

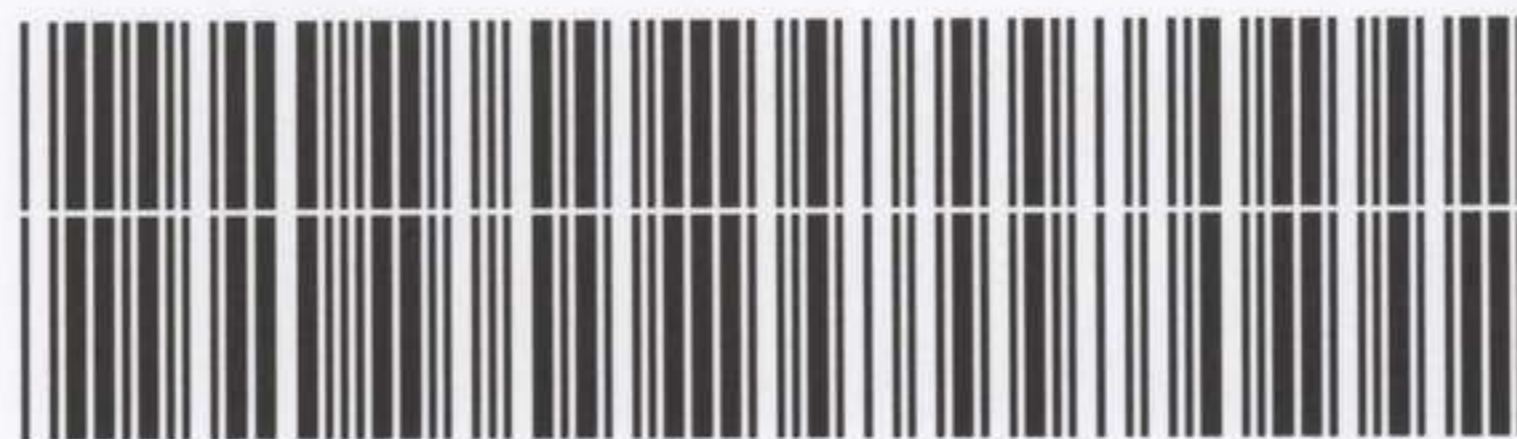
AWM4
Australian Imperial Force unit war diaries,
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Formation Headquarters

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Title: Intelligence, General Headquarters,
Egyptian Expeditionary Force

March 1918



AWM4-1/8/21

EXTRACTS FROM WAR DIARY
OF

INTELLIGENCE G.H.Q., E.E.F.,

MARCH 1918.

1918.
March.
1st.

PALESTINE

WESTERN SECTOR.

On the 1st instant an Agent reported as follows regarding the 3rd Turkish Cavalry Division:-

Headquarters at BERUKIN (099.A.10.C) is under orders to proceed to NABLUS. The 8th Cavalry Regiment has left KURAWA IBN ZEID (099.A.24) and KEFR AIN (097.C.23) for JEMMAIN (098.W.26) where 5 mountain guns from FURKHAH (099.B.9) have been sent.

2nd.

SYRIA L. of C.

Aleppo Area.

An Agent reports that all the German Troops who were at ALEPPO had gone South to RAYAK by January 19th. All the hospitals in ALEPPO were full of sick and wounded, most of the wounded were being sent to ADANA. There was no contagious disease but the sick were suffering from hunger and lack of clothing.

3rd.

EASTERN SECTOR.

(b) On the 2nd instant patrols reported that the EL GHORANIYEH Bridge was held by Infantry supported by Artillery. (20th Corps 3/3/18.)

4th.

PALESTINE (EASTERN SECTOR.)

(B) Prisoners captured on the 2nd instant state that the following are the dispositions of the 26th and 53rd Divisions:-

Dispositions.

59th and 78th Regiments in reserve E. of the JORDAN.

76th Regiment (450 rifles) 1 mile W. of GHORANIYEH Bridge.

Attack Coy./26th Division (100 rifles) employed on patrols.

