

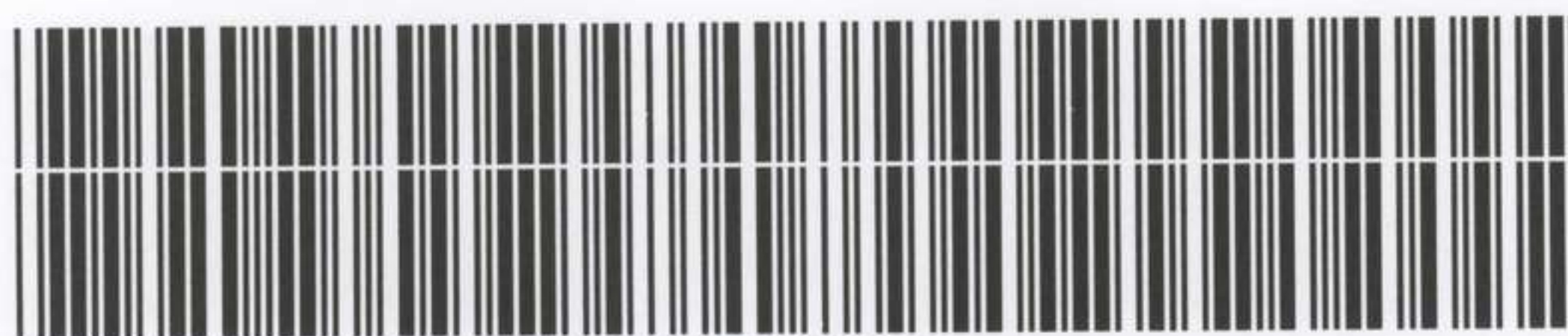
AWM4
Australian Imperial Force unit war diaries,
1914-18 War

Formation Headquarters

Item number: 1/6/12 Part 2

Title: General Staff, General
Headquarters, Egyptian
Expeditionary Force

March 1917



AWM4-1/6/12PART2

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118

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or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Erase heading not required.)

G.S.O.-G.H.Q.-E.E.F.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
CAIRO	16-3-17	20.00	Wire to CHIEF LONDON AM 1705. All well to-night.	
		1716	Wire from DESERT COLUMN H.I. 1056. Hostile aircraft reported at EL ARISH flying East at 0915. No report of bombs being dropped.	
		1525	Wire to CHIEF LONDON AM 1704. As the SYKES-PICOT mission will only deal with political matters beyond the borders of EGYPT, it is still considered necessary for the increase in the establishment originally asked for (see War Diary dated 13-2-17). It is considered most important that a B.G.G.S. should be appointed to co-ordinate all General Staff work at G.H.Q. under the C.G.S. This necessity is increased, owing to the fact that shortly the C.G.S. will be at advanced G.H.Q. Lt Col ROBERTSON Cameron Highlanders is recommended as B.G.G.S.	
			Wire from ARBUR to WILSON TEDDAH AB 003. British & French Political officers having been appointed, the King of the HEDJAS is requested to appoint, in consultation with the High Commissioner of EGYPT, a representative to accompany this political Staff. This representative must be an individual of position & experience and one who commands His Majesty's confidence.	

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G.S.O. - G.H.Q. - E.E.F.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
CAIRO	16-317	-	Letter to The Secretary of State for War G.S. 2/62/13 Forwarding the Despatch for the period 1 st October 1916 to 28 th Feb 1917 inclusive.	
"	"	-	Letter to G.O.C. EASTERN FORCE. G.S. 556 It has been decided in the event of serious operations taking place on the Eastern front, the instructional courses at the Staff School MENA, and at the School of Instruction ZEITOUN, with a few exceptions, shall be broken up, the officers and other ranks under instruction being returned to their units, and a certain number of instructors both officers and other ranks will be placed at your disposal during the period of operations, a list of these is being forwarded.	
"	2110		Wire from TROOPERS 31063 The Sirdar is placing at the disposal of Gen C EGYPT FORCE. Three battalions, these will be armed by EGYPT FORCE.	

Murphy
Capt

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G.S.O.-G.H.U.-E.E.F.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
CAIRO	17-3-17	1955	Wire to CHIEF LONDON AM 1708. All well to-night	
"	"	1703	Wire from DESERT COLUMN H.I. 1061 Hostile aircraft reported to day at RAFA flying N at 09/8. No reports received of bombs being dropped.	
"	"	1240	Wire to TROOPERS AM 1706 Weekly R.F.C. return (appendix).	A.
"	"	-	Letter to G.O.C. EASTERN FORCE G.S.L. 88 Forwarding copies of the complete War Establishments of Northern and Southern Canal Sections (appendix). War Office approval has been received as regards affairs, but the establishment of clerks, batmen, cooks, riding horses ect has not as yet been sanctioned by the War Office.	B.

