

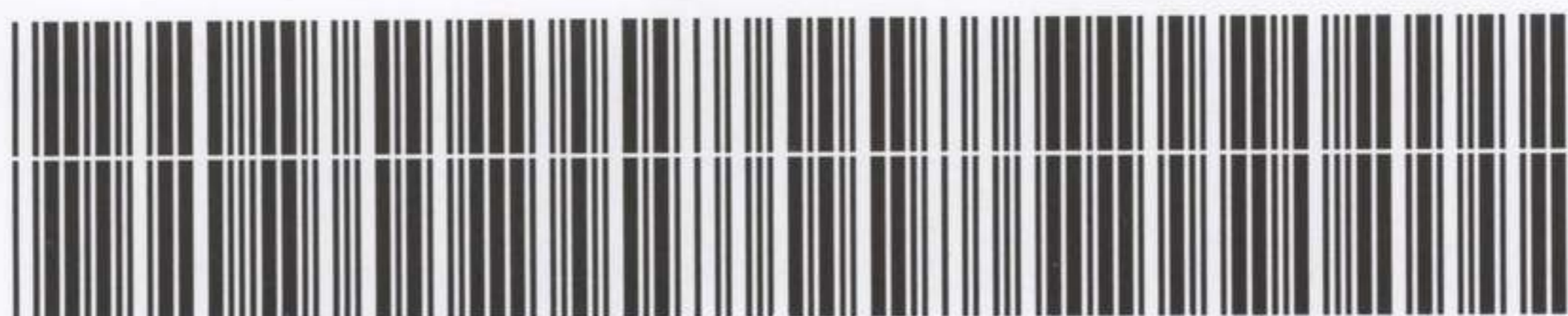
**AWM4**  
**Australian Imperial Force unit war diaries,**  
**1914-18 War**

Engineers

**Item number:** 14/40/7 Part 1

**Title:** D Field Troop and Bridging Train,  
Australian Engineers

September - October 1918



AWM4-14/40/7PART1



1225  
**CONFIDENTIAL.**

**ORIGINAL.**  
**DUPLICATE.**  
**TRIPLICATE.**

Australian Imperial Force.

**WAR DIARY**

OF

"D" FIELD TROOP & BRIDGING TRAIN. AUST. ENGINEERS.

FOR

7<sup>TH</sup> PERIOD - SEPT. 1918 TO OCT. 1918.

Signature of Officer compiling

*A. J. Brownell Capt.*

Signature of Officer Commanding

*A. J. Brownell Capt.*



No.

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or  
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

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SHEET NO 66A.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
7 <sup>th</sup> PERIOD. SEPT. 1918 TO OCT. 1918.				
JERUSALEM.	2/9/18		Move off from JERUSALEM was very well done 1930 2/9/18. a party of one officer & 6 O/R being left behind on JORDAN plain & an advanced party being sent forward as set out in appendix. Good march except for a broken swingletree & one horse going down with gripes, was made to ENAB, where camp was made at 2400.	APPENDIX No 41.
ENAB	3/9/18		Revell at 0600, usual parade was held at 0630; mules were fed with feeds carried in nosebags, & draughts with those carried in sacks on their wagons. Tea at 1630, good move-off at 1815 and LATRON was reached at 2300. Here were standing horse-lines and everything was sang and picquet mounted at 2330.	
RAMLEH.	4/9/18		Moving off at 1830 good march was made to RAMLEH, 2130, the effects of good discipline being shown in the way	



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SHEET NO. 67.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
RAMLEH	4/9/18.		good distance was kept and orders for halts etc. were passed. The man detailed by N.C.O. in charge of advance party as guide to camping ground selected by him, was unable to find his way for some time; the site, south of the town, was however reached and all snug at 2300.	
	5/9/18		This was an excellent camp site, large olive trees giving agreeable shade and the ground being dry, clear & clean. Move was made about 1900, the road to LAFFA was found to be in fair condition, but for frequent patches of new metal which necessitated finding & using side tracks, and camp was made alongside ALJA river at MUANNIS Bridge at about 0100, 6/9/18.	
ALJA.	6/9/18		Reveille' at 0700. Watering was made at ALJA river 0930 and unit moved off at 1000 to good camping ground on sandy soil close to sand hills and immediately south of river; by the afternoon, the camp was ship shape with tents & bivvys erected, & visit was made by C.E. XXI Corps.	
	7/9/18		O.C. visited H.Q. XXI Corps & discussed with C.E. that Corps & C.R.E.	3



No.

