

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

Engineers

Item number: 14/36/17

Title: 1st Field Squadron, Australian
Engineers

October 1917



AWM4-14/36/17

WAR DIARY

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

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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.



Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Abasan	1917 Oct 1		General Watering arrangements for the Division - Minor miscellaneous works details attached.	
Syria Jerusalem	to		Preparations and experiments for special work anticipated.	
1/250,000 B. O.	Oct 19			
	Oct 20		Squadron including newly formed Mechanical Troop (D Troop) marched from ABASAN to GAMLI.	
	21		Joined Imperial Camel Brigade at ESANI	
	22		Opened up water for G.C. Bde at MALAAGA by digging Sumps in the Wadi	
	22 & 23		B Troop assisted by 10 th Cavalry Troop RE. opened up one well at GHALYUN, and dug one new well but supply was unsatisfactory - An abundant supply was located with diving rod within a few hundred yards, this was fully developed and storage tanks filled.	
	Night 22/23		Squadron less two troops marched to KHALASA. Two large wells here had been very successfully shot in by enemy - Craters about 30' diameter, depth about 10' stone lining lower down badly shaken, engine houses, girders, engine block, rearsited in wells which were completely filled with the debris.	
			Method employed by enemy appears to have been to sink four holes equidistant round the well about three feet back from the stining and about eight feet in depth in which the charges were placed.	
			The method of clearing was as follows:-	
			A working party of approximately 100 men for each well (from G.C. Bde) commenced clearing crater of large boulders commencing at the outer edge.	
			Meanwhile the Sappers erected at each well a heavy, improved derrick (10" Spars) with specially made Skips (capacity 1/2 ton)	
			On crater being cleared a false lining was fitted in the top of the well to strengthen the stining which was badly shaken down at this depth.	
			All material in the well was then removed by derrick and skips, three skips were kept going night and day on each well, flares were used at night. The wells were cleared to a depth of thirty and thirty-eight feet respectively and then a four-foot box sunk in the bottom of the well.	

Cause of
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 - OCT 1917
 Preparation will be forwarded later.
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 Sketches
 No. 1/11/17
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<p>ASLUJ. Syria Jerusalem 1/250,000 G. 12.</p>	<p>Oct to 27th</p>		<p>There was no horse water nearer than seven miles until water was struck in the wells. In each case a 5 HP "Lister" Engine and ^{centrifugal} rotary pumps was installed by the Mechanical Troop. Fifteen 5000 gal. canvas reservoirs were sunk in the ground and sandbagged. This work including filling reservoirs was completed by 27th and handed over to Australian Division on morning of 28th. N.Z. Troop then proceeded to MESSERIEH near ASLUJ and developed water in an unlined well 60' deep using derrick and skips.</p>	
	<p>Night 24/25</p>		<p>Two troops proceeded to BIR ASLUJ with 2nd A.L.H. Bde and were joined by Squadron HQ. on 26th. Four wells here had been similarly shot in, craters 25' to 31' diameter depth about 8' and so completely covered with debris of masonry that no estimate of dimensions or exact location of the well was possible. These were cleaned to depths varying from 34' to 53', the method followed was similar to that at KHALASA. Shifts were working day and night in all cases. Two other wells, one at ASLUJ ^{Railway} Station and one near ^{Railway} Viaduct (demolished by this Squadron in May last) were also cleaned out to depths of 42' and 35' respectively, a double acting hand deep well pump placed on one, and a "Lister" Engine and centrifugal pump erected on the other. At BIR ASLUJ 5 HP "Lister" Engines and rotary pumps were installed in the two best wells and G.S. Lift and force pumps connected in series were used on the others. There was no water at ASLUJ for the Light Horse Brigade until the wells were opened up. The Division watered in the ASLUJ AREA on 30th and pulled out that night for BEERSHEBA.</p>	
	<p>30th</p>			

- OCT 1917

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Army Form C. 2116.

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Karakel.	1/10/17		<u>"A" TROOP</u>	
		2.	Moved camp to Karakel, Dug Sump, and erected troughs for 1 st Brigade	
		3.	Working on Sumps and erecting troughs for 1 st Brigade watering	
		4.	Working on Sumps and troughs and erecting reservoirs and Pumps.	
		5.	Erecting fence round drinking water area, Repairing troughs & Reservoirs	
		10.	Deepening Sump at 1 st Brigade, Machine Gun Squadron watering area.	
		11.	Erecting reservoirs at 1 st Brigade, Watering area (drinking water).	
		12.	Making rope ladders for Troop use. & repairs to stool for Pge. Head Quarters.	
		13.	Deepening a Sump in Pge. Watering area, making canvas covers for reservoirs	
		14.	Completed Rope ladders & Reservoir covers, erected troughs in Pge. area.	
		15.	Repaired one of this troops limbers - made flares for use on projected operations	
		16.	Making Canvas Sheets and painting thereon signs for Aeroplane Reporting Stations.	
		17.	Overhauling Gear and making general preparations as far as possible for Special work	
		18.	2. O.R. to Dump Rafa, 1. O.R. to Squadron Head Quarters, 15 O.R. to Shiek Muran	
		19.	Painting Aeroplane Signs for Brigade, cleaning & repairing troughs	
		20.	Musketry Instruction, Carpenters repairing limbers, Plumbers making flares.	
		21.	Moved from Karakel to Abasan-el-Kebir to make final preparations for active operations	
		22.	Left 1. N.C.O. and Sapper at Karakel. to supervise watering arrangements for 1 st L.H. Brigade	
		23.	Drawing equipment from 1 st L.H. Brigade dump Rafa to replace equipment left with Brigade	
		24.	Troop moved from Abasan-el-Kebir to Gambi & joined up with Squadron Head Quarters	
		25.	Moved with Sqd. Hd. Qrs. developing water Khalassa to Ashuj. (See Squad. Report).	