O.C. Williams
Capt 81

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

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G.S.O. G.H.Q. E.E.F.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
CAIRO	18-3-7	2230	Telephone message received from Middle East Bde R.F.C. A reconnaissance was carried out over NEKHL, no sign of movement was seen at NEKHL or HASSANA or between those places	
		2005	Wire to CHIEF LONDON AM 1709 Situation unchanged to-night	
			Wire from ARBUR to DIRMILINT LONDON A.B. 028 The withdrawal of the AKABA garrison to TETAN and KMURMASH EL ATHALI has been ordered by TEMAL Pasha the Lers	Ref. map SINAI 0.11
			Wire from WILSON TEDDA to ARBUR W. 616 ABDULLA says he has destroyed, in addition to bridge near ABU NAAM, six small culverts, and that no trains have passed since destruction of former	
			Letter to G.O.C. Middle East Bde R.F.C. G.S. 2/25/6/1 Now that a permanent post has been established in the neighbourhood of SIWA, it is considered desirable to make arrangements for aeroplane co-operation, in the event of operations developing in this neighbourhood. A statement, ^{is required} showing number of what advanced landing grounds, stores & petrol will be	

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
CAIRO	18-3-17		<p>required between MATRUH and SIWA Camp in order to give the smallest number of machines, which it would be safe to employ, a radius of 100 miles beyond the Oasis of SIWA.</p> <p>When all arrangements are complete for aeroplanes to work over SIWA, it is considered that all other aeroplane depots in the NILE Valley, south of CAIRO, might be abolished.</p> <p>Letter to G.O.C. EASTERN FORCE G.S.349 Sanction ^{has} being been received from the War Office for the formation of a third Indian Brigade from the Indian bns. now in Egypt, or expts which may be expected to arrive shortly.</p> <p>There will eventually be 14 Indian bdes in Egypt. The following is the suggested composition of the brigade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1/101st Grenadiers 2/101st Grenadiers 58th Rifles 5th Light Infantry <p>The number selected will be notified later</p>	

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G.S.O-G.H.U-E.E.F.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
CAIRO	18-3-17	1758	<p>Wire from HOSKINS DAR ES SALAAM 4.587 Following distribution Military Wing</p> <p>R.F.C. for week ending March 17th -</p> <p>Headquarters ----- MOROGORO</p> <p>'A' Flight ----- NWOMBE</p> <p>'B' Flight half ----- TULO</p> <p>half ----- MOROGORO</p> <p>'C' Flight ----- MOROGORO</p> <p>Aircraft Park Hdqrs. ----- MOROGORO</p> <p>Stores ----- DAR ES SALAAM</p>	

O. Williams
Capt

49

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118

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G.S.O.-G.H.A.-E.E.F.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
CAIRO	19-3-17	1742	Wire from DESERT COLUMN H.I. 1068 Hostile aircraft over SHEIKH ZOWAID at 0920 to-day No bombs dropped	
		1955	Wire to CHIEF LONDON A.M. 1710 Evening report All well	
		1430	Wire from JOYCE BARBUR 111 IBN RASHID has written declaring himself hostile to SHERIF of MECCA.	
			Wire from ARBUR to DIRMILINT LONDON A.B. 029 Report from agents in MEDINA state that the majority of the inhabitants have been deported. The mosque at EL HARAM has been dismantled. Food and wood are unobtainable, the former causes considerable sickness. Inhabitants of MEDINA very bitter against Turks, all notables have left.	
			Letter to G.O.C. NORTHERN CANAL SECTION G.S. 2/58/21. The despatch of the topographical survey party to the neighbourhood of GIDDI and NEKHL has been postponed. When, however, the escort proceeding with the party to repair the Egyptian State Telegraph line to TOR and ABU ZENIMA have returned, it is intended that the survey party shall carry out the work as already suggested. Arrangements should be made accordingly.	

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G S O G H Q E E F

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
CAIRO	20-3-7	-	Wire from EASTFORCE E.S. 96. Requesting that offensive action by aircraft may cease, and this arm be used solely for reconnaissance, photography etc. Information of enemy preparations & dispositions urgently required.	
"	"	1740	Wire to EASTFORCE O.284 places 5 th Wing R.F.C. at G.O.C.'s disposal for reconnaissance work.	
"	"	2005	Wire to CHIEF LONDON AM 1712. Nothing to report this evening.	
"	"	1939	Wire from DESERT COLUMN H.I. 1069. Hostile aircraft over LAHFAN at 0945 and SHEIKH ZOWAID 1030. No bombs were dropped.	
"	"	-	Wire from WILSON TEDDAH to ARBUR SH 631. SHERIF ALI is at BIR RABA. Turkish force is still at BIR SEQUERI, BIR DERNISH, but men & supplies are being gradually withdrawn.	
"	"	1145	Wire to TROOPERS AM 1711. Our aeroplanes in PALESTINE are quite outclassed by the new machines the enemy have received, and these come daily over our lines. Moreover owing to the superior speed of these machines	top secret secret

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G S O - G H Q - E E F

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
CAIRO	20-3-17		<p>as compared to ours, it is impossible to force them to engage us. Request four of the best type of fighters may be spared for the 5th Wing R.F.C. They are considered absolutely essential in order to prevent the enemy obtaining full information of our movements.</p> <p>Wives were sent to School of Instruction ZEITOUN, Staff School MENA Gas School TELEL KEBIR, ordering all ranks with a few exceptions to return to their units. This was ordered owing to the possible action which may take place in the Eastern Theatre. The arrangements having been made beforehand, on the codeword 'DISPERSAL' being received by these Schools, the necessary action was at once taken.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">O. Williams Capt. Gp.</p>	

