

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

Engineers

**Item number:** 14/40/8 Part 2

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

October - December 1918 (duplicate)



AWM4-14/40/8PART2

-----TRIPPLICATE.-----

Volume No. 10-12/1918.

**AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE**  
**EGYPT.**

**WAR DIARY.**

Unit "D" FIELD TROOP AND BRIDGING TRAIN AUSTRALIAN ENGINEERS.

From OCTOBER 1918 To DECEMBER 1918

SHEETS 77 - 94

**CONFIDENTIAL.**

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

**Australian Imperial Force.**

**WAR DIARY**

OF

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

FOR

8<sup>TH</sup>. PERIOD - OCT. 1918 TO DEC. 1918.

Signature of Officer compiling E.S. Clayton Lieut

Signature of Officer Commanding E.S. Clayton Lieut.

"D" FIELD TROOP AND

BRIDGING TRAIN. A-3

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence  
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WAR DIARY

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

Army Form C. 2118.

SHEET NO. 77-

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
DISR BENAT YAKUB.	29/10/18	1800	<p>Period from 1800 of 29<sup>th</sup> Oct. 1918 to 2400 of 31<sup>st</sup> Dec. 1918 &amp; covering:-</p> <p>Preparations &amp; Move from DISR BENAT YAKUB to "RICHON-LE-ZION"</p> <p>2<sup>nd</sup> Lt E.S. CLAYDON, A.E. arrived by motor lorry from DAMASCUS and assumed command of the unit.</p> <p>Living at day break on morning of the 30<sup>th</sup> October I took a walk round, to look at the pitiful condition of the fever stricken camp. Bivouacs lay flat on the ground &amp; tents of the sick men, after being well looted, lay about them. The horses attached to a line, run between the wagons, looked very sickly &amp; poor &amp; had not been groomed for ages. Two or three men crawled out from their bivouacs &amp; as sick as they were, managed to feed the animals. Most of us cooked our own meals &amp; fed when time would permit. As for a watering parade, this was quite out of the question &amp; the only thing left to do was to drive the horses down to the water of the JORDAN, like sheep. The office work, was well over the odds; piles of official correspondence lay waiting to be dealt with;</p>	

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SHEET NO. 78.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
DISA BENT YAKUB.	30/10/18		<p>urgent mines required immediate attention, but to attempt to deal with all these, was almost impossible. The necessary information required to reply to these many staffs was contained in many different books &amp; papers of all kinds. It needs continual work day before me, so the sooner I made a start the better. I at once sent many mines for reinforcements which at this time were hard to obtain. I also employed native labour from the 37<sup>th</sup> Coy. E.L.C. to care for our many horses. This was indeed a great help although these were the worst natives I <del>had</del> ever had dealing with. Rations at off times became very poor &amp; having a large stock of Turkish explosives, found it necessary to place a few bombs in the river JORDAN from which we obtained ample fish for all the natives as well as for ourselves. Five days of a terrible wind storm came upon us. Although we were well sheltered by the high mountains still it blew down all that was standing. This suddenly ceased then down came the rain, making things more miserable than ever, but to</p>	

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SHEET NO. 79.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
DISC. BENAT YARUB.			<p>our relief only lasted a day or two, when another long spell of fine weather came. Thinking there was no possible chance of moving for some time, I was determined to make ourselves comfortable for the winter, which had just started to set in, so one morning I moved the men into a house in the village, which was once used as a hospital. I took for myself, another house at the bottom of the street. This was the best house in the village, &amp; contained six large rooms including a kitchen. This building had been used as a serick shop before the war &amp; was now being used as my head quarters. It overlooked the river JORDAN running from LAKE HULE; also the bridge across it which was repaired by our unit during the last successful stunt. This bridge had always been one of great importance as the road from JERUSALEM to DAMASCUS crossed it. A large Turkish garrison had always been kept here, in two forts, one on either side of the bridge. At last a batch of eleven reinforcements arrived &amp; a fine lot of men they were too &amp; all had just</p>	
	10/11/18			