## WAR DIARY

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SHEET NO 68

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
ALWA RIVER	7/9/18		<p>Desert Mtd. Corps, the expected engineer work, in particular bridging, during the forthcoming operations. Lt. R.A. CAMPBELL and remainder of detachments left behind in the JORDAN valley, rejoined. The unit was practised in pontooning in the ALWA river, many of the men doing the work for the first time, and the recently redesigned and altered trestles were found to answer admirably. The trestle as originally designed, did not permit of ready adjustment of the transom, this was rectified by making the transom, which carried the superstructure, independent of the braced trestle, to which an additional rigid transom was added, it being given lateral play at the legs &amp; contacting therewith by means of rollers, so that it could be moved by chain blocks, to take up a position much inclined to the general position of the trestle, if necessary.</p>	
	8/9/18		<p>The route expected to be taken by the unit on mobile operations commencing, were reconnoitred as far North as practicable, and training in pontooning was continued. Draft of 10% taken on strength.</p>	
	9/9/18		<p>Troop drill was carried on in order to get men and horses into condition</p>	11



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SHEET NO 69.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
AUSA RIVER.	9/9/18		in view of very mobile nature of imminent operations and good times were made in pontooning.	
	10/9/18		Training in pontooning and with mounted drill was continued. Good time was done in night bridging, the AUSA being bridged, using all pontoons, without noise or bustle, in 1 hour 35 minutes, including time to off-load and by personnel of this unit only.	
	13/9/18		O.C. attended conference at DAFEM of C.Os. of Engineer Units of Adv. Med. Corps. Arrival of 18 riding horses made it possible to mount every man of strength.	
	14/9/18		A commencement was now made in preparing material for fixed trestle bridging which was to be carried by the train during the projected operations. It was expected that the unit would be required to bridge the ISKANDERUN-EH and NAHR FALIK and that there would be a depth of water in them insufficient to float the pontoons of the equipment carried by the unit. Also it was desired to construct bridges to carry loaded motor lorries & consideration was given to the design of a bridge which would comply with these conditions, <sup>&amp; those of material available</sup> & yet would be light enough to be carried with	APPENDIX No 42



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## WAR DIARY

or

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SHEET NO 70.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
AUA RIVER	14/9/18		<p>The train over the heavy going expected. Air photographs of the sites concerned, provided material for much study, giving conclusions as to requirements which were later found to be much more accurate than the intelligence available from other sources. The design set out in the appendix was settled on, and material got from A.P.R.E. LIDD. and every thing was, by strenuous exertions, got ready &amp; loaded in time for moving off 18/9/18.</p> <p>The train was employed in transport of standard pontoon equipment to the MILL, JERISHEM, where two pontoon bridges were to be swung out by this unit during night preceding commencement of operations, the work <sup>of transport</sup> being completed at 0600, 16/9/18.</p> <p>The unit's pontoon bridging equipment and all surplus technical equipment and baggage were dumped at Camp site, it being intended to travel as light as possible &amp; was left in charge of 30/R who were unable to accompany the unit. The fixed trestle bridging equipment was loaded.</p> <p>Moving off at dusk, via MUANNIS BRIDGE, traffic conditions were rather difficult but the MILL, JERISHEM was reached, where bridges were swung and racked down and decks spread with earth to prevent noise and restiveness of animals crossing. The 4<sup>th</sup> Cavalry division, safely crossed during the early hours</p>	APPENDIX No. 42
	15/9/18			
	16/9/18			
	17/9/18			
	18/9/18			



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SHEET NO. 71.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
JERISHEM	19/9/18		<p>of next morning, and the unit moved with 'A' Echelon of that division about 0830. The going through the enemy trench system between TABSOR and the coast was sandy &amp; very heavy indeed for the <sup>heavy</sup> wagons of the train, the teams having frequently to be double banked, &amp; progress was disappointingly slow. The NAHR FALIK was reached at dusk and it was found that there no bridging was required. A reconnoitring party, pushed on to the ISKANDERUNEH, reported that the bridges at that crossing were intact. Orders were received from C.P.E., Des. Mtd. Corps. to offload the trestle bridging, and push on with tools and the scanty technical equipment carried. MUGHAR was passed and ISKANDERUNEH reached about 1200. Comparison of the ground with air photographs, showed that overhanging bushes had made the stream appear a series of pools. Moving at 0700, the going was, even for the lightly loaded wagons, soft &amp; heavy. At LIKTERA some meal was requisitioned and bread purchased, and midday halt was made at railway crossing just beyond. At KERKUR the going improved and good marching was made through the WADI ARA and MUSMUS pass to LESJUNE which was reached at dusk, 21/9/18.</p>	
ISKANDERUNEH	20/9/18			
LESJUNE	21/9/18			
AFULE	22/9/18		<p>Unit was engaged in watering arrangements and in constructing cages for thousands of prisoners. O.C. proceeded to AFULE and</p>	
NAZARETH			<p>NAZARETH, reconnoitring water supply facilities</p>	