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Abassan	1/10/17		<p><u>B TROOP</u> 3 C. L. O's & 6 O/R. proceeded to well Desert Corps, dismantled pump and fittings & tested Canvas water buckets. 1 Carpenter sharpened 4 Saws.</p> <p>1 C. L. O. & 4 O/R. delivered material to 5th 6th & 7th Light Horse Regiments. Erected high jump & fullow fight pole. Repaired table at officers mess 6th L.H. 1 NCO & 2 O/R. Repaired G. S. Limber.</p> <p>4 C. L. O's & 12 Sappers attended Instructional class on Derrick (sawing). 4 O/R. making quick release shackle and alteration to Canvas Water Buckets. Lieut. Steven left for Port Said Post camp.</p> <p>1 C. L. O. and 2 O/R. with limber proceeded to Brigade to collect all Brigade reserve pumping gear. 1 O/R. proceeded to R. E. Park Shellal with N. Z. Limber to exchange 6 pumps. 2 suction & 1 delivery hose complete.</p> <p>1 C. L. O. and 6 O/R. exchanged pumps (Mk 5 in place of Mk 4) at Abassan. Troop packed all gear & moved out for inspection at 2nd Brigade area.</p> <p>2 C. L. O's & 10 O/R. proceeded to Rifle Range. 1 C. L. O. & 1 G. S. Limber proceeded to Kilo N^o 9 to collect ordnance stores.</p> <p>1 C. L. O. & 1 O/R. proceeded to R. E. Park Bellah to collect material. 1 NCO & 1 G. S. Limber to R. E. Park Shellal.</p> <p>1 C. L. O. & 1 O/R. proceeded to R. E. Park Bellah to collect material. 1 NCO & 2 O/R. made targets for machine Gun Squadron. 1 O/R. made Telephone table for 5th A. L. H. Regt. 1 chair repaired for B. H. Q.</p> <p>2 O/R. altered Rope ladders from 1' 6" rungs to 1'. 2 O/R. making quick release swingle bar. 1 NCO. reported @ Bth D.H.Q.</p> <p>1 G. S. Limber Reported to watering officer @ 9.30 & 13.00 for filling in around water troughs. 2 O/R. repaired table D.H.Q.</p> <p>1 C. L. O. and 6 O/R. erected a 30' x 20' Reservoir to replace 1 unservicable at Abassan & fixed up drinking water cover.</p> <p>1 C. L. O. & 3 O/R. completed Reservoir at Abassan. 2 O/R. Reported S.H.Q. for days work at D.H.Q. 1 C. L. O. and 1 Limber reported Watering Officer Abassan to complete filling in around Water Troughs. 1 O/R. & half Limber proceeded @ R. E. Park Bellah to draw material. 1 C. L. O. and 2 O/R. reported to Watering Officer for duty 1 week at Abassan Watering Area. 2 NCO's & 6 O/R. erected Derrick & tested Canvas Water Bucket at well near Des. Corps. 1 O/R. Repaired Stretcher bed for Major Banger D.H.Q.</p> <p>1 C. L. O. & 5 O/R. erected 1.30' x 20' reservoir at Abassan in place of one unservicable. 3 O/R. reported S.H.Q. to assist erecting Stage at B.H.Q. 3 O/R. assisted in respraying gas helmets at S.H.Q.</p> <p>Clearing up camp etc. 1 O/R. proceeded to cooking school Smailia.</p> <p>Preparing and experimenting with material for the "stunt"</p> <p>Allowed with Sydn Head Quarters developing water Khalassa to Asluj (see Squadron Report)</p>	
	20.			
	31.			

- OCT 1917

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WAR DIARY

or

~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.~~

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Army Form C. 2118.

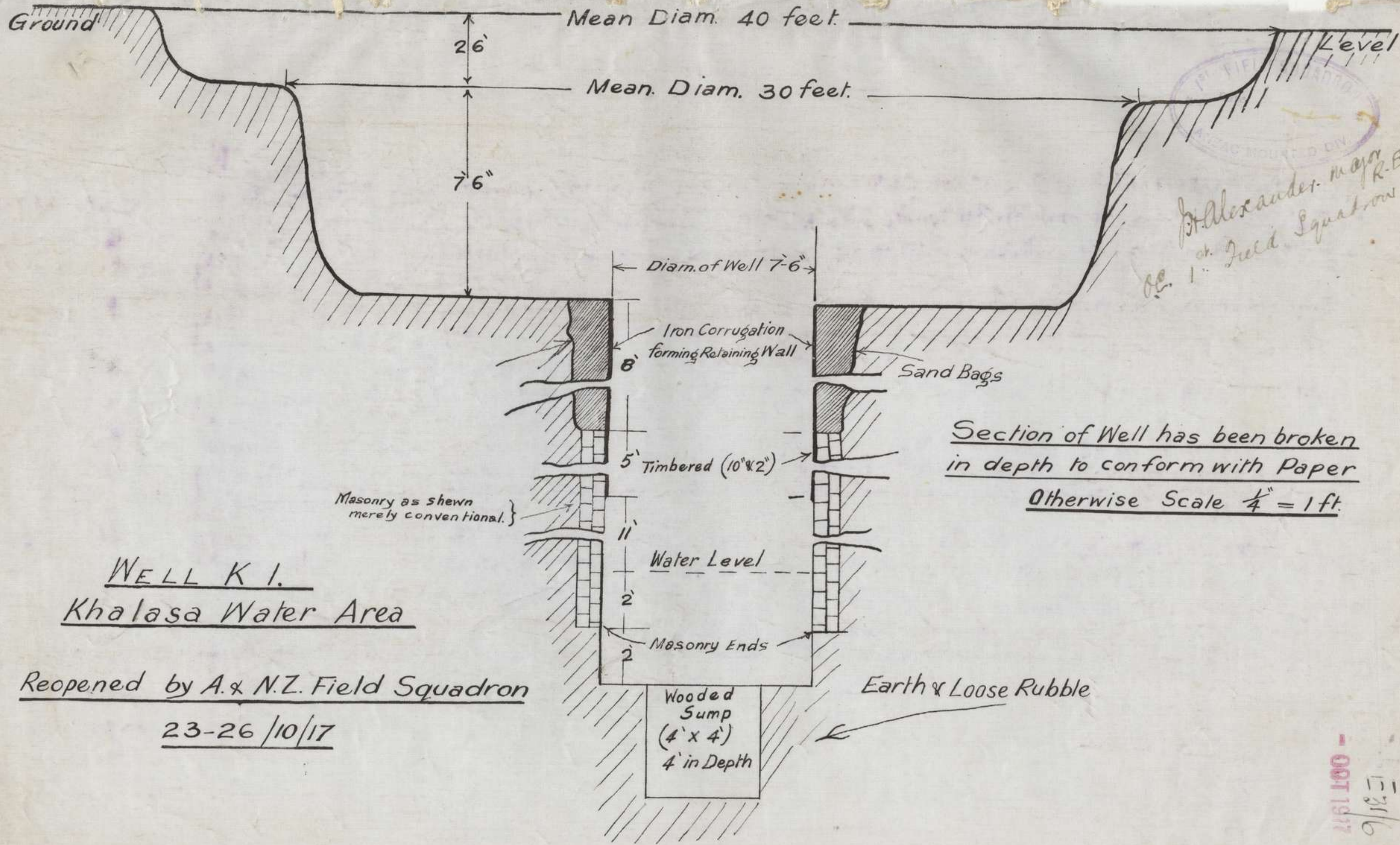
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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
			<u>N.Z. TROOP</u>	
Abassan.	1/10/17		3 o/r. to R.B. Park Belah for timber and canvas 4 o/r making target, 17 o/r erecting Pump at Hassan	
	2.		1 o/r on duty as allocated orderly for S. H. Q. 14 o/r erecting pump at Abassan Water area 4 o/r making targets	
	3.		4 o/r on guard water area. 2 o/r with timber to B.H.Q. for ordnance stores 4 o/r making targets & chairs	
			2 o/r making rope ladders.	
	4.		1 o/r on duty at S. H. Q as mounted orderly 3 o/r with timber to Rafa to R.B. Park. 10 o/r to Bidan 3 o/r to Shallah with timber 2 o/r making rope ladders. 4 o/r making chairs and Targets.	
	5.		4 o/r on water Guard Abassan, 4 o/r making targets. 1 o/r to Kalar.	
	6.		1 o/r reported to S. H. Q as mounted orderly. 2 o/r making canvas bags. 28 o/r shooting practice at Range	
			4 o/r making tables and chairs.	
	7.		3 o/r to Sheik Shuran with timber to Pump, 1 o/r to Kalar, 4 o/r making timber boxes.	
	8.		9 o/r at well Abassan testing new bucket apparatus, 3 o/r with timber cutting metal at water area Abassan	
			1 o/r making flares, 4 o/r water guard Abassan, 1 o/r orderly at S. H. Q. 4 carpentering, making stretcher & "Lemi" for new bucket.	
	9.		2 o/r with timber to Sheik Shuran, 3 o/r erecting stage for concert party, 10 o/r at Abassan well.	
			testing water hoist. 3 o/r carpentering & making stretchers and leg rests.	
	10.		1 o/r to Sheik Shuran, 1 o/r orderly S. H. Q. 3 o/r erecting stage, 2 o/r spraying gas helmets.	
			12 o/r at Abassan well with timber. 4 o/r making timber boxes	
			4 o/r making tailboard for timber and foot rests 1 o/r making flares 12 o/r gas practice	
	11.		Preparing and experimenting with material for the coming stunt.	
	12-19		absent with Squadron Head Quarter, developing water. Khalassa told by (see Squadron Report)	
	20			
	21			
	31			