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
			<p align="center"><u>PLAN OF OPERATIONS - EASTERN FORCE.</u></p> <p>The following Proposals were forwarded by General Dobell, under his E.S. 93, of 19/3/17.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>It is proposed, if the enemy postpones a general retirement until we are ready to strike - which it is hoped will be about the 25th March - that the Desert Column should move forward so as to be about DEIR EL BELAH and KHAN YUNUS on that evening. Simultaneously with the movement of the Desert Column, it is proposed to move forward the 54th Division to the neighbourhood of EL JURA or IN SEIRAT, and the 52nd Division to the neighbourhood of IN SEIRAT or KHAN YUNUS. The exact disposition of these formations must depend on the latest information available as to the dispositions of the enemy, and on the practicability of watering the divisions. The Imperial Camel Brigade will cover the right flank of the force.</p> <p>On the morning of the 26th March the Desert Column will attack GAZA. The mounted troops of the Desert Column will be thrown round to the east and north-east of the town in order to block the escape of the enemy force in GAZA itself, and to observe the enemy on all roads leading to GAZA from HUJ and HAREIRA and between those places. The 53rd Division to move straight on the ALI MUNTAR position, attacking and taking it as soon after dawn as possible. This attack must be rapidly pressed to a conclusion, and additional artillery may be attached to the 53rd Division from one of the other divisions to assist.</p> <p>As soon as the above position is taken, the Desert Column will move forward its infantry in order to take up and strengthen a position covering the roads from HUJ - HAREIRA.</p> <p>One of the supporting divisions will be moved simultaneously to the neighbourhood of SHEIKH ABBAS, or possibly to GAZA.</p> <p>The mounted troops meanwhile will continue to observe and press the enemy towards HUJ and HAREIRA, assisted by the Imperial Camel Brigade.</p> <p>2. In case of a determined enemy advance from HUJ and HAREIRA, the 53rd Division of the Desert Column will be ordered to entrench and hold on. One of the supporting divisions would be within easy reach, at SHEIKH ABBAS - GAZA. The other would either be moved up or,</p>	

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			<p>in the event of a strong flanking movement on the part of the enemy by SHELLAL, would remain echeloned behind the right flank.</p> <p>The mounted troops of the Desert Column, assisted by the Imperial Camel Brigade, would harass the flanks of the enemy, falling slowly back on the main force.</p> <p>3. On the occupation of GAZA, and if the enemy does not move out to attack us, he may adopt one of two courses. His main body in the HUI - NEJILA area may remain in position until his advanced detachments at SHARIA - HAREIRA have time to retire. In view of this possibility, the prospects of endeavouring to cut off those advanced detachments, should the enemy adopt this course, had been considered. On hearing from the aircraft that the enemy's main body stood firm, it might be possible to move the right flank division straight forward north-east, with its left directed practically on HUI. This division should be strong enough to hold off any attack which the enemy is strong enough to make for a considerable period. The mounted troops might then pass in rear of this division and endeavour to cut off the enemy's SHARIA and HAREIRA detachments.</p> <p>This plan, however, offers considerable difficulties in respect of the watering of troops in the area indicated. It has the further disadvantage that the mounted troops alone might not be able to deal completely with the SHARIA - HAREIRA force, and that that force might escape by way of BIR ES SABA instead of northwards.</p> <p>4. After full consideration, therefore, the conclusion was come to that the following plan, which in any case would be preferable in the event of an immediate general retirement of the enemy, is the one to which it would be desirable to work.</p> <p>On information being received from the aircraft that the enemy is in retreat northwards, the mounted troops to be thrown round his right flank, if possible across the line EL FELUJE - BEIT JIBRIN. The 53rd Division will move forward from GAZA to a position on which it can support the mounted troops and keep the roads open behind them. The Desert Column would maintain the pursuit as far and as actively as possible, the mounted troops cutting the railway in the neighbourhood of the junction, and doing as much damage as possible to the enemy, on the move, out of his trenches.</p>	

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			<p>In this event the remaining divisions would be removed straight to GAZA and everything possible done to hasten the landing of supplies from the sea. If necessary, and desirable in view of the general situation, one division might be moved back to KHAN YUNUS, so as to make its divisional trains available for increasing the radius of action of the remainder of the force.</p> <p>5. The necessary reconnaissances, etc., and organisation of the troops and their transport, are now being rapidly proceeded with with a view to the execution of these plans.</p> <p>The Commander-in-Chief forwarded the following remarks on the proposed plan of operations, under his G.S. Z/58, of 20/3/17 :-</p> <p>(a) He presumes that, in the event of it being impossible to water a division in the neighbourhood of EL JURA, the Imperial Camel Corps Brigade, disposed upon the line EL MENDUR - GOZ EL EZZ, will be strong enough to prevent any interference with the main operation at GAZA and to the south-west by the enemy force located at HAREIRA.</p> <p>(b) It is suggested whether it would not be advisable, should supply arrangements permit, to move the 54th or 52nd Division northwards in support of the mounted troops when they attack the railway in the neighbourhood of FALUJE, and their subsequent occupation of the line EL FALUJE - BEIT JIBRIN. The 53rd Division could then be given the sole task of capturing the ALI MUNTAR position and consolidating the position covering GAZA. This division will almost inevitably require a certain amount of reorganization after the capture of ALI MUNTAR, and the moving up of one rearward division, even though the distance to be traversed would be longer, would save time eventually.</p>	

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Capt 3

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G.S.O - GHQ - E.F.F.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
CAIRO	21/3/17		Wire from JOYCE WEDT to ARBUR. The hostility of IBN-RASHID to the Sherif's cause is confirmed, but it is considered that he can do but little harm, and the fall of BAGHDAD may cause him to change his policy.	
"	1940		Wire from Wingate CAIRO to General BASRA A.B. 050 IBN RASHID may endeavour to occupy HANAKIYA and NAKHAIL. He has received 200 camels with supplies, arms and money from the Turks. A diversion against MEDINA made by IBN RASHID would help the Turks considerably, accordingly FEISAL is asking NURI SHALAN to operate against him from the north.	
"	1725		Wire from DESERT COLUMN H.I. 1073 Hostile aircraft reported at SHEIKH ZOWAID flying E 0910 to-day.	
"	2000		Wire to CHIEF LONDON AM 1714 Evening report all well.	
"	1140		Wire to CHIEF LONDON AM 1713 Some form of divisional Artillery can be formed for the 74th Division, but at least two Brigade Ammunition Columns must be sent from home, ^{that} provided two batteries of 3.7" howitzers are sent.	