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SHEET NO. 72.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
AFULE.	22/9/18 23/9/18 to 27/9/18.		<p>and condition of HAIFA - BEISAN railway in vicinity of AFULE.</p> <p>Unit moved early on 23/9/18, to AFULE and commenced work of improving supply of water for use of troops and for watering locomotives, and in repairing the damage done by demolition work to the railway. A petrol-engine driven pump at the railway station and a very broken down steam pumping plant, distant about a mile North, were intermittently worked; several lengths of rail within two miles of AFULE were replaced by rails taken from the AFULE station yards and efforts were made to get locomotives, some of which had been bombed, &amp; otherwise damaged, into working order, and to clear tracks of demolished rolling stock, and to make up trains. A train proceeded with 30 tons of supplies to BEISAN about midday 25/9/18 and two trains were run all day 26/9/18 with prisoners, about 4000, from BEISAN to AFULE, last train arriving at AFULE about 2230. Much time was wasted at BEISAN by 4<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Division, which insisted on counting &amp; rationing the prisoners as they were entrained. The detachment at BEISAN under LT. CAMPBELL, also did some work in repairing the damaged road between BEISAN and SAMAKH. The prisoners as they arrived at AFULE were watered, the Turks, in contrast with the Germans, being quite out of any control of officers or N.C.O.s, and giving a</p>	



No. \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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SHEET NO. 73.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
AFULE.	23/9/18 to 27/9/18		<p>lot of trouble. On 26/9/18. there was a sharp shower of rain which made the ground at AFULE very sticky, and produced plaques of mosquitoes, thereby adding to the already unhealthy conditions due to decaying animals and defective enemy sanitary arrangements. This day O.C. was warned of probable intention to move on DAMASCUS by way of USR BENAT YAKUB, the bridge at which crossing had been demolished, and of probability of this unit being required to undertake its repair. From the meagre intelligence available, it appeared to be most probable that the demolition had consisted in the fracture of a masonry arch and selection was immediately made of such material, as could be found in the enemy dumps and parks at AFULE, which could be employed for repair of a demolition of that kind. Some useful rolled steel joists were available, but the only other suitable material to be had were a few blue gum saplings and a large quantity of very rotten deals, about 6" x 2". Fortunately some good 8" x 4" and a supply of <math>\frac{7}{8}</math>" bolts and 6" wire nails, had been brought with the unit from LUBD.</p> <p>Orders being received at 0200, material was collected between 0330 and 0730 and loaded on to six motor lorries, together with party, consisting O.C. unit and 12 sappers and N.C.O's and a working party of 18 E.L.C. with rations &amp; kits, this column moving off at 0900.</p> <p>At NAZARETH, petrol, oil &amp; carbide were drawn</p>	



~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.~~

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SHEET NO 74.

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
KEFR KENNA	27/9/18		<p>from the former enemy dump and a good run was made to beyond KEFR KENNA. The road now became much rougher and TIBERIUS was traversed and halt made for lunch at 1500, at MEDEL. The road was full of cavalry and progress was difficult, especially without lights, after dark. Two miles beyond MEDEL a broken down culvert was converted, as a temporary measure, into an invert crossing, there being neither time nor material to allow of attempts to restore it. H.Q. 5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Division met at 2330, and a meal and an hour's rest were taken at 0200 28/9/18. At 0300, the lorries were taken to H.Q. Aust. Mtd. Division. Officer's reconnaissance of the crossing was made at dawn, when 4<sup>th</sup> A.L.H. Brigade commenced to ford just below demolished bridge. Lorries were then brought down and the work of bridging commenced. Some complication was caused by the visit of two enemy bombing planes, the natives of E.L.C. showing considerable alarm, and the information given by inhabitants of the adjacent Jewish village as to the presence of an unexploded charge in the eastern arch. The E.L.C. were employed in filling an exploded culvert in the approach to the bridge and in carrying material from the lorries, which had to be stung out along the road to the entrance to the bridge, and the engineer party worked with such energy and skill that the bridge was carrying traffic at 1240, about five hours after commencement of the work. No. 18018 Sgt. SCULLY. T.P.</p>	<p>APPENDIX No 43.</p>