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SHEET NO. 80

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
DISA BENAT YAKUB	4/11/18		<p>The trades &amp; professions I required chiefly. Work was now progressing very favourably. Orders by wire were received from C.R.E. Desert Mtd. Corps on 4/11/18 to prepare to track back to SARONA &amp; to state assistance required to <sup>move</sup> immediately. Before, this was possible drivers would have to be obtained from somewhere and 100 horses must be shod &amp; head stalls made for them. This I stated in my reply wire. Two men on shoeing &amp; another two mending head stalls &amp; other harness completed the work in ten days. During this time I did most of the driving of the teams, as there were no drivers left. Taking two of the boys out with me one day we tried to follow the JORDAN down as far as the sea of Gallilee, to try &amp; find a better road by which we could return when the time came, but after travelling for a mile or so the banks became very steep until we found ourselves climbing great mountains, which were frightfully stony &amp; bad for our poor horses. The further we went the worse it got so finally we decided to return to camp.</p>	

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SHEET NO. 81

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
USR BEVAT YAKUB.	23/11/18		Lt. Col. D.C. CAMERON. C.O. 5th A.L.H. Regt. visited me, & brought with him orders from Div. Mtd. Corps for me to move to DAMASCUS with the help of his men.	
	24/11/18		A wire arrived the next day from Div. Corps ordering me to proceed to SARONIA instead of DAMASCUS, when all was ready.	
	25/11/18		Another wire arrived and again changed the place to where I was to proceed to RAMLEH. During the day three motor lorries, with 1 sgt and 16 drivers from the 5th A.L.H. Regt. arrived. The lorries were loaded up by the natives with 4 tons of salvage stores & sent back to SEMAKH. Everybody got very busy getting teams & harness fitted & ready for the move on the following morning.	
	26/11/18		Movement orders and my travelling time table did not arrive until 6 a.m. which of course put everything back. In spite of this, the men got out quickly & got hooked in and all was ready to move by 9 a.m. One native was put on each wagon to act as braker man, the remainder were detailed to ride & lead all the spare horses & would follow in rear of the train to act as a break down gang. The first two or three	



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SHEET NO. 82.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
LIER BENAT YAKUR	26/11/18		<p>Teams started off well, then the next lot being collar-bound began to jib; others followed suit, whilst the remainder got away at the gallop, and going over bad roads caused wagon poles to be broken. A whole hour was spent in trying to start jibbing teams &amp; the only way I was able to get them on the move was to mount &amp; ride the leaders. At last I got them all well on the move, &amp; then rode up to head of the train, keeping all going, until the top of the hill was reached. I waited over an hour to give all teams a chance of catching up, but three were still missing when we pushed off again for the next village. A galloper arrived and reported to me that a native had been thrown off one of the galloping wagons in rear &amp; got his leg broken. I ordered that he was to be taken back to the village we had just left, &amp; leave him in charge of the signals with his leg in splints until the arrival of an ambulance. A second galloper advised me of the breaking of another pole. I at once sent a native back with our last spare pole &amp; carried</p>	

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SHEET NO. 83.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
ROSSPENIEH	26/11/18.		<p>on till we reached "ROSSPENIEH". I left the word to feed up and then went across to a camp of a troop of the 5<sup>th</sup> A.L.H. Numerous wires were sent for extra poles and ambulance etc. Just then a Jewish doctor belonging to the "American Zionist Medical Unit" came on the scene, so LIEUT. GRAHAM (who was with me at the time) and myself persuaded him to go and attend to this native. He did not want to go, as his inner man was just about to be fed, &amp; he would have to buy something to eat out of his own pocket, if he should have to go. LIEUT. GRAHAM gave him some biscuits &amp; bully &amp; sent him off to BENAT YAKUB by the ration lorry. When all this had been arranged, it was time to get moving again. We made a very fair start, but had only gone a few hundred yards, when the grey team made off over the side of the road &amp; caused the rear wheel of that wagon to be smashed to pieces. The train was stopped, a spare wheel sent down &amp; all hands assisted to fit it on. The three last wagons &amp; spare horses were at last sighted coming over the top of a hill about three</p>	

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
ROSS PENIEM.	24/1/18		<p>miles back. Repairs were once again made good &amp; all were on the move. The sun had now quite gone down &amp; the light was failing fast. It was impossible to stop &amp; camp for there was no decent area or water &amp; we had only just started to ascend the hills. Although my orders were to reach "TIBERIUS", I knew now that to do this was quite out of the question. No moon &amp; a dark uncertain track still we plodded on for another two hours. I rode ahead &amp; found a place to camp, well off the main road, but right on the water's edge. When the first lot of wagons arrived I guided them to the camping spot &amp; parked them for the night. Right up to midnight I kept going to &amp; fro to the turnoff &amp; guiding fresh wagons in, with a hurricane lamp. After the arrival of the last wagon I turned into bed. One wagon had to be left on the side of the hill until break of day as it got into a dangerous position &amp; could not be moved in the dark. When daylight appeared I discovered that we had camped at CAPERNAUM.</p>	
CAPERNAUM.	26/1/18		<p>27/1/18</p>	