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G.S.O.-G.H.Q.-E.E.F

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
CAIRO	22-3-17	2006	Wire from EASTFORCE E.G.S/742 Situation unchanged our patrols saw nothing of enemy east and northeast of DEIR EL BELAH as far as WADY GHUZZEE	
		1700	Wire from DESERT COLUMN H.I. 1076 Hostile aircraft reported to-day at EL ARISH 0955 flying E. At RAFA at 1010 flying N.E. No bombs dropped	
		-	Wire to DELTA & WESTFORCE O.A.S. 36 Two battalions of 231 st bde will proceed from ZEITOUN to KANTARA on Saturday 24 th	
		1955	Wire to TROOPERS A.M. 1717 Changes in distribution - (a) Transferred to EASTFORCE 114 th Bn D.C.L.I. No 17 Motor Machine Gun Battery (b) Taken onto strength of E.E.F. 195 th Heavy Battery 35 th Motor Ambulance Convoy	
		1445	Wire to TROOPERS A.M. 1716 Grouping of INDIAN battalions into three brigades as follows: -	

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G.S.O - G.H.Q - E.E.F

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
CAIRO	23-3-17		<p><u>20th Brigade</u></p> <p>Alwar Infantry Gwalior " Patiala " 6th Pioneer</p> <p><u>29th Brigade</u></p> <p>2/3rd Gurkhas 3/3rd Gurkhas 123rd Rifles 57th Rifles</p> <p><u>49th Brigade</u> (newly formed)</p> <p>1/101st Grenadiers 2/101st Grenadiers 58th Rifles 5th Light Infantry</p> <p>were to ALEXANDRIA District O.A.S 33 On completion of its concentration at ALEXANDRIA ^{park} W/T Section No 12 will move to ISMAILIA.</p> <p>0725 were from TROOPERS 31384 giving approval for the appointment of a G.S.O 1 and G.S.O 3 for Intelligence.</p>	

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
CAIRO	23-3-17	2200	<p>Wire to Chief LONDON AM 1722. High Commissioner was informed yesterday by letter that the proposal of opening up markets to MOHAMED IDRIS is strongly approved here, until an agreement has been arrived at with MOHAMED IDRIS, and until he has carried out the terms of such an agreement. We should run a serious danger of the period of negotiations being utilized by hostile elements in order to re-organise and strengthen their forces for renewed hostile action. It might result in the re-occupation of the western oases by the enemy, & there are not any longer troops available for further operations against them.</p> <p>Letter to G.O.C. EASTERN FORCE. G S 2/58/19 Advanced General Hqs will be established in the Commander in Chiefs train at EL ARISH from 1800 on the 25th instant. The necessary arrangements for communication will be made.</p> <p>Letter to G.O.C. EASTERN FORCE. G S 90 It is proposed shortly to issue an additional four Lewis guns to each Infantry battalion. It is suggested these guns and their ammunition, which will be in the nature of a reserve with battalion Hqs, should be carried in two limbered G.S. waggons.</p>	

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G.S.O. GHQ-EEF

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
CAIRO	23.3.17	1936	Were from EASTFORCE E.G.S. 760 No change in situation. Our mounted patrols crossed the Wadi EL GHUZZE to-day and approached GAZA from the South. A few shells estimated field artillery were fired at them.	
"	"	1840	Were from Britannia ISMAILIA - H.M.S. ANNE reconnoitred HAIFA, TENIN, EL AFULEH, BEISAN, NAZARAETH, SHEFRAMR yes today No troops ^{or} camps on train were seen. Two trains were seen at EL AFULEH. Rails of line were very bright around EEISAN.	
"	"	1700	Were from DESERT COLUMN H.I. 1081 Hostile aircraft over EL BURT and RAFA at 0910 to-day. No bombs were dropped.	
"	"	1936	Were from Wilson JEDDA to ARBOR W659. Sherif states that ALI reports his troops after two days fighting have occupied BIR DERWISH, and Turks were pursued to EL MANGUR, he thinks enemy will retire to MEDINA.	
"	"		Were from Joyce WETH to ARBOR 414. Railway a few miles south of EL ULA raided by a detachment of Sherif FEISAL's troops, who destroyed considerable portion of railway line & three culverts. Raiding party stayed 12 hours, and saw none of the enemy.	oaw Capt

1875 Wt. W593/826 1,000,000 4/15 J.B.C. & A. A.D.S.S./Forms/C. 2118.

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G.S.O. G.H.Q. E.E.F.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
CAIRO	24-3-17	-	Wire to C.G.S. c/o Admincom. KANTARA OAS 37. R.F.C. report this evening GAZA 300 tents commencement of new redoubt. between KHALASA and TEL EL TEMPII. roads Much new work n to the N.W. of town (GAZA)	
		1747	Wire from DESERT COLUMN H.I. 1085 Hostile aircraft reported to-day SHEIKH ZOWAID flying NE 0920, RAFA 0933 flying E. No bombs dropped.	
		1700	Wire to CHIEF LONDON AM 1724 Pointing out that no safeguards will prevent supplies reaching SAYED ACHMED. To deny all supplies until peace is made is the only plan, to ensure this the markets should not be re opened.	
			Wire from WILSON TEDDA to ARBUR W 673. Transfer to WEATH now complete. At present no convenient forward landing ground for aeroplanes has been established.	
			Wire from TROOPERS LONDON 31523. The three S AFRICAN Field Batteries will probably not reach you before July, as they will now be sent to the Cape to reorganise	