No. \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# WAR DIARY

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SHEET. NO. 75.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
JISR BENAT YAKUB.	28/9/18		<p>especially distinguished himself here, as elsewhere. The traffic which was urgently required, namely the fighting limbers of the M.G. Sqdns and the cars of the light car patrol, together with some H.Q. cars of brigades, the 5th Cavalry and Australian Mtd Division, were passed over with only a single decking. The second layer of deck was then added and a constant stream of wagons, cars &amp; guns continued all day and well into the night.</p>	
	29/9/18		<p>0300 traffic was quieter and the pier which had up till this time consisted of the flat trestle only was strengthened and so made absolutely safe for loaded motor lorries by the addition of struts of blue gum saplings, while the footings were loaded with large rubble to prevent washaway in event of river flooding. During the day, Corps H.Q. and heavy armoured cars and the loaded divisional train of the 5th Cavalry and Aust. Mtd Division crossed, and the traffic of supply lorries commenced. As the very soft timber used in the deck was showing signs of rapid wear, a third layer of decking was added and the upper surface was kept covered with loose earth &amp; light brushwood.</p>	
	30/9/18 to 3/10/18		<p>A site suitable for the erection of a new bridge of more permanent type was surveyed and the limited personnel, which was now rapidly dwindling with fever, was employed in improving the very</p>	

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SHEET NO. 76.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
415R BENAT YAKUB	30/9/18 To 3/10/18		<p>bad road from the JORDAN towards DAMASCUS. Efforts to secure labour from amongst local inhabitants for this work were unsuccessful, owing to the amount of sniping which was indulged in by hostile Circassians along the road, although captured Turkish money, up to the value of four shillings per day, was offered in rages. Afternoon of 2/10/18, the remainder of the unit, including the bridging train, under LT. R.A. CAMPBELL, which had marched up from AFULE 28/9/18 and had built a road culvert with hollow concrete building blocks, near MEUDEL, on the way, arrived.</p>	
	5/10/18		<p>On 3/10/18 CAPT. E.J. HONELLS was evacuated to Field Ambulance and LT. R.A. CAMPBELL assumed command of the unit.</p>	
	6/10/18		<p>Repairing bad places in roads beyond BENAT YAKUB bridge by own E.L.C. labour. Again endeavoured to obtain native labour for roads, but men refused to come for less than 30 piastres per day, so were not employed.</p>	
	7/10/18		<p>Parties with transport were out to neighbouring villages daily to requisition horse feed. Men were going sick with malaria at rate of four or five per day, during the whole period 4/10/18 to 12/10/18.</p>	
	to 12/10/18		<p>CAPT GREY, arrived in car and Pioneer Battalion arrives to repair road for 8 miles beyond BENAT YAKUB</p>	
	10/10/18		<p>LT. R.A. CAMPBELL travelled to DAMASCUS to see C.R.E. re medical comforts + work and on 13/10/18 was admitted to hospital.</p>	
	12/10/18			
	13/10/18			



# WAR DIARY

OF

"D" FIELD TROOP & BRIDGING TRAIN. AUST. ENGRS.

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FOR

7<sup>TH</sup> PERIOD SEPT. TO OCT. 1918.

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## LIST OF APPENDICES.

No.

Subject.

41. *MOVEMENT ORDER.*  
(2 Sheets).
42. *DESIGN OF TRESTLE BRIDGE.*  
(4 Sheets)
43. *SKETCH. REPAIRS TO PARTIALLY DEMOLISHED  
BRIDGE. (JISR BENAT YAKUB.)*



"D" FIELD TROOP AND  
BRIDGING TRAIN. A. E.

No. ....

Date .....

Movement order.

By Capt. E. J. Howells. Comd. "D" Field Troop.  
Bridging Train. A. E.The unit will move as per following march  
table

March table

2/9/18	1900	March out
	2230	(about) Arrive Enab.
3/9/18	1900	Leave Enab.
	2230	(about) Arrive Latrou
4/9/18	1900	Leave Latrou
	2230	(about) Arrive Ramleh
5/9/18	1900	Leave Ramleh
6/9/18	0030	about. Arrive at Aija

Advance Party as follows; S/Sgt. Thompson. Sgt. Strang  
Spr. Peebles and Lt. Gros. will report as follows.