53rd Division, on the line of the WADI EL AUJAH (113.Z.25-26)

The troops West of the Jordan have orders to make a determined stand but if compelled to retire they are to blow up the GHORANIYEH Bridge (20th Corps. 4.3.18.)

6th.

PALESTINE (EASTERN SECTOR).

Patrols on 6th instant report that no enemy were seen East of the Jordan, South of AIN EL KHARRAR (127.Q.27) nor on the West bank, South of the GHORANIYEH Bridge.

7th.

PALESTINE (EASTERN SECTOR).

The bridge of EL GHORANIYEH is reported to have been destroyed. The sound of an explosion was heard on the night of the 6th/7th from the direction of EL GHORANIYEH.

/8th

1918.
March.
8th.

MESOPOTAMIA.

A reliable Agent who left MOSUL on January 12th heard that two divisions left for ALEPPO about 2nd January. One of these Divisions, the 46th, has since been reported as having arrived at ALEPPO, but no information has been received as to the titular number of the other Divisions.

9th.

In the neighbourhood of ATTARA (099.K.21) the enemy appeared to be holding a line running approximately 099.K.2.a - E. of ATTARA in K.23.a - 099.L.22. and 600 Infantry were observed on the road between SINJIL (099.J.33.a.) and EL LUBRAN (099.H.12.Z) (R.F.C. 9.3.18) An officer prisoner from the 53rd Division states that this Division crossed from the East to the West of the JORDAN on the 8th instant, but that the Divisional H.Qs. are probably still East of the river. (20th Corps 9/3/18). Prisoners and deserters from the 32nd and 136th Regiments were taken West of the JORDAN on the 7th and 9th inst.

PERSONALITIES.

Refugees from NABLUS state that Field Marshal von FALKENHAYN has resigned his Command on a question of military policy and that General Liman von Sanders has arrived on this front to take over command of the YILDERIM Group.

10th.

IDENTIFICATIONS.

Prisoner, captured on 4/3/18, states that 11th Division has arrived on this front; this confirms previous report that part of the 11th Division had arrived West of SELWAD (099.L.32)

A number of statements by prisoners and deserters confirm the return of the 53rd Division to the West of the JORDAN. The more of this Division appears to have been from the JERICHO area to SHUNET NIMRIN where it camped for some days, thence to the west of JORDAN via JISRED DAMLIEH. 32nd and 163rd Regiments crossed on 2nd instant, and 136th Regiment on the 7th instant.

11th.

PALESTINE (EASTERN SECTOR).

Air reconnaissance 10/3/18. A possible line of defence has been started extending approximately 300 yards E. and W. on the South of AMURIEH (099.H.15.a.) (R.F.C. 10/3/18)

Note:- This is in prolongation of the disconnected trench system reported yesterday North of SINJIL.

12th.

EAST OF JORDAN.

In operations which are in progress between the Arabs and the enemy forces in the neighbourhood of TAFILE the energetic action of the HOWEITAT and the BENI SAKR Arabs against them L. of C. had prevented the Turks occupying TAFILE up to March 8th.

/13th.

1918.
March.
13th.

EAST OF JORDAN.

On the 2nd instant the enemy moved from JAUF EL DERWISH against ET TAFILE apparently co-operating with a column from KUTRANI. In the meantime the 7th Cav. Regt., demonstrating against the WADI EL HESA. The Turks captured TOWANE, a village half way between JAUF EL DERWISH and TAFILE on March 3rd. On March 5th there were small actions N.W.E. of TAFILE which appears to have been evacuated on March 7th by Sherif ZEID who fell back towards SHOBEK. On March 8th the enemy were engaged with part of this retreating force on the ET TAFILE - SHOBEK Road but it seems without capturing guns or material. ET TAFILE was occupied by the enemy on or about the 10th instant.

The enemy force is believed to be composed as follows:-

KERAK Garrison. 1 weak battalion 151st Regiment Operating from Kerak 7th Cav. Reg. and 1 battery Operating from the railing 1 German Battalion with its troop of cavalry, 126th Regt. (11th Div.), 1/146th Regt., Bn. Mule M.l. with 2 guns, 2 Batteries 48th Artillery Regt., 1 German battery, 2 mountain batteries, 1 heavy gun.