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
CAIRO	24-3-17	1630	Went to TROOPERS LONDON A.M. 1723 R.F.C. weekly return (appendix)	A
"	"	1854	Went from General HOSKINS, DARES SALAM G 661 Following distribution military wing R.F.C. for week ending 24 th March - Headquarters MOROGORO "A" Flight NJOMBE "B" " half TVLO " " half MOROGORO "C" " " Aircraft Park Hqs. " Stores DARES SALAM	
"	"	"	Letter to Naval Cmc EAST INDIES and EGYPT. Z/43 Request sea plane reconnaissance to ascertain enemy's movements and concentrations in the LUDD area and along the line north of LUDD as far as EL FULE.	
"	"	"	Letter to G.O.C. EASTERN FORCE and DELTA and WESTERN FORCE G.S. 12/67/1 Steps are to be taken to convert The Royal Monmouth Siege Coy R.E. and 5 th Royal Anglesy Siege Coy R.E. into Field Coys. They will concentrate at KANTARA and ABYSS ABBASSIA respectively. Notification of completion of this reorganization should be sent to this office	

William
Capt

WAR DIARY

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or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
CAIRO	25-3-41	0600	<p>were from TROOPERS LONDON 31563. (1) It is considered that five sixths of all Field Ambulances (except Colonial units) in EGYPT should be native, the remaining one sixth British taking charge of stretcher squads. This saves ninety stretcher bearers per Field Ambulance. The three ^{new} field ambulances could be formed on this basis from the white personnel which would since become superfluous. Any surplus left could be utilised in the three stationary hospitals and two clearing stations to be formed.</p> <p>(2) Two Sanitary Sections, two Casualty Clearing Stations & three Stationary Hospitals can be supplied, subject to any modifications consequent on above suggestion.</p> <p>were to DELTA & WESTFORCE D.A.S. 358 sanctioning the retention of six men of the 5th Royal Anglesey Siege Coy R.E. at MATRUH, in order to supervise E.L.C. detachment there. The 5th R. Anglesey Siege Coy R.E. are concentrating at KANTARA.</p> <p>The Commander in CHIEF left to-day for EL ARISH where Advanced G.H.A. were established at 1800</p>	

1875 Wt. W593/826 1,000,000 4/15 J.B.C. & A. A.D.S.S./Forms/C. 2118.

overriding
Capt. P.

WAR DIARY

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G.S.O G.H.Q. E.E.E.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
CAIRO	26.3.17	2245	Wire to CHIEF LONDON O.A. 366 Nothing to report to-night	
"	"	—	Wire to EASTFORCE O.A.S. 39 The 230 th Bde is now concentrated at ALEXANDRIA and ready to move	
"	"	—	Wire from SOUTHERN CANAL SECTION. S.G. 331. Telegraph escort column marched out to-day at 0800. Strength 8 officers 62 other ranks 114 natives 304 camels	
"	"	—	Letter to G.O.C. EASTERN FORCE. G.S. 554. The Squadron of WESTMINSTER Dragoons now in the NORTHERN CANAL section will form the Divisional Cavalry for the 74 th Division. They should be made up to full strength accordingly	

O.C. Williams
Capt. M.G.

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118

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CAIRO	27-3-17	1630	<p>Wire to Naval C in C. EAST INDIES & EGYPT O.A. 369. Requesting two monitors to be placed at the disposal of G.O.C. EASTFORCE and for them to be despatched urgently to DEIR. EL BELAH.</p> <p>Letter to G.O.C. EASTERN FORCE G.S. 327/21 Attaching a printed amendment to page 29 of 'Provisional Establishment of a Division with Camel Transport' which in its present form is somewhat misleading (appendix)</p>	A

*O. Williams
Capt*

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118

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G.S.O - G.H.Q. - EEF

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
CAIRO	28-3-17	1906 2058	<p>Wire to CHIEF LONDON. O.A. 377 We have advanced our troops a distance of fifteen miles from RAFA to WADI GHUZZE, 5 miles W of GAZA to cover construction of railway. On the 26th and 27th we were heavily engaged east of the GAZA with a force of about 20,000 of the enemy. We inflicted very heavy losses on him. It is estimated his casualties were between 6,000 and 7,000 and we have in addition 900 prisoners including General Commanding and whole of Divisional Staff of 53rd Turkish Division. This figure includes 4 Austrian officers, 32 Austrian and 5 German other ranks. We captured 2 Austrian 4.2" howitzers. All troops behaved splendidly, especially the Welsh, Kent Sussex, Hereford, Middlesex and Surrey Territorials, and the Amzac and Giomanny Mounted Troops.</p> <p>2058 Wire from WINGATE. British Residency 3787. Congratulatory message to Comd & troops on their conduct in the recent heavy fighting.</p>	

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
CAIRO	28-3-7	1546	Wire from ARBUR BASRA to ARBUR CAIRO 2451. Chief Political officer has urged IBN SAUD for immediate action against IBN RASHID. Following are being instructed to combine with IBN SAUD - IBN TAWALAH, and IBN SUBHAN.	
"	"	0705	Wire from ³¹⁷⁰⁹ Troopers approving of special Coy. R.E. for water duties in area between KANTARA and EL ARISH. The number of the company is 360.	
			Wire Letter to G.O.C. DELTA and WESTERN FORCE. G.O. 535 forwarding amendments to the establishments of that headquarters. (appendix)	A.