1/9/18	1600	to S.O. Enab.
2/9/18	1600	to S.O. Latrou
3/9/18	1600	to H.O. Lof. B. Ramleh
4/9/18	1600	to <u>XXI</u> Corp. Bridging School

to arrange a) camp site b) water and  
c) rations. From each place S/Sgt. Thompson  
will send back one man with details  
of them in writing, to report unit as  
soon as arrangements are made

Order of March will be.

Headquarters

Mounted Sappers.

Wagons in numerical order

Farrriers and Saddler.



<p>"D" FIELD TROOP AND BRIDGING TRAIN. A. E. No ..... Date .....</p>
--

Brakesmen

One man will be detailed as brakesman to each wagon and will ride thereon

Loading

No gear of any kind to be in sight above gunnalls of pontoons.

Dress

Unless otherwise ordered, all ranks will be properly dressed, with bandoliers and waistbelts in case of drivers and men riding in wagons, and all equipment with men mounted.

Rear Party

as follows remain at JORDAN PLAIN  
Lieut Campbell, Cpl Nicholson, & Sprs  
Northmore, Briggs, Boyd, & Colquhoun.

(Signed)

Copies to W. O. Finch

S/Sgt. Thompson

Sgt. Roberts.

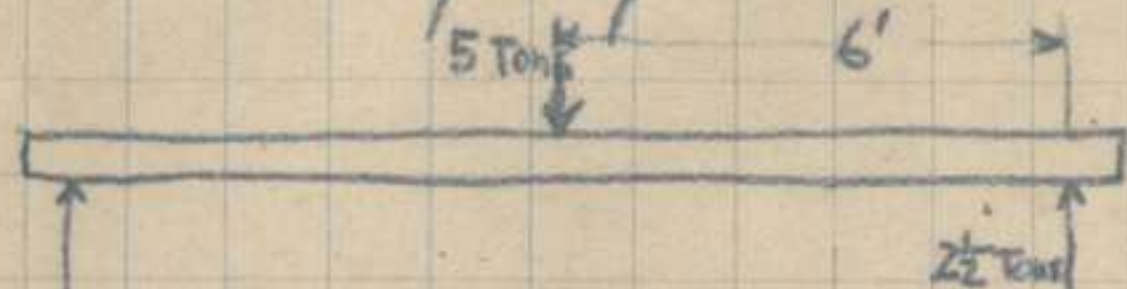
E. H. Havelle, Capt.

1/9/18.



adding 10% for impact, max. BM then  $\approx 177,000$  in-lb.  
 Comparing 9x3 and 8x4 for weight and as girders,  
 for weight 27 : 32, for strength 243 : 256.  $\therefore$  9x3 is  
 more economical.  $Z = \frac{9 \times 9 \times 3}{6} = \sim 405$  and Max.  
 intensity of stress then  $= \frac{177,000}{405} = \sim 4370$  lb/ft<sup>2</sup>. Using  
 2-9x3 Max f  $\therefore = 2185$  lb/ft<sup>2</sup> which is, for hardwood  
 of fair quality, well within allowable stress.

2) longitudinal girders: Max B.M. occurs with  
 load at centre of bay then:-



and is  $\therefore \frac{5}{2} \times 2240 \times 6 \times 12 = \sim 403,000$  inch-lb.  
 8x4 is better than 9x3 for lateral stability and its  $Z$   
 $= \frac{8 \times 8 \times 4}{6} = \sim 42.6$  and assuming total load is  
 carried by 4 of 5 girders Max f  $= \frac{403,000}{42.6 \times 4} =$   
 $\sim 2360$  lb/ft<sup>2</sup>. and adding 10% for impact  $\approx 2600$   
 lb/ft<sup>2</sup>, well within allowance.

N.B. Increment due to impact has been assumed  
 for lorry moving at not more than 2 m.p.h and is in  
 accordance with present-day engineering practice.

3) Columns Ample scantling, 6x6, is  
 assumed for them in order to give good bearing  
 for girder and eill jointing and nailed-on  
 bracing. (See Appendix Table Aldersworth p. 107 25<sup>th</sup> ed)  
 4x4 would do for strength as strut, but 6x4 would  
 at least be reqd for jointing