OCT 1917

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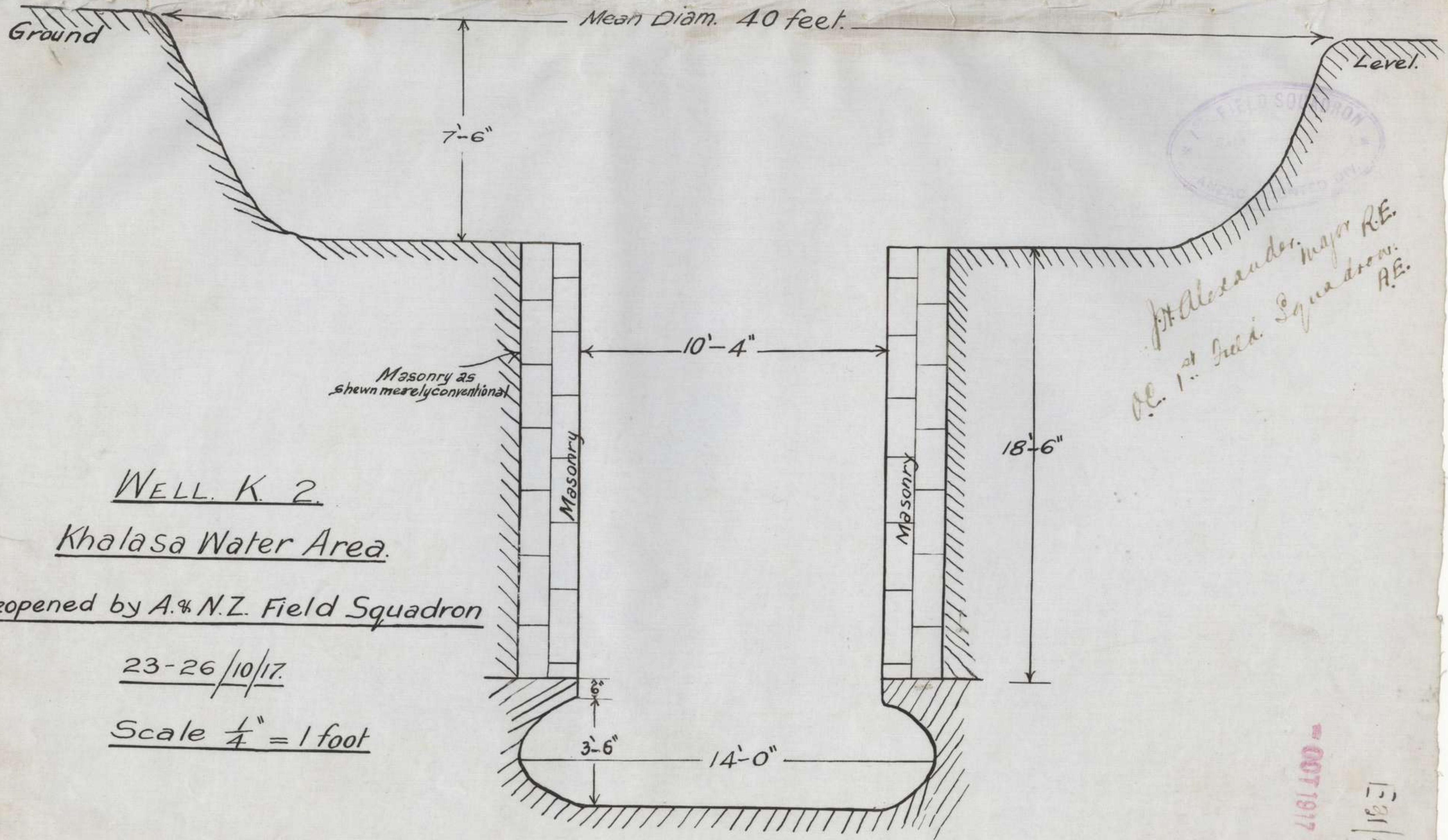
Major R.E. Alexander
1st Field Squadron