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Ranch	1917		<p><u>Provision of Royal Engineers Units.</u></p> <p><u>Field Companies.</u> It will be necessary to form Field Companies for -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the 74th Division, which is in process of concentration. (b) the 13th Division which is coming from MESOPOTAMIA. The move of this Division is temporarily postponed. (c) for the new Territorial Division, the units of which will be coming from INDIA. <p>As regards (a): Two companies can be furnished by the conversion of the Monmouth and Anglesey Siege Companies to Field Companies. This re-organization is now taking place.</p> <p>As regards (b): Two companies will accompany this Division and will satisfactorily meet requirements.</p> <p>As regards (c): It is proposed to utilise the 496th (Kent) Field Company, which it is hoped will, by the time this Division arrives in this country, have been completed by reinforcements from home. The 495th (Kent) Field Company, which will be transferred from the 54th Division, will form the second Field Company for this Division.</p> <p>The position as regards R.E. units will thus eventually be as follows :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 52nd and 53rd Divisions - each 3 Companies. The 54th, 74th, 13th and new Territorial Divisions - each 2 companies. <p>Sanction has been obtained from the War Office for the formation of a special Coy. R.E. for water duties between KANTARA and EL ARISH.</p> <p>Strength of this special Company is 5 officers and 158 other ranks.</p>	

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WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

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G.S.O.-G.H.Q.-E.E.F.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
CAIRO	29-3-17	1615	<p>Wire to Sir C. DOBELL AM 1731 When your next move takes place I have every confidence it will be most successful, every detail for the attack should be worked out before assuming the offensive. All gas preparations should be carefully prepared, in case it is necessary to use them, and an overwhelming supply of shells should be at hand.</p> <p>Two days preliminary bombardment are so strongly recommended, even at the risk of the enemy evacuating GAZA, in which case the cavalry must pursue with the utmost vigour. General CHETNODE should devise plans to prevent any retrograde movement of the enemy, & for obtaining ^{early} information should this occur.</p>	
"	"	1930	<p>Wire to CHIEF LONDON AM 1735 We are in close touch with the enemy who now occupy strong position just west of GAZA. Operations proceeding satisfactorily. With a view of turning out enemy by a deliberate attack the heavy artillery and tanks are being brought up.</p>	

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118

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G.S.D. - G.H.A. - E.E.F.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
CAIRO	29.3.17	0828	Wire from EASTFORCE E.F. 130 No change in situation. Dev. patrols captured 33 Turks yesterday.	
			- Appreciative wires were received, from H.H. The Sultan O.B. 585 and from H.E. The High Commissioner O.B. 586, upon the conduct of the troops in the recent operations.	
"	"	0910	Wire from WILSON TEDDA & ARBUR W. 708 Following received from WALDER. 2,000 men, two guns, four machines are being sent out to-morrow by FEISUL to ABU RAQA in WADI GHAZAL.	
			<u>Staff School</u> It has been decided that, owing to the uncertainty of the length of time the present operations may take, the present course at the Staff School MENA HOUSE shall not reassemble, having been temporarily broken up on 21-3-17. The candidates from SALONIKA will return to their units accordingly.	
			The Commander in Chief returned from the Eastern Theatre at 13.00 to-day.	

1875 Wt. W593/326 1,000,000 4/15 J.B.C. & A. A.D.S.S./Forms/C. 2118.

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G.S.O - G.H.Q. - E.E.F.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
CAIRO	30-3-17	12 00	Wine to CHIEF LONDON AM 1741 Request for more ammunition for the 6" and 8" howitzers. Probable requirements 1,500 rounds of 6" shells and 2,000 8" shells. Strongly fortified positions may have to be attacked early in April. Furthermore may the request for additional gas shells be expedited, as it is probable these will be used in the forthcoming operations.	
		1125	Telephone message from Gen DOBELL Re-organization from Flying Column scale to a scale of complete equipment is taking place with a view of using all artillery possible, of having available ample supply of ammunition, and of greatly improving the signal arrangements. There will probably be three stages from the present position to that from which the attack will be launched.	
		1200	Wine to EAST FORCE AM 1736 Suggestion to concentrate 230 th and 231 st Inf. Bdes at KHAN YUNUS. This was agreed to in EAST FORCE. reply No. E.F. 186 received at 1945.	
		1541	Wine from EAST FORCE E.F. 175 EAST FORCE Headquarters arrive DEIR EL BELAH 6-day.	

1875 Wt. W593/326 1,000,000 4/15 J.B.C. & A. A.D.S.S./Forms/C. 2118.

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118

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G.S. O-GHQ-EEF

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
CAIRO	30-3-17	-	Wire from EAST FORCE ^{EF 1727} _{EF 188} No change in situation, our patrols active east of WADI GHUZZE. Weather cooler, but low clouds hamper our aircraft.	
		2025	Wire to CHIEF LONDON AM 1738 Evening report all well.	
		1810	Wire from WILSON JEDDA to ARBOR W 713 Deserters state (1) TE-BUK - MEDAIR - SALEH section of railway held by 600 men and three aeroplanes. (2) Some Turkish forces returned from MEDINA on EL ULA.	
		1930	Wire to H M THE KING Thanking him for his gracious message.	
		-	Letter to Brig Gen ² CLAYTON D. of I. EGYPTIAN ARMY ^{G.S. 14616} Giving permission for the garrison at the ASSOUAN Dam to be reduced by 50 rifles.	
		-	Letter to G.O.C. EASTERN FORCE G.S. 518. In view of the increasing length of the lines of communication EASTERN FORCE it is now considered advisable that the G.H.Q. Signal Coy. should be relieved of the administration of the telegraphs and Signals in the Suez Canal area and of the main road telegraph lines west of EL ARISH exclusive.	

