

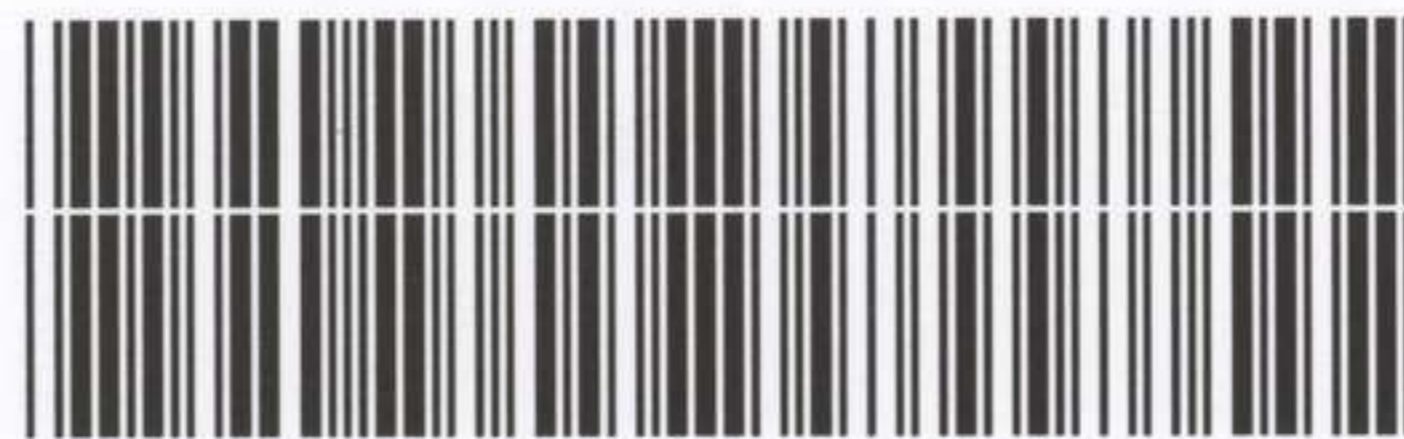
AWM4
Australian Imperial Force unit war diaries,
1914-18 War

Formation Headquarters

Item number: 1/8/4

Title: Intelligence, General Headquarters,
Egyptian Expeditionary Force

August 1916



AWM4-1/8/4

EXTRACTS FROM WAR DIARY
OF

INTELLIGENCE

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

AUGUST 1916.

1916.
August.
1st.

Christian population on Black Sea Coast driven inland and it is reported that Armenians are still being killed at sight. Caesarea is reported to be "stinking of corpses"

Brigandage in Smyrna deistrict is rife.

No general change KATIA district.

Enemy improving his trenches and building gun emplacements. No fresh hangars but fresh shelters and evidences of A.A.guns.

Arab rumour states Turks going to attack shortly after Bairam.

2nd.

Turkish 12th Division located en route to KIGHI, 14th Division in MOSUL district (previously reported as arrived Constantinople and thence DIARBEKIR) 1st Div. arrived OGNAT Section.

No general change KATIA. R.F.C. reconnaissances show some trench line trench maps of enemy second line (original line) completed from R.F.C. photos.

Agree with Italy signed as regards Senussi.

3rd. 0500

Enemy occupied KATIA and line from High ground $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles S. hill 110 - high ground 800 yards N.W. RABAH - high ground S. and S.E.KATIA - high ground $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles N.W. HAMISAH.

0605

Advancing N.E. NEGID.

1100
1200

Aeroplanes report new trenches ABH HAMRA - NAGID - MAMLUK - KATIA cemetery, KATIA. MAGEIBRA quiet. Trenches ABU HAMRA.

Rest of day spent in consolidating.

Attack expected.

Mho. Idris at ZOWEITEEN S. of Benghazi Reported most tribes now in agreement with him.

4th

HERMES reports negotiations pending between Greek and Roumanian Governments with a view to entering war on side of Allies.

No grounds given for belief.

Agents report that Smyrna cannot understand why it is being bombarded continually in view of pro-ally sentiments of Town and of RAAMI BEY. Liberal entente party endorses this.

Government reported to be seriously alarmed less HEJAZ revolt should spread to Syria.

No communique on the subject has appeared - only an Iradi appointing a new Emir (ALI HAIDAR) vice the Sherif.