WELL K I.
Khalasa Water Area

Reopened by A. & N.Z. Field Squadron

23-26 / 10 / 17

100
- OCT 1917
11/16



J. Alexander, Major R.E.
 of 1st Field Squadron
 R.E.

WELL K. 2.

Khalasa Water Area.

Reopened by A. & N.Z. Field Squadron

23-26/10/17.

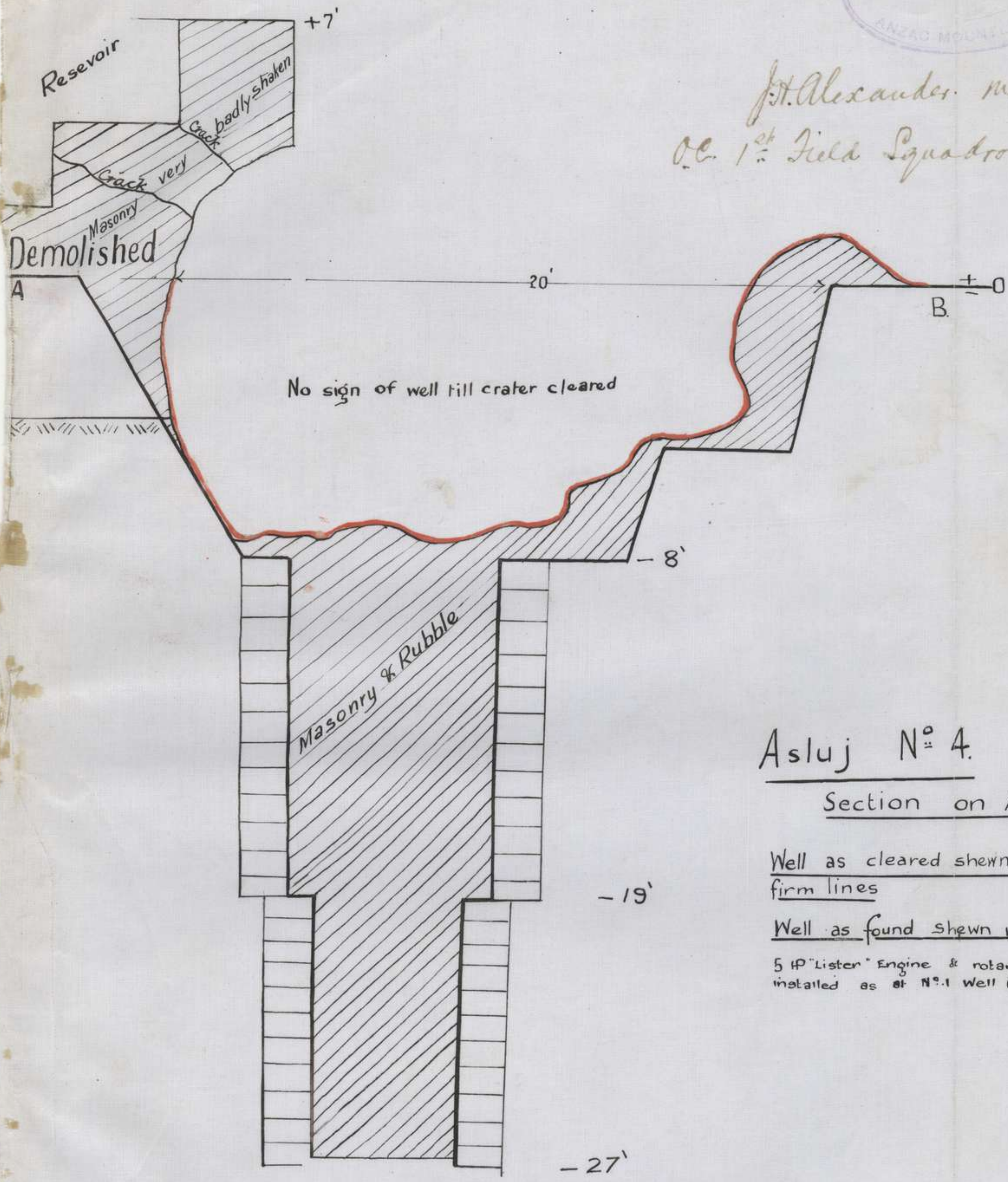
Scale $\frac{1}{4}$ " = 1 foot

0071917

13/17



J. H. Alexander Major R.E.
OC. 1st Field Squadron R.E.



Asluj N^o 4.
Section on A. B.