WAR DIARY

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G S O - G H Q - E E F

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
CAIRO	30-3-17	-	Force order No 36 relating to the Special Water Coy R.E. and the reorganization of the London Wireless Section (appendix)	A
		-	Letter to SECRETARY WAR OFFICE G.S. 318 Forwarding a revised establishment for the Graves Registration Unit (appendix)	B
				<p>O'Williams Capt R.F.</p>

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
CAIRO	31-3-17	2129	Wire from CHIEF LONDON 31898. More details as to fight on March 26th are required by the War Cabinet. State what forces identified and what forces you employed.	
"	"	2143	Wire from TROOPERS LONDON 31917. Since 6" shells are urgently required, the number you require should be taken off the "SOUTH PACIFIC" if she has not left. 1500 8" shells will be shipped as soon as possible. Shipped on vessel sailing yesterday 10,000 k. shells.	
		1633	Wire to CHIEF LONDON AM 1745. In view of reliable information received which shows the enemy are about to receive 20 more HALBSTADT aeroplanes, I wish to supplement my original demand for 4 machines. Our present aeroplanes are in no way equal to the HALBSTADT, which has been clearly shown in the recent fighting. The MARTINSYDE cannot deal with this machine owing to this climate being unsuitable for its engine, ^{leading to overheating} at least ten machines will be required, & if these are not supplied, we will lose supremacy of the air, and the success of future operations will be jeopardized.	

WAR DIARY

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
CAIRO	31-3-17		<p>Wires from CHIEF LONDON 31534 and our reply AM 1750 shown under headings - a</p> <p>① Why is it necessary for 18 pr batteries to be locked up on canal</p> <p>①a Owing to insufficiency of animals to make them mobile in desert terrain</p> <p>If four D.A.C.'s asked for from ENGLAND arrive, it will render these 18 pr batteries mobile.</p> <p>② For each of the four divisions what is the minimum establishment of 18 pr batteries necessary?</p> <p>②a Twenty four 18 prs per division must suffice, but ask K section to return to the 4 gun organization</p> <p>③ On arrival of SOUTH AFRICAN batteries what is being done with them?</p> <p>③a These batteries being without trained drivers it is proposed to utilize these units on arrival for L of C work, releasing 18 prs at present employed. This obviates ammunition complications</p> <p>④ On basis of above how many 18 prs batteries could be made available from existing resources?</p> <p>④a A total of six six gun batteries = 36 guns, and a further non composite</p>	

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WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

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Army Form C. 2118

G.S.O G.H.A. E.E.F.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
CAIRO	31-3-17		<p>brigade of three 4 gun batteries with BAC from ENGLAND to complete new Divisions with 18 pdrs</p> <p>⑤ Probably two batteries 3 7" howitzers can be provided for each Division</p> <p>⑥a When these arrive the Divisional artillery will be reorganised on uniform basis of 2 composite and 1 non composite brigades per Division</p> <p>⑥ Will send two additional 60 pdr batteries</p> <p>⑦a Noted if possible these batteries should be tractor drawn.</p>	
		2000	<p>Went to TROOPERS AM 1747 forwarding R.F.C. weekly return (appendix)</p> <p>Wire from WILSON JEDDA to ARBUR W732 Good forward landing ground found near EL BEIDHA</p> <p>Wire from WILSON JEDDA to ARBUR W717 Northern tribes are coming in steadily, but I have no rifles to give them as I promised. Please help. Turks have concentrated at EL ULA and MEDAIN SALEH.</p>	A.

O. Williams
Capt. G.S.

WAR DIARY

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
			<p>BATTLE OF GAZA: 26/3/17 - 28/3/17.</p> <p><i>Following is Summary of Telegram AM 1751 of 1/4/17, sent in answer to W.O. Telegram 31898, 31/3/17</i></p> <p>1. <u>Intention.</u> <i>aiming for further details of the action</i></p> <p>(a) In order to protect the advance of the railway from RAFA to GAZA, it was necessary to seize the line of the WADI CHUZZE.</p> <p>(b) To prevent the enemy at all costs from retiring without a fight.</p> <p>(c) If possible, to capture GAZA by a "coup-de-main".</p> <p>2. <u>Commanders.</u> The whole force was commanded by General Dobell, the Mounted Troops and the 53rd Division by General Chetwode. Advanced G.H.Q. were at EL ARISH. As far as water, munitions and supply allowed, all troops were actively engaged.</p> <p>3. <u>Starting Point.</u> The infantry debouched from small oases to the east of RAFA, the mounted troops from RAFA.</p> <p>4. There was a dense fog on the morning of the 26th until 11 a.m.; on the 27th and 28th the thermometer registered 90° in the shade.</p> <p>5. <u>Operations.</u> By dusk on the 26th GAZA was enveloped, and the 53rd Division had taken the first line trenches. The enemy blew up his wireless station, reporting to Von Kress that they must surrender. At about 1300 Von Kress started relieving columns from BERA SHEBA, HUJ and SHARHA, and the 53rd Division arrived at EL MEDJEL. Our armoured cars and mounted troops, brilliantly led, fought delaying action against all these separate columns, capturing the commander and staff of the 53rd Turkish Division. Enemy casualties were estimated at over 5,000. General Chetwode, to prevent his cavalry being enveloped by converging Turkish columns, drew off towards the main body, thus enabling GAZA to be relieved and reinforced.</p> <p>On the 27th the 53rd and 54th Divisions and Camel Corps were attacked, having previously dug in. The attack was completely unsuccessful, and the heaviest losses were inflicted on the enemy, the Camel Corps nearly annihilating a Turkish cavalry division.</p>	