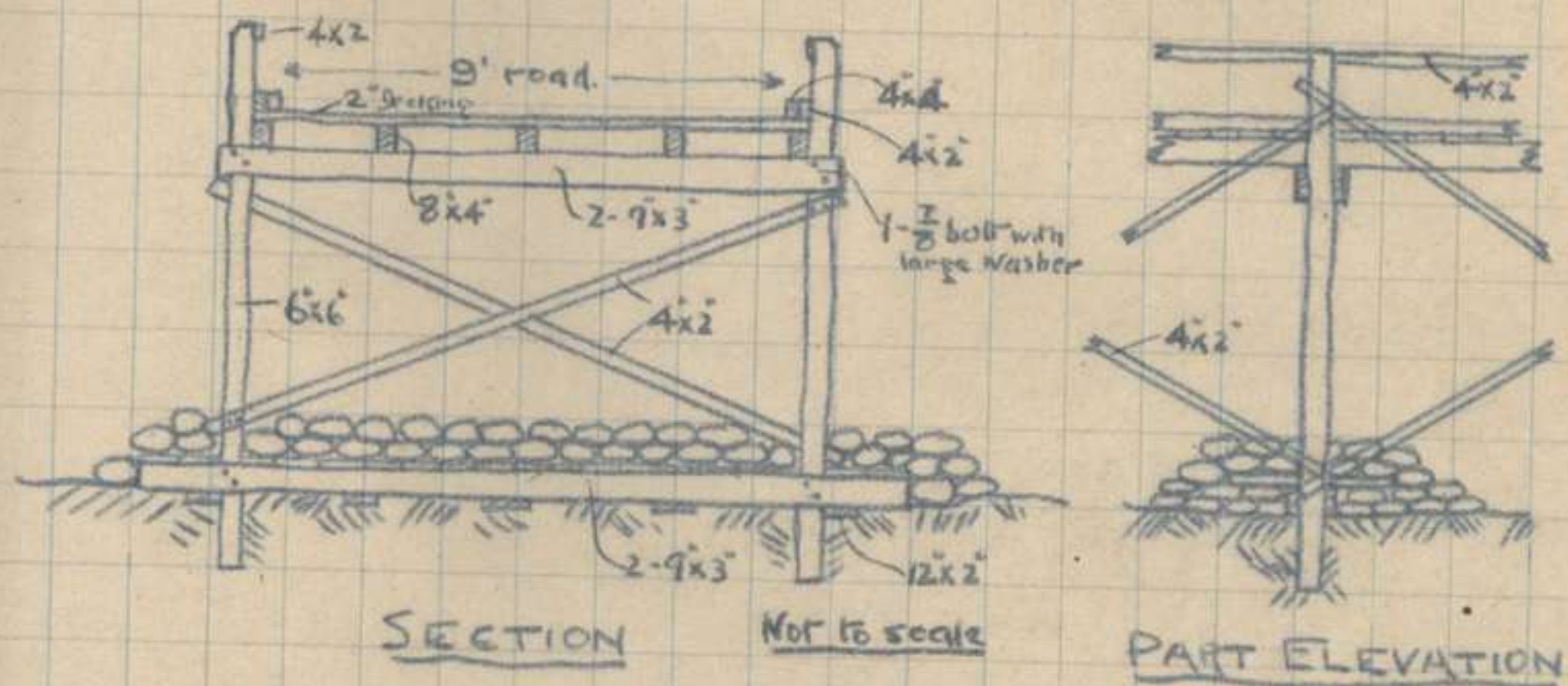
4) Cills Conditions of loading will be at

## Detest Motor Corps

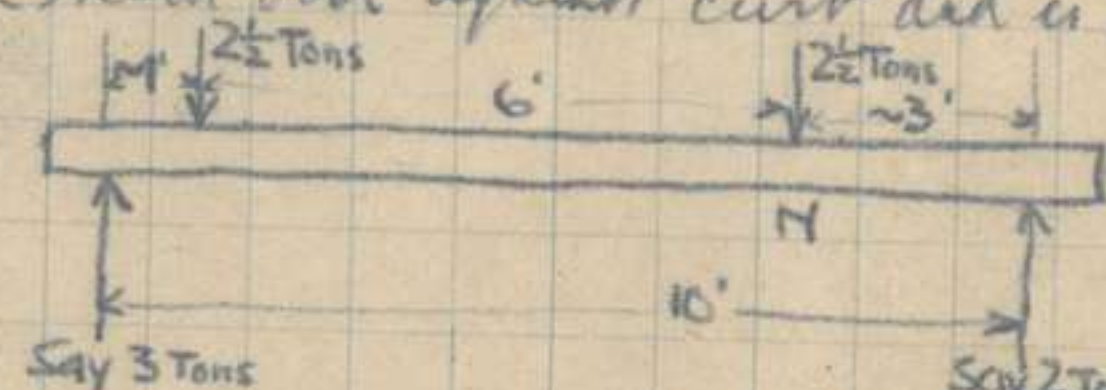
### Subject: Design of Health Bridging

General design was settled with view to following  
 main requirements:

- Rapidity of erection
- Ready adaptability to various heights of piers,  
 and was therefore made, as far as piers are  
 concerned, as below.