Well as cleared shown by firm lines

Well as found shown in red

5 HP "Lister" Engine & rotary pump installed as at N^o.1 Well (see sketch)

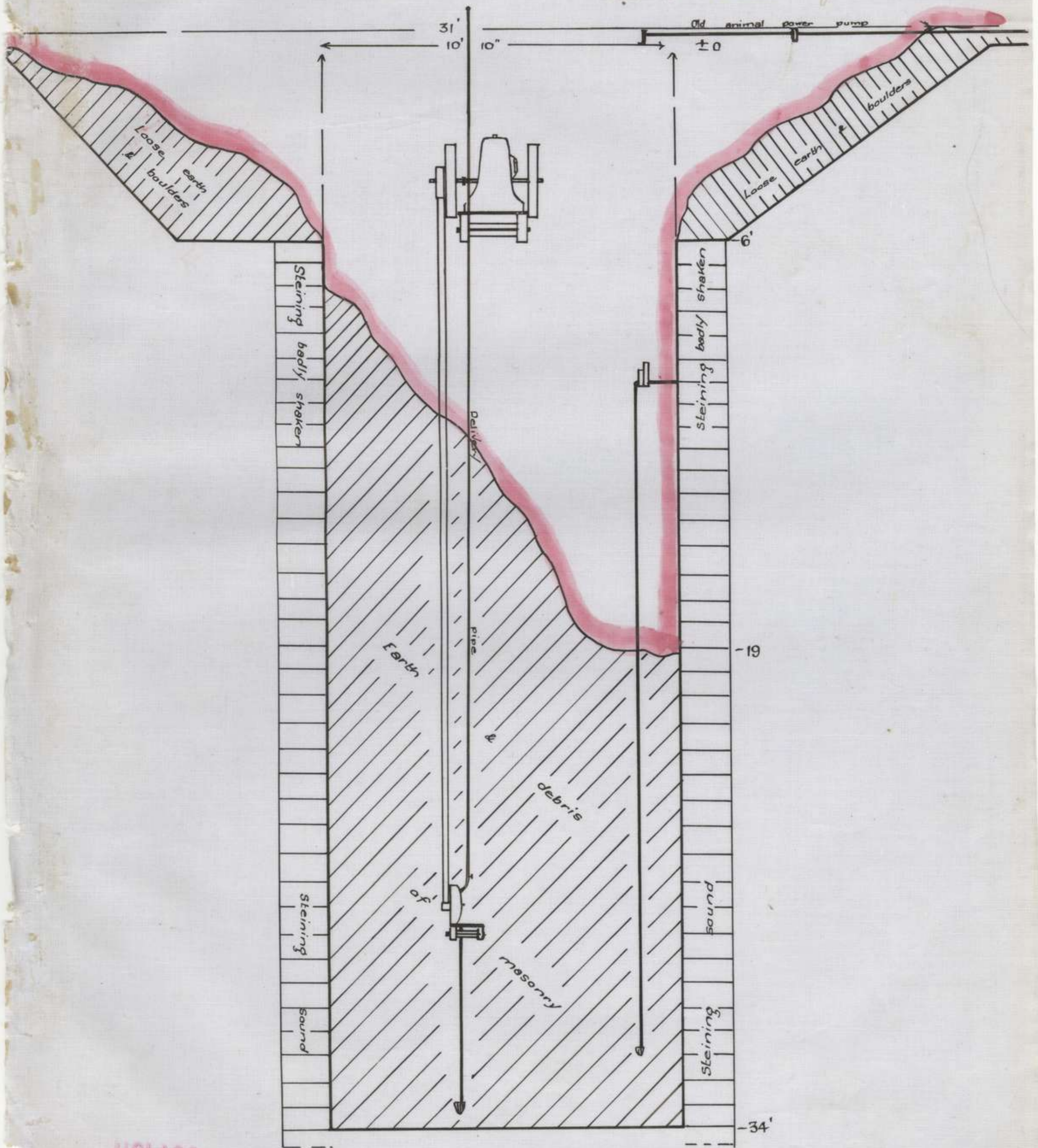
100100
2/12/11

ASLUJ No 1 WELL

Opened up by A. & N. Z. Field Squadron 28:12:17
 5 HP Lister Engine & rotary pump installed
 Clearing indicated by hatching
 Well as found shewn in red