/0000

1916.
August.
4th.

- 0000 Enemy attacked an outpost line
KATIBGANNIT - HOD ELENNNA. Cavalry held
enemy till dawn.
- 0700 Threatened attack on 52nd Division in
direction ET MALER.
Works 4, 5, 6 shelled by H.E.
R.F.C. show trenches EL ENNA.
- 1005 Attacks on post 23 slacken.
- 1050 2 Columns, each estimated one battalion,
entering ABU HAMRA.
- 1100 Works 4, 5, 6 still shelled H.E.
- 1110 Attacks on 22A, 21, 21A not pressed.
2 L.H.Bde. ABU DIYUK - KATIBGANNIT
(1 mile N.W. - small hill "Mount ROYSTON")
- 1145 2 L.H. brigade pressed back.
- 1305 Attack on posts 4, 5, 6 - another
line behind.
- 1500 Attack checked - Turks 1 Regiment
(2000 - 3000) assembling ABU NAMRA.
New Zealand M.R. advancing on Mount Royston.
- 1400 5th Mounted Brigade attacked by two
Battalions on line NIGEIRET ALI -
UMMZIYAB.
- 1900 New Zealand M.R. take Mount Royston.
200 prisoners. 127th Brigade and 156th
also attacking.
- 1835 R.F.C. 750 infantry advancing on
ROMANI (ourselves?)
- 1940 Prisoners 400 - 500, 1 machine gun.
Prisoners mostly 39th Regiment,
3rd Division. No other unit beyond 3rd
identified.

5th.

- YUNUS R.N.A.S. reports RAPA - GAZA - KHAN
roads clear and denuded of Troops.
In KATIA district we advanced at dawn.
- 0800 Battery 4 mountain guns captured.
Turks entrenching on ridge 2000 yds.
E. of ABU HAMRA.
- 0915 Hod el Enna clear.
- 1000 Katia still in enemy's hands.
- 1100 Turks hospital had gone.
2500 men and 200 shelters at KHIRBA
located by R.F.C.
- 1350 3 Columns of Infantry each 1 mile long
seen by R.F.C. in direction of KHIRBA.
37 Officers 2542 o.r. including
German m.g. Coy. captured - nearly all 3rd
Division. No fresh identifications.

/6th.

1916.
August.
6th.

We pursued the enemy in KATIA district and at night-fall were beyond KATIA. 400 more prisoners taken including some of 81st Regt. From interrogation of prisoners it would appear that there are 8 German M.G. Corps in Turkey. We captured one entire - of 6 guns. Personnel came from Regular Army.

0800
1600

MAGEIBRA occupied without opposition. Enemy in their line of trenches RESHAFAT - RODHA - DHABA - DHAKAR, presumably a rear ground to cover retreat.

1648

7000 Infantry marching E. from SALMANA.

1600

Our Camel Corps at BAYUD. Total prisoners up to 1642 on 6th August. 45 Officers and over 3100 rank and file. Mhd. Idris held conference chiefs JEDABIA in July. Demanded their complete submission. SAYD AHMED at DAKHLA intimate available prices not probably more than 2000. NURI reported at NUFILIA. (S.W. BENGHAZI).

7th.

Enemy still in position KATIA as yesterday only more Westwards. Hill 102 - NEGILIAT - OGRATINA - GHARAB - QASAB. Turkish officer states object of attack was ROMANI. They expected to envelop our right, but from a German officer's map, it would appear that our right extended 4 miles further S. than expected. They thought we had no Infantries.

8th.

48th and 47th Divisions which were reported moving to CANCASUS have been brought back and put on BAGHDAD Railway. Destination by train is still unknown. Situation KATIA district. Consequent on operations of Independent Camel Corps and Detachment on S. who had worked round enemy left rear, enemy evacuated his positions and retired.

08000

2000 troops MAZAR - 1300 marching E.

0828

2200 at SALMANA of which 1000 moving E.

1600

Bir el ABD Camp doubled - no doubt rearguard having retired into it. From interrogation of prisoners it would appear likely that the 27th Division from TARSUS has moved and is still moving to S. Syria and Sinai and that they have been relieved by the 23rd Div.

/The

1916.
August.
8th.

The 81st Regiment is in EL ARISH. ROSH SALEM is being made a store dump - a raid on No. 2 Section may be expected shortly from new Troops 27th Division.

9th.

Muhajirs and Turks resident in Balkans are being sent back to Turkey for Military Service.

0800

R.F.C. reconnaissances show 2000 at SALMANA. MUSHALFAT - 1500 men. Trenches much improved. Our cavalry advancing in three columns. After attacking and being held up, our cavalry at 1230 was heavily counter-attacked but drove off the enemy. Enemy were reported to be moving stores away and a fire was seen in EL ABD. SAYD AHMED reported at FARAFRA. Raid expected in SIWA AULAD.

10th.

