.

Ration strength of regiments and battalions may be taken as 25% above these figures.