H. Alexander, Major R.E.
 OC. 1st Field Squadron A.E.

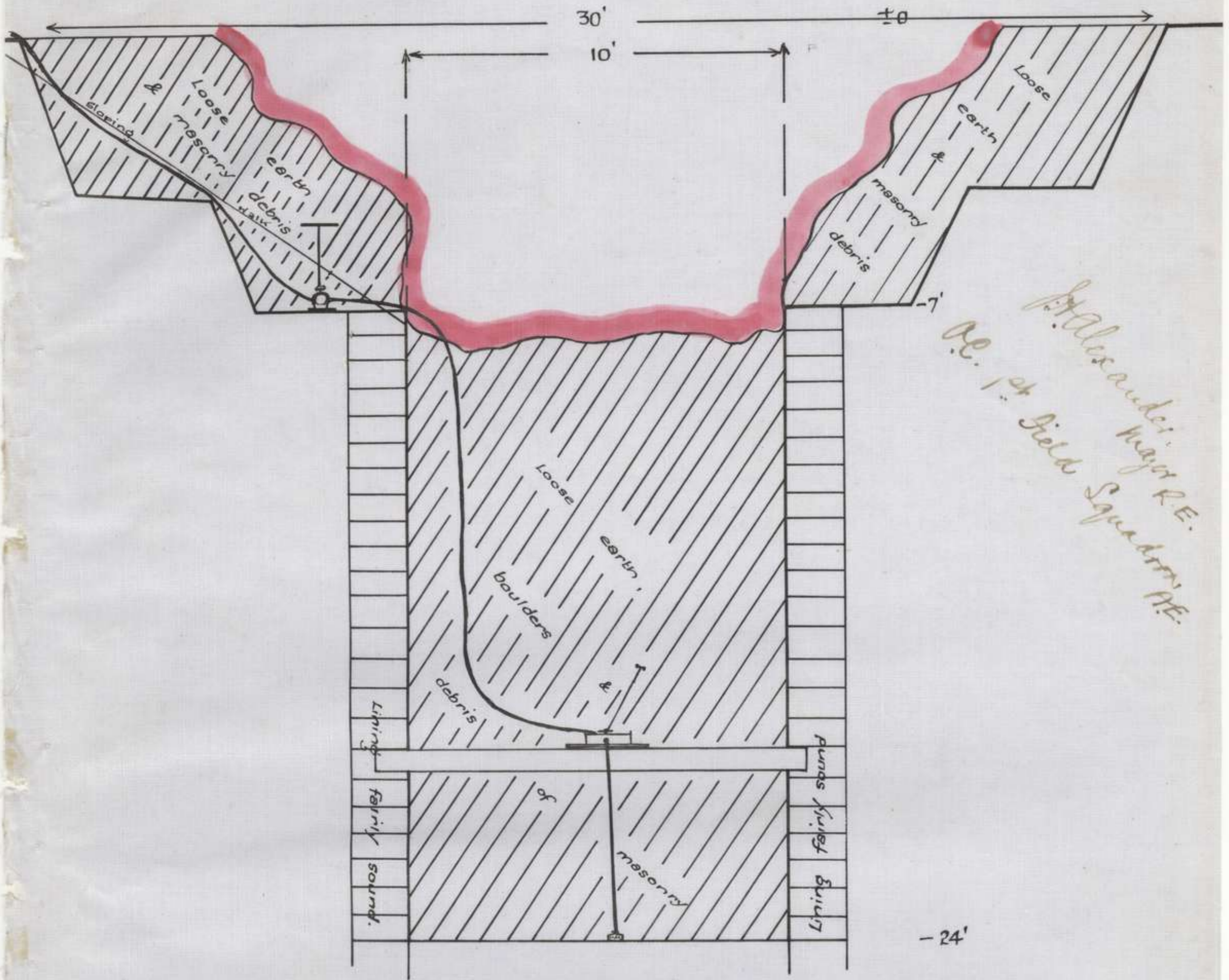


OCT 1917

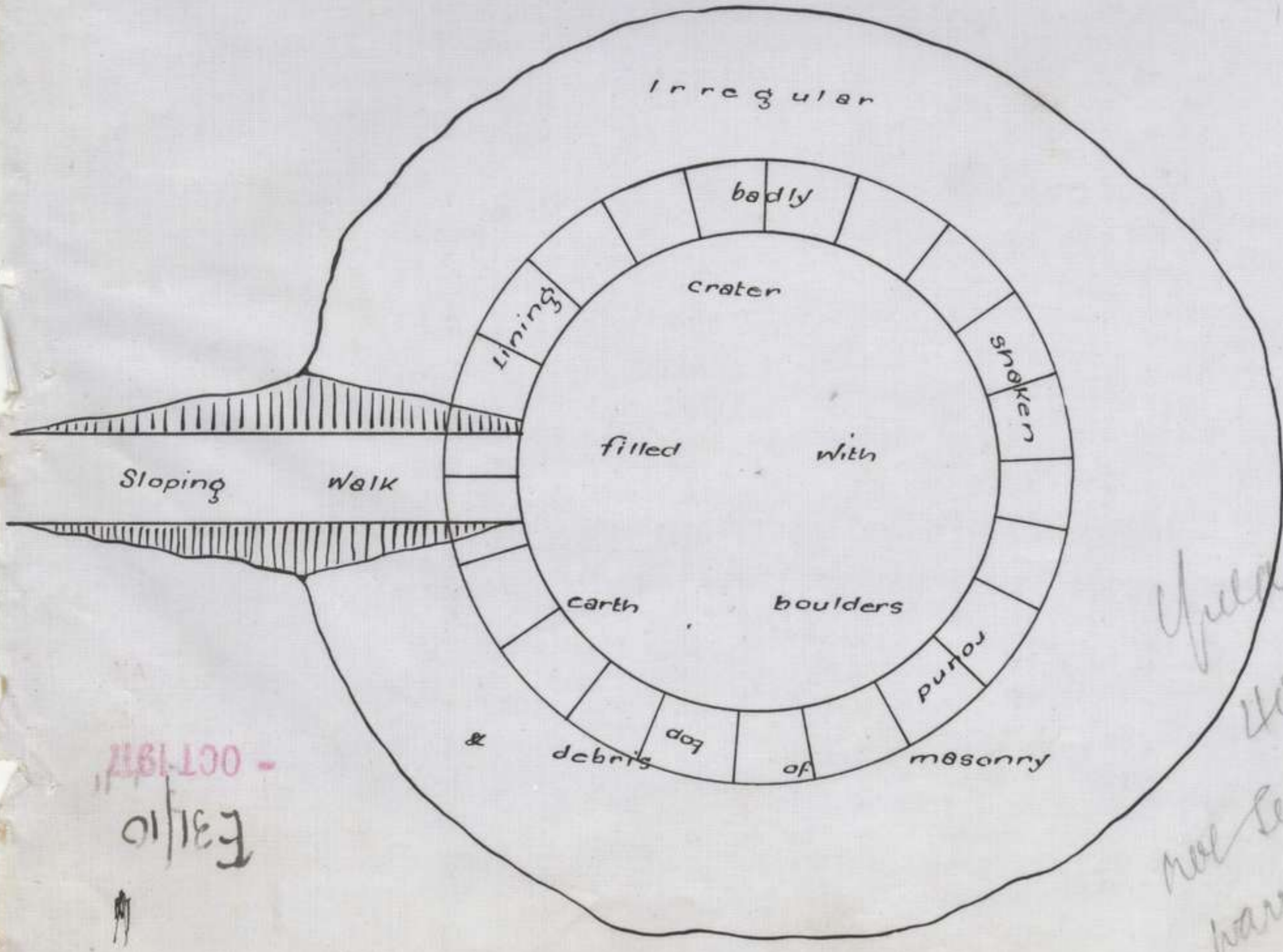
E 31/9

M

ASLUJ No 2 WELL
 Opened by A. & N.Z. Field Squadron 28:12:17
 Well as found shewn by red edging
 Well as opened up indicated by firm lines.
 L. & F pumps used in series



*Alexander Major R.E.
 A.C. 1st Field Squadron A.E.*



*Yuen about
 400 gpl.
 not sufficient
 not all in
 engine*

*1861-100 - OCT 1917
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NOV 1917

1st FIELD SQUADRON
Date Dec 1917
ANZAC MOUNTED DIV.