WAR DIARY

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
			<p>It is estimated the enemy casualties were 3,000.</p> <p>On the 28th the enemy occupied GAZA defences and would not advance to the attack. Our cavalry kept in touch with the enemy throughout the day.</p> <p>6. <u>Enemy forces engaged.</u> The 3rd and 16th Infantry Divisions, part of the 27th and 53rd Infantry Divisions, and the whole of the 3rd Cavalry Division were engaged during these operations.</p> <p>7. <u>Casualties.</u> We suffered the following losses :-</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">Killed: 47 officers, 351 other ranks.</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">Wounded: About 2,900.</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">Missing: Less than 200.</p> <p>Of the wounded 2,000 are slight cases and will be able to rejoin shortly.</p> <p>8. <u>Captures.</u> 950 prisoners, two 4.2" Austrian howitzers.</p> <p>9. It was a most successful operation, the fog and waterless nature of the country just saving the enemy from complete disaster. It has filled our troops with enthusiasm and proved conclusively that the enemy has no chance against our troops in the open.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>O. Williams</i> <i>Capt</i></p>	

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	21-3-17		<p>Disposition of our troops on 21-3-17</p>	
	22-3-17		<p>Disposition of our troops on 22-3-17</p>	
	23-3-17		<p>Disposition of our troops on 23-3-17</p>	

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
CAIRO	24-3-17		<p>Distribution of our Troops 24-3-17.</p>	
	25-3-17		<p>Distribution of our Troops 25-3-17.</p>	
	26-3-17		<p>Distribution early morning 26-3-17.</p>	

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118

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G S O - G H Q - E E F.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
CAIRO	27-3-17		<p>Disposition of Troops 27-3-17</p>	
<p>During the 26th March the Cavalry were east of GAZA, but on the 27th March our dispositions were as above. No details of the fighting are available but the dispositions of the enemy before and after the action were as below -</p> <p>[Before the action]</p> <p><u>GAZA</u> 5,100 men and 8 Q F guns and a few Austrian 4.5" howitzers</p> <p><u>BIRSABA</u> 2,000 and 6 guns</p> <p><u>TEL ES SHERIA</u> 4,850 men and 42 guns</p>				

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WAR DIARY

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

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Army Form C. 2118

G-5-0-G H A-E E.E.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
CAIRO			<p><u>AKRA</u> 9,100 men 42 guns.</p> <p>(There are troops at JERUSALEM RAMLEH etc who do not affect these operations)</p> <p>During the action these forces appear to have concentrated about GAZA in order to save the garrison of this latter place, a manoeuvre they were successful in at a considerable cost to themselves, their casualties being estimated at 30% of the entire enemy forces in Southern PALESTINE.</p> <p>The enemy dispositions after the battle of 26-3-17 were as below.</p> <p><u>GAZA</u> 13 battalions, 1 F.A. regt, Austrian howitzers & camel corps. It is not possible to state numbers owing to casualties in the recent fighting.</p> <p><u>BIRSABA</u> 2 Cavalry regiments and 13 machine guns.</p> <p><u>TEL EL SHEHIA</u> 6 battalions infantry, one German F.A. bn, one two F.A. bns, one div engineer coy.</p> <p><u>AKRA</u> 12 battalions infantry one F.A. regiment.</p>	

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WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118.

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
			<p>Summary of Events for month of March, 1917.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>1. <u>Eastern Front.</u> The most important event has been the preparation and concentration of troops, culminating in the Battle of GAZA, on 26/3/17; for details of appreciations of the situation prior to the action, see notes after war diary for 9th March, 15th March and 20th March. For accounts of operations, see notes after war diary for 31st March.</p> <p>The chief difficulty throughout these operations has been lack of water and difficulty of transport and supply.</p> <p>2. <u>Western Force.</u> In accordance with G.H.Q. Force Order No. 34, para.1(a), dated 9th March, 1917, the amalgamation of Western Force and Delta District into one single command, to be known as "Delta and Western Force", took effect from 12 noon, 15th March, 1917. No events of any importance took place on this front during the month.</p> <p>3. <u>Hedjaz.</u> Indications show that the Turks are endeavouring to withdraw their forces from this front. Portions of the 53rd Division are now reported in PALESTINE from this front. To prevent this retirement efforts have been made to destroy the railway line, which is their chief method of communication. The railway was cut successfully at the beginning of the month between MEDINA and JADAH. It was estimated that no rolling stock could be run until 20/3/17. Another party left on a demolition expedition on the railway near EL SANA on 15/3/17.</p> <p>4. <u>Royal Flying Corps.</u> Throughout the month they have been employed for bombing the enemy and his communications, as well as reconnaissance on the Eastern Front. The enemy now have machines of a faster and more powerful type than we have, and application has been made to the authorities at home for the supply of a faster and more powerful type of machine for the use of our R.F.C.</p> <p>5. <u>Organization.</u> The organization of the 74th Division is, as regards infantry, nearly complete, and brigades are in process of concentration on the Eastern Front. A new Indian Brigade has been formed and will be known as the 49th Indian Infantry Brigade, consisting</p>	

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118

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(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
			<p>of the 1/101st Grenadiers, 2/101st Grenadiers, 58th Rifles and 5th Light Infantry.</p> <p>6. <u>Training</u>. Owing to the possibility of operations in the Eastern theatre, the Staff School at Mena House, the Imperial School of Instruction, Zeitoun, and the Central Gas School, Tel-el-Kebir, were broken up on 21/3/17, the candidates returning to their units.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>O.E. Williams</i> <i>Capt R.F.</i></p>	