Government threatens to confiscate all Arab property and send large expedition HEJAZ if mission to Sherif fails. On July 26th TALAAT declared sufficient reinforcements had been sent to quiet Arab revolt.

Turks are separating Arabs from troops going to Medina: the reason being, it is said, that of the original 15,000 soldiers sent, the Arabs deserted, all Arabs therefore are now being sent to MOSUL.

In KATIA district our Mounted Troops remained in observation of the enemy at BIR EL ABD. SALMANA camp was estimated by R.F.C. to contain 2000 men. Very many small oblong holes were observed by our aircraft as being in the process of excavation. R.F.C. are of opinion that enemy are digging up or burying stores.

Enemy's line in afternoon appeared to run HOD EL HISHA with Westward curve to UMZAGLIA and S.E. to MUSHALFAT. Prisoner (officer) states 81st Regiment EL ARISH. Divisional Headquarters 27th Division NAZARETH also 1 battalion (depot?) 29th Regiment. 3 Battalions 29th Regiment HASSANA. No report 80th Regiment possibly coming to EL ARISH. Senussi has surrendered crew of Coquette.

11th.

Very little change KATIA. Turks attacked our mobile column near BADA but were driven off at 0725. For the rest, enemy continued to hold line ABD - MUSHALFAT with about 6000. 2000 remained at SALMANA.

1716

Report from Mobile Column says they had to retire from BAYUD to MAGEIBRA owing to Turk attack with 2 field guns, 3 machine guns. Men of 79th Regiment reported by an agent at EL ARISH. Bombardment enemy's positions - no infantry action. Enemy retaliated. Prince William of WIED according to a

/French

1916.
August.
11th.

French report from BERNE has returned to Germany from ALBANIA. Has lost confidence in victory central powers and is sceptical as to value of sending Turkish troops to GALICIA. Enemy retired from EL ABD which was entered by our Mounted Troops at 0600. 1700 SALMANA was evacuated by enemy. 400 Camel Corps reported HASSANA - with 8 guns, August 9th. Railway reported as being hurried on from KOSSAIMA - embankment under construction.

13th.

Our cavalry occupied SALMANA at 9 a.m. Enemy in retreat to MAZAR. From Agents reports it would appear that some of enemy have already retreated to BIR SABA. Water at BAYUD reported good, 14 wells. R.F.C. reconnaissance shows RODH SALEM HAMMA nothing important. SAYD AHMED apparently is not favouring action against us for the present.

14th.

No change on front. Artillery registration continues. Agent in an enemy legation at ATHENS reports Turkey is sending 3 Divisions to help Austrians. Situation unchanged in Sinai. R.F.C. report SALMANA and MAGHARA clear.

15th.

A report from ATHENS states that at ALEXANDRETTA an Allied transport has been signalled and that the Allies are expected to land there, with the intention of joining the Russians and cutting off all the Turks in MESOPOTAMIA and SYRIA, etc. Situation unchanged in SINAI. A small patrol near BIR MOSEIFIG were the only enemy troops seen by our Air reconnaissances, W. of MAZAR. Prisoners' statements agree that about 2000 wounded passed E. through BIR EL ABD during the past fortnight and confirm the heavy Turkish casualties at that place. (500 on Aug. 11th.) A prisoner states that he saw in Syria three months ago the 2nd and 3rd Expeditionary Forces. 36,000 each, that the 2nd was at DAMASCUS destined for HEDJAZ, and the 3rd on garrison duty. These numbers are obviously impossible. He estimates the 1st Expeditionary Force at the same figure 36,000 which he thought represented one division.

16th.

SINAI - An aeroplane reconnaissance this morning estimated the troops at MAZAR as about 500 men with about 2000 camels in lines, this being a considerable decrease in the numbers seen on 13th inst.

/A

1916.
August.
16th.

A reliable Agent reports 4000 men at AUJA on 11th August, this is a large increase since August 5th and probably includes troops from the KATIA fight.

At KOSSAIMA on 11th August, only 520 men including 200 Camel Corps were seen by Agent and the railhead is stationary at this place.

An Agent's report agrees with R.F.C. report that a large column of transport camels marched towards MAGHARA from the North on 14th inst. This Column is apparently retreating, transport being transferred from the northern to the centre road.

A Turkish Doctor captured at ROMANI states that the health of the Turkish troops was good, and their morale very bad. Food was insufficient.

Air reconnaissances showed EL RIGUM, WADI MUKSHEIB, MOYA HARAB, GIDDI, TAWAL and MITLA all clear of the enemy. W/T intersections of enemy field W/T. Stations indicate tendency to retreat along N. road

17th.