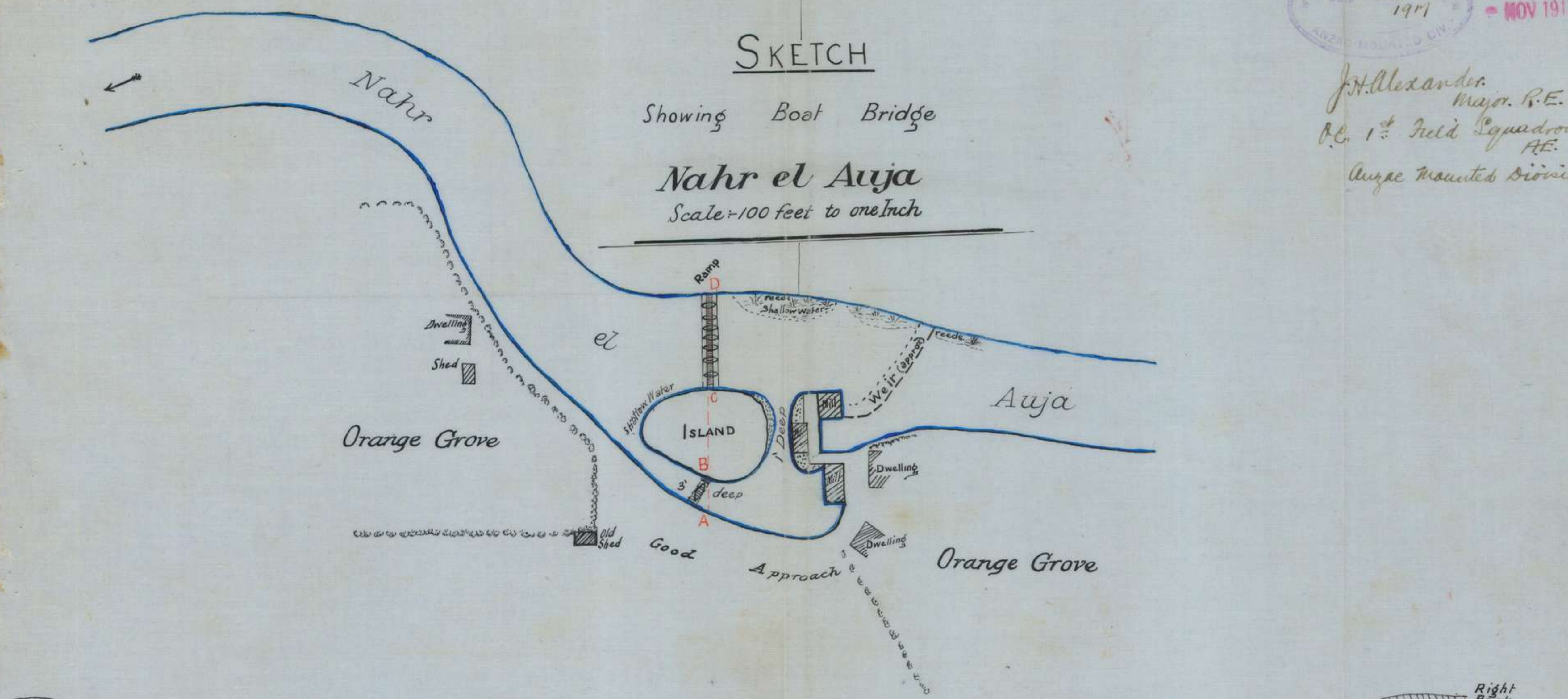
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NOV 1917

SKETCH

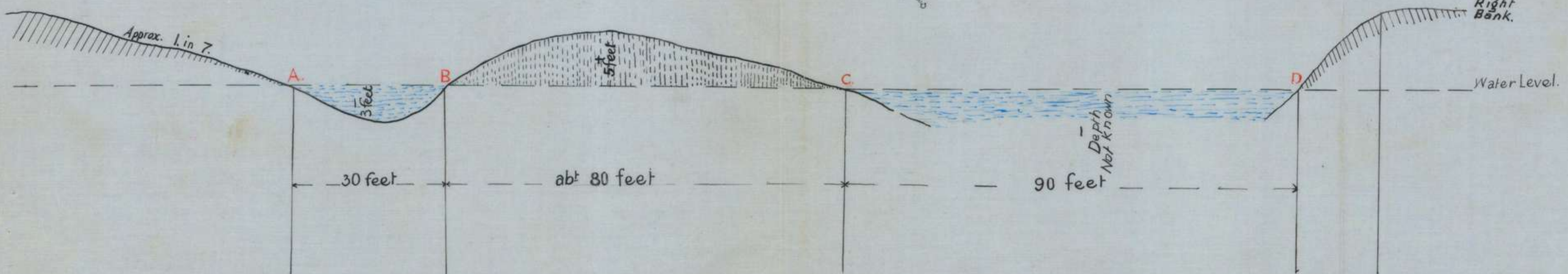
Showing Boat Bridge

Nahr el Auja

Scale = 100 feet to one Inch



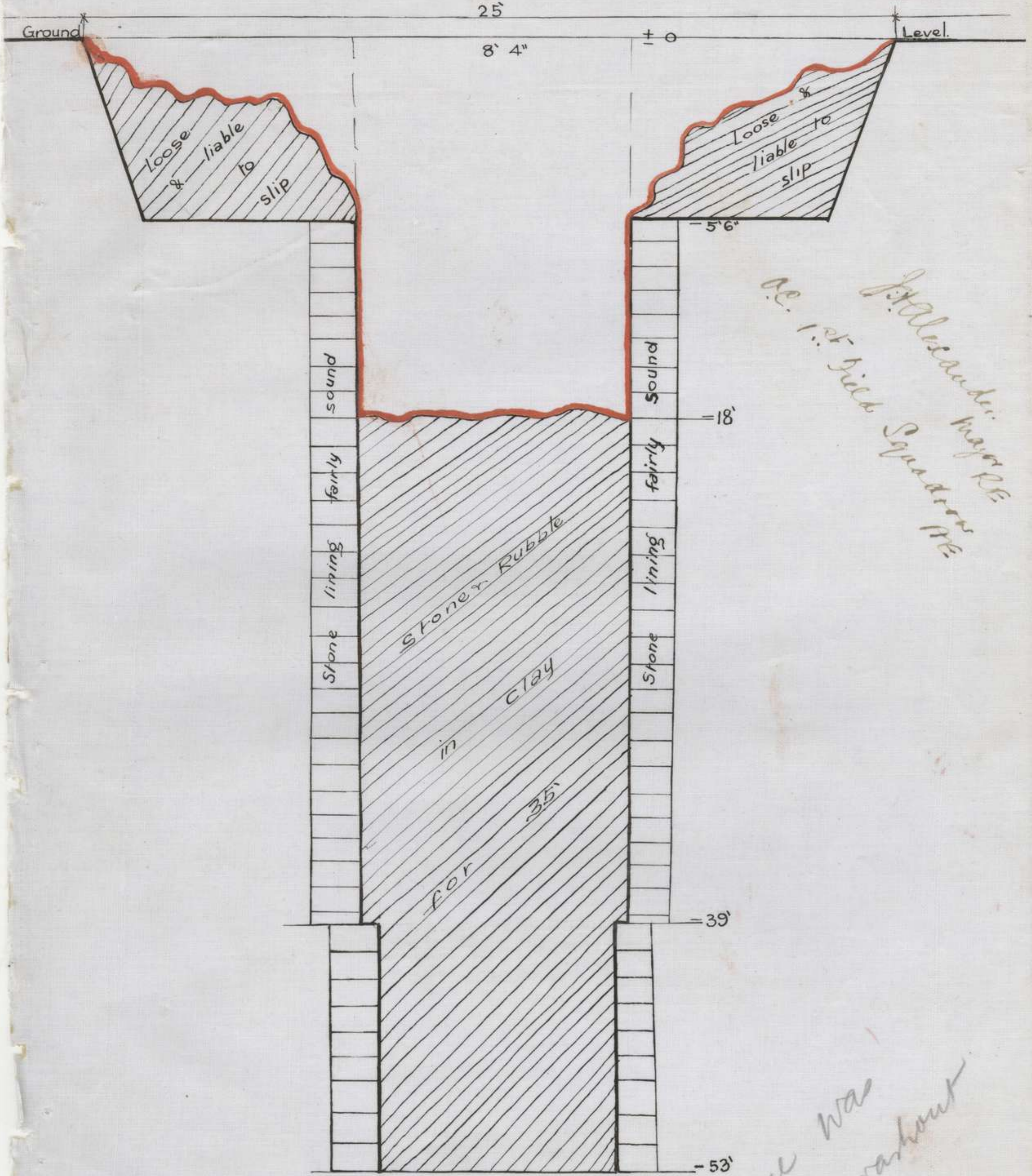
J.H. Alexander
Major, R.E.
P.O. 1st Field Squadron
A.E.
Auja Mounted Division