The estimated strength of the above is 2650 rifles, 550 sabres and 21-25 guns.

IDENTIFICATIONS.

A prisoner states that a counter attack against TAIYIBEH was to have been made on the night 8/9th March by an attack battalion (note: Probably the VII Army Attack Bn.) 400 strong. This attack was, however, abandoned and the battalion is now in reserve to the 24th Div.

14th.

IDENTIFICATIONS.

A cadet officer prisoner of the 183rd Regiment, 59th Division, states that the 59th Division on arrival at ALEPPO was split up to serve as drafts to various Divisions.

15th.

ORGANISATION.

Man Power. An official announcement in the Turkish Paper "EL DALAGH" of February 12th, with regard to the re-examination of exempted men with a view to bringing them to the Colours, reads as follows:-

It is decided that the following shall be included for examination:-

1. Lawyers, Professors of Private Schools and farmers of the Reserve Class who were set aside for non-combatant service before September 1st 1916, or were temporarily exempted without examination according to the previous orders, but were still liable.
2. Merchants and their employees of the Reserve who were examined before September 1st, 1916, and were set aside for non-combatant service.
3. All those who were examined before Sept., 1st, 1916, and were temporarily exempted at different times and whose period of grace has not yet expired.

/16th

1918.
March.
16th.

ROUMANIA.

The 15th Division, which was last identified in the DOBRUJA District on 18/2/18 is reported to be moving Eastward. A report from another source states that a large part of the 15th and 25th Divisions have been sent to SYRIA.

CAUCASUS.

A report states that 3½ Divisions have been withdrawn from this front for PALESTINE and MESOPOTAMIA.

18th.

SYRIA L. of C.

An Agent reports that the condition of the troops of the ALEPPO Garrison is miserable and that many of them beg for food; also that the condition of Turkish troops passing through ALEPPO is little better than that of the garrison. The German troops on the other hand are well clad, and appear well fed and healthy.

21st.

PALESTINE (EASTERN SECTOR).

On the 21st inst. parties of Infantry totalling about 1000 were observed to be moving West in 127.P.24.b. East of SHUNET NIMRIN (20th Corps 21/3/18).

Agent reports that on the 16th inst. troops estimated at about 1000 retired from the WADI FARAH (11Z.S.6), and proceeded to NABLUS. The line of the WADI FARAH is reported to be held by small outposts. Bedouin report that after being bombed by the British, troops East of the Jordan at JISR ED DAMIEH crossed to the West bank and proceeded to NABLUS.

24th.

It is reported from AKABA that the Arab forces entered ET TAFILE without opposition on the 18th March and are now in contact with the enemy on the SEIL EL HESA. Enemy air activity from MAAN and KUTRANI continues.

25th.

ENEMY INTENTIONS.

According to two Turkish Officers of the 76th Regiment captured on the 23rd instant, the enemy expects an attack in the Direction of NABLUS on a front of 2 - 3 kilometres East and West of the main JERUSALEM - NABLUS Road. Preparations are being made by the enemy to hold this present position as no defensive line exists between it and NABLUS. NABLUS and ES SALT will be two main points of resistance; should the former fall, a retirement will be made to the NAZARETH line.

29th.

WESTERN ASIA MINOR.

Agent reports that the 47th Division which has its H.Q. at MENEMEN (15 miles N. of SMYRNA) has been absorbed by the 56th Division. Another agent reports, however, that the 47th Division is about to leave for SYRIA, where some elements are already known to be. It is possible that both these statements are partially correct, and that all the efficient men of the Division

/have

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have been, or are being, despatched to SYRIA, the unfit men being left behind and incorporated in the 56th Division.

30th.

EAST OF JORDAN.

Enemy Intentions.

An officer prisoner stated that troops which had arrived from NABLUS were to have attacked the British at EL SALT on the night 29/30. The operation did not take place, however, as the attacking troops lost their way (20th Corps 30/3/18.)

Prisoners stated that ES SALT would be attacked on the night 30/31 (20 Corps 30/3/18.)