Pier Scantlings: 1) Cross girder: Position of load  
 incidence for max. bending moment with motor lorry occurs  
 when load over against curb and is:-



giving Max. BM  
 at N and  $= 2 \times 2240 \times 36 = \sim 161,000$  inch-lb.

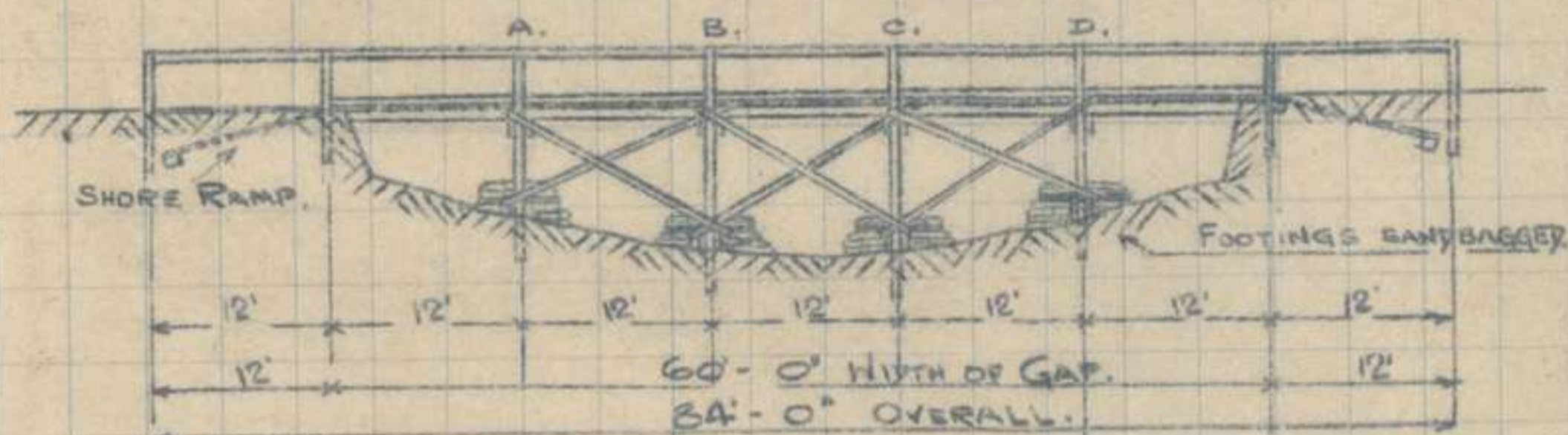


are as in sketch below. Height of deck may however be increased up to say 3' by reducing length of leg used as piered post and as headrail post.

Total weight including gear for erection and tools estimated as  $\approx 9\frac{3}{4}$  tons which can be safely carried by the wagons of bulging team if the unit over fairly hard going by easy marches.

Scantling may of course be varied to suit timber available. Weight of superstructure has not been allowed for in calculation but margin of safe stress is ample to include this.

SCALE 0 3 6 9 12 15 18 21 24 FEET.



910  
10/9/18

J. C. Bowles

least as far as in cross girders and similar scantling and jointing as therein makes for simplicity. 2-9x3; therefore, goes.

5) Joint, Cross girder and sill to leg. Stresses here are rather indeterminate but considering single  $\frac{7}{8}$  bolt in double shear, safe load would be about  $2 \times 6 \times 7 = 8.4$  tons. b) Crushing stress on hole would be  $\frac{3 \times 2240}{(\text{say}) .75 \times 6} = \frac{1440}{4.5} = 320 \text{ lb/in}^2$  which is, for hardwood, well within allowable load.

c) Miscellaneous scantlings, such as blocking bracing, are determined by inspection.

Foundation will depend on nature of bottom. If ground is soft, bottoms of legs will go in as shown and sill will be carried on footings of timber of scantling used for decking. If severe and rise in stream are likely foundation will be pitched and pier loaded by floor above sill and sand bag work as shown.

Approaches will be ramped below rock surface, as shown in general elevation, to prevent churning at abutments.

Handrail and all bracing 4x2, which is sufficient by inspection.