Approx. Section

Scale { Hor. 20' to 1 inch }
Ver. 10' - 1 inch }

Asluj No 3
 Well as found edged red
 Well as cleared indicated by firm lines
 L & F pumps installed in series
 Opened up by A. & N.Z. Field Squadron 28.12.17



*de. 1st Field Squadron RE
 Alexander Major RE*

*This well was
 practically a washout*

1161 188 -
 E 31/11

Plan

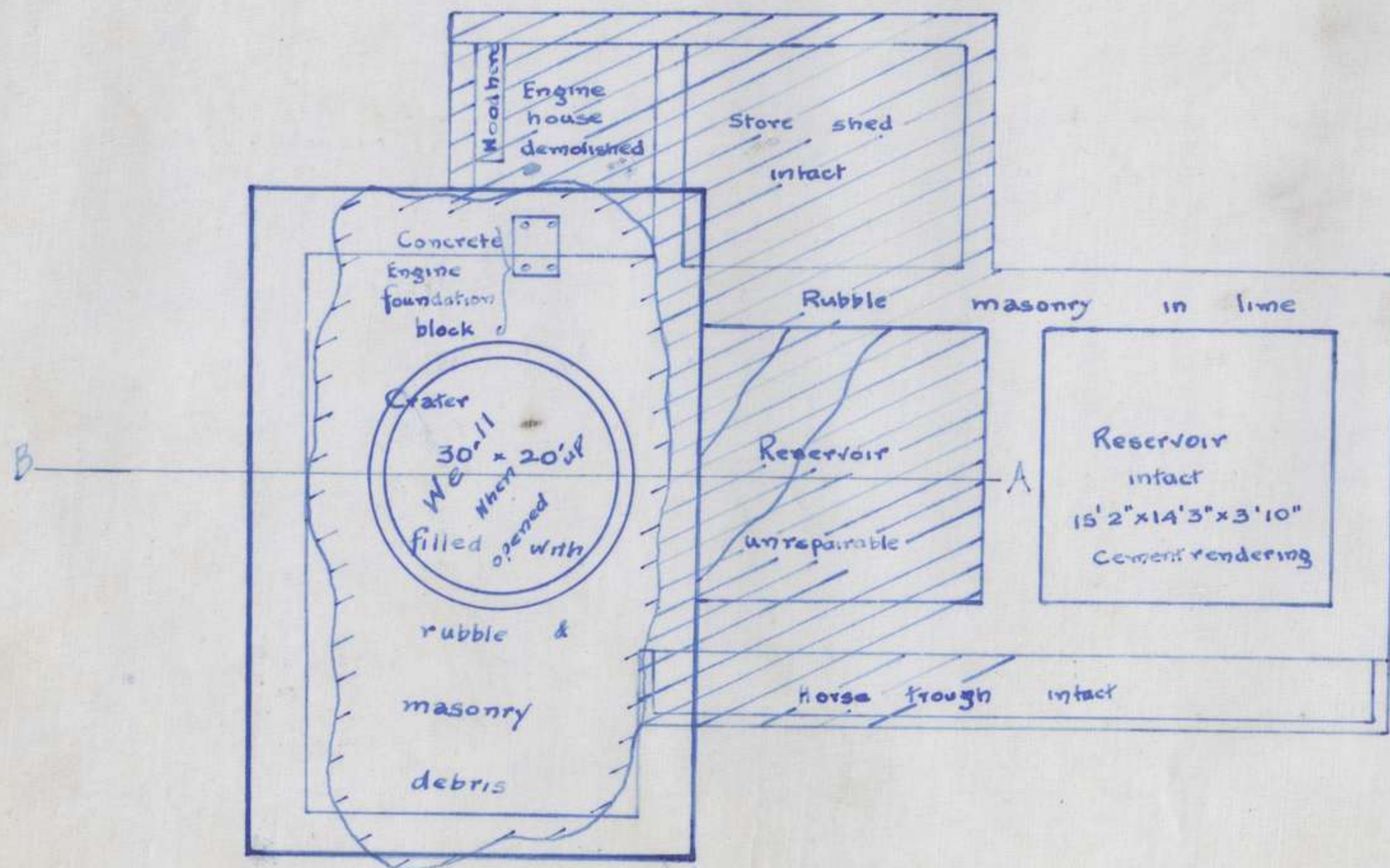
Asluj No 4 Well

Hatched area cleared and crater opened up as shown by firm lines

(See Section herewith)



*J. Alexander Major RE
1st Field Squadron RE*



21 OCT 1917

E 21/17