SINAI. Aeroplane reconnaissances evening of 16th showed MAGHARA camp quiet. About 80 tents which shows a considerable increase since 2nd August. The increase may be noted in connection with the large column of camels seen by the R.F.C. proceeding towards this place from direction of RAKWA on 14th inst. A fairly large supply depot was observed, also three full watertanks.

Aeroplane reconnaissance today showed all clear within 10 miles radius of BAYUD MOSEFIG, SALMANA road clear. Small enemy patrol seen at MOSEFIG.
W. DESERT.

Arabs arriving from the West repeat the rumours that Mohd. SALEH intends to attack the railway near ASSOUAN.

19th.

A report emanating (perhaps intentionally circulated) from Turkish Legation at ATHENS, states that general attack on Canal is to take place early in October.

SINAI. A very reliable Agent reports 4000 Turks on August 16th at NEKHL., estimated from what he saw and heard, but he did not enter the town. Many troops arrived recently and the Turks are said to be fearing an attack from SUEZ. Saw 8 guns.

21st

In South SYRIA and SINAI an Agent locates some men of 80th Regiment, 27th Division, in RAFA garrison - 2000 in number. IN EL ARISH, about 4500, amongst whom he saw men of 80th, 81st and 31st Regiments. He states that an Allied landing is expected

/22nd

1916.
August.
22nd.

Agent heard that DIEMAL had a supporting force of 13 Battalions at AUJA, during the last attack, but that on receipt of news of defeat, 10 Battalions went back to Syria and three were put to work on the Railway.

He also heard Turk casualties were 6270 killed, missing and permanent casualties (which agrees very nearly with our own estimate). He saw two Germans in arrest, anti aircraft gunners, for bringing down a Turkish aeroplane and heard dissensions between KRESS and SAMI were going to be settled by a court of enquiry at BIR SABA on 21st August.

25th.

R.F.C. reconnaissance of EL ARISH yesterday - little change reported (12 gun emplacements along sea front, 220 Forts, 15 shelters seen, 400 camels 11 hangars.) Increased hospital accommodation seen at MAZAR.

R.N.A.S. carried out a successful raid with 10 Seaplanes on S. SYRIAN Coast and railway. Combined attack on EL AFULEH function and main line running South. 44 bombs dropped with great effect Embankment of main line South of station destroyed. Heavy A.A. and machine gun fire met with.

Wilson telegraphs to ARBUR asking that we do not send agents to the West Country to ascertain attitude of Arabs as SHERIF himself is in communication with SULIMAN RIFADA. Also asks us to confine our activities to AKABA and leave HEJAZ alone, or at least do nothing without consulting Wilson. C. in C. asks High Commissioner for an explanation of this telegram. We have sent various Agents to AKABA Country and can do no good there. The ship (SCOMA) told off by R.N. for Colonel Parker's coast trips has been re-called to Red Sea by S.N.O. for other work and is no longer available.

C. in C. telegraphs to CHIEF LONDON and HIGH COMMISSIONER that Senoussi must be regarded as a spiritual Chieftan and not a Temporal Power. This is a result of Colonel Talbot being included to give way on the subject, in which case we should soon be having difficulties with ITALY.

26th.

LIMAN-VON-SANDERS is reported to consider the weakest point in his Command to be ADAHA, where an Allied landing would have serious consequences for the Turks.

27th.

No change SINAI.

28th.

There is a general state of chaos in the Turkish army due to re-grouping of Regiments in Divisions.

Rumania declares war on Austria.

/29th

1916.
August.
29th.

Prisoners just arrived KANTARA state that 3rd Division in its retreat did not stop at MAZAR but went to EL ARISH, leaving 400 men of 31st Regiment, 4 machine guns and 2 mountain guns.

31st.

Conference held at ISMAILIA explained the method of working the issue of permits to individuals to enter the Canal Zone. The various natures of the permits were explained and what in possession of each implies. The system now resembles that obtaining in France, where there is a Zone of the Interior and an Army Zone. The army Zone in Egypt is subdivided into two further sub-zones, W. bank and E. bank of Canal. No civilians are allowed into E. bank. On W. bank a double chain of posts has been established with telephonic communication in between, to prevent people crossing by desert.

The 8 maps captured from German mail bag near Athens are of little military value. It is hoped that from indications on them the author may be traced.

During the course of the month the Map Section, following up the retreating Turks after their defeat at ROMANI, have pushed out their surveys which now reach a line N. and S. through BIR EL ABD.

Several localities have also been mapped from aeroplane photos, so that now we have accurate maps of all the principal hostile camps and stations in SINAI. Specimen of work is attached.