Dimensions of gap which may be bridged

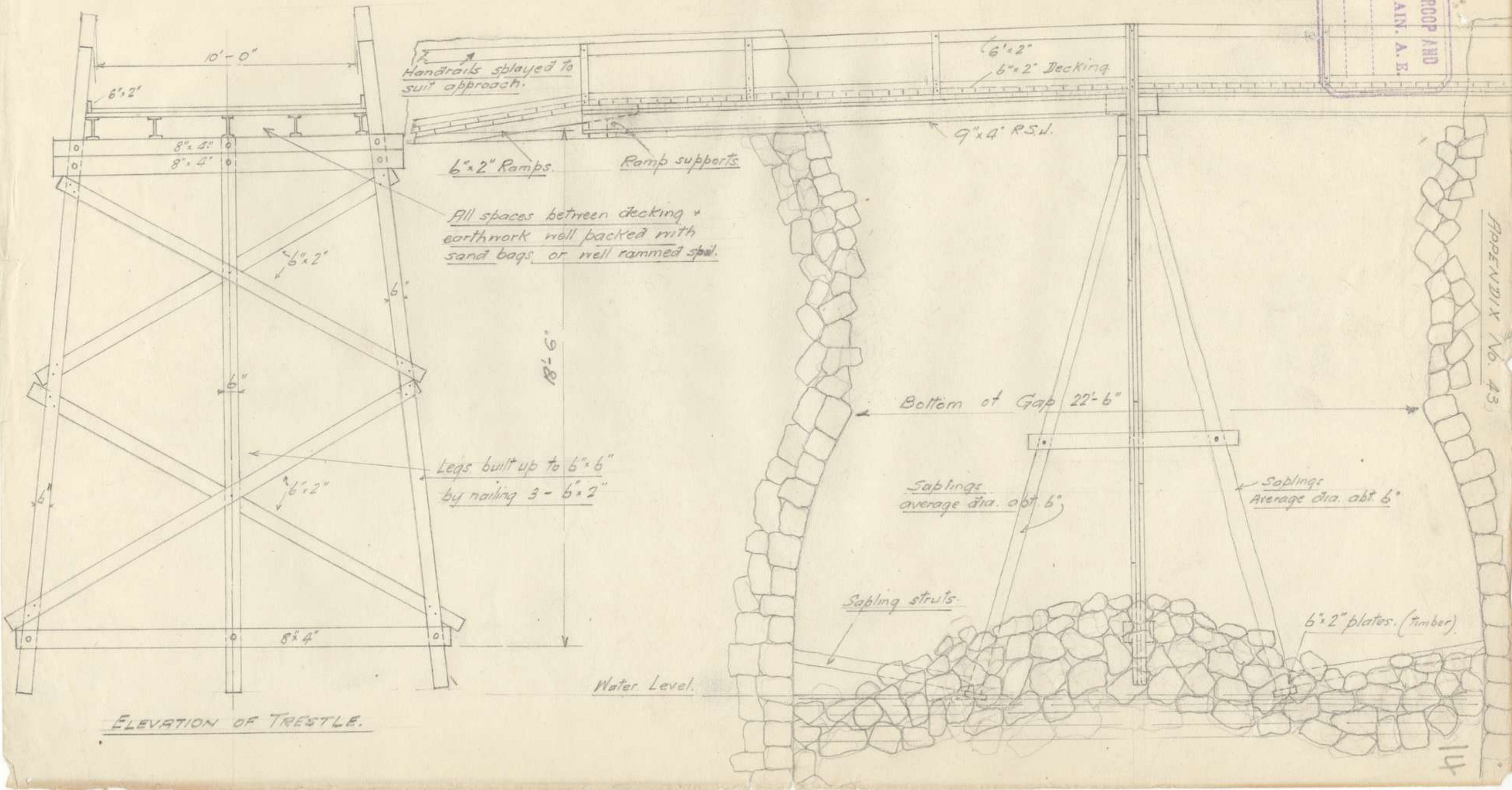
15



REPAIRS TO ARCH, PARTIALLY DEMOLISHED BRIDGE. JISR BENAT YAKUB.

SCALE 1/4" = 1 FOOT.

“D” FIELD TROOP AND  
BRIDGING TRAIN, A. F.  
No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_



Handrails splayed to suit approach.

6'x2" Decking

9'x4" R.S.J.

6'x2" Ramps Ramp supports

All spaces between decking & earthwork well packed with sand bags or well rammed soil.

Legs built up to 6'x6" by nailing 3 - 6'x2"

Bottom of Gap 22'-6"

Saplings average dia. abt. 6"

Saplings Average dia. abt. 6"

Sapling struts

6'x2" plates. (Timber)

Water Level.

ELEVATION OF TRESTLE.

APPENDIX No. 43