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
CAPERNAUM	27/11/18		trees, but quite a large number of ruins. A large flow of mineral water came from a hill opposite, around which numbers of Bedouins had pitched their camp. A little more trouble was met with in starting off. One team got off the market at a gallop & got out of hand & made for the lake. The driver seeing a large rut in front, sprang off just before the horses went over it. Away went another pole & the wagon was completely relieved of its load some of it falling in front of the wheels & pulled the horses up suddenly. I sent a galloper into TIBERIUS to procure the poles I had already ordered for. We got the loan of a car & had them brought out to the job in no time. All the other teams were well on the road & TIBERIUS was made by 1200. I took them through the town & up the hill a bit & then fed up. Only very few horses would eat & 5 were lying down in the poles, well out to it. Nothing else could be done, but pull in off the road & camp, giving the horses a good rest during the afternoon & that night. I rode back into the town & rang up	
TIBERIUS	27/11/18			

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
TIBERIUS.	27/11/18.		<p>The Staff Officer of СЕМЯКН, stating my condition &amp; the impossibility of working to his timetable. He gave me permission, after a lot of argument, to finish the trip as I thought best. As I was feeling very tired I rode just out of the town &amp; went for a swim; unsaddled my horse &amp; gave him one too. We both felt very much refreshed after it. The town was situated right on the edge of the sea, &amp; like all these places had small narrow streets of cobbled stones. There were quite a large number of modern buildings dotted in between the old flat top Jewish buildings, with the staircase of stone up the outside of each place. Mosques &amp; Synagogues were few but large, the bells of which were ringing all day. The remains of a large wall &amp; forts, which were once round the city, still stood in places. The best view of this place was from where we were</p>	
	28/11/18		<p>camped for the night. Soon after day break all the teams, with one exception, were well on the move. This one we looked on behind another wagon &amp; pulled the horses &amp; wagons to the top of the hill.</p>	

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SHEET NO 87

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
TIBERIUS	14/18		By this time this team was sufficiently hot enough to pull its own load. By noon we rode into a place 'KEFR KENNA' by name, with all the roofs & domes of the various buildings painted in dark red. I met one of the inhabitants who could speak a little English & asked why this was so: she replying said that it was the place where the "water was turned into wine" & the tops of all the houses were painted red to represent the wine. Some granates seem to be the only thing they were able to grow here, owing to the very small water supply. The travelling was very mountainous & the horses stuck to it well. The top of a very large hill was reached when suddenly the city of NAZARETH came into full view. The tops of 27 of the buildings here had the Turkish hospital crescent on, these of course after the enemy's evacuation, were left in a terrible condition. NAZARETH lay in a valley, with mountains all round & a few green pastures running through the centre of it. Again here, the majority of the buildings were	
KEFR KENNA	"			
NAZARETH	28/11/19			

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SHEET NO. 88

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
NAZARETH	28/11/18		ms. dem., with tiny little streets, which might have smelt a lot sweeter. Riding down the hill into the centre of the town I discovered a place for our camp that night. Here all the wagons were parked with horse lines in between. Water was obtained from the "Virgin Well" & very good it was too. Just as the sun rose the next morning I rode back to the top of the hill & from there got several excellent photographs of NAZARETH with the morning sun shining upon it. On my returning to camp found all ready so moved off, riding through the town & up the hill on the other side. It was not long before we completely lost sight of the town, & once again began to descend the mountains on a good road full of hairpin bends. We dropped a few hundred feet in no time & then got on to the long straight road running across the ESDRAGON plain. At EL ARULE we drew three days supplies which I had to battle for, as these people had never been warned of our arrival. All day long the horses worked very well	
"	29/11/18			
EL ARULE	29/11/18			

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SHEET No. 89.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
EL ARABE	19/11/18		which enabled us to reach DENIN (or as it is sometimes called SAMARIA) before sunset. Quite a new German plane lay on the side of the road. A camping ground + water had already been arranged by the transport sergeant, so everyone soon got settled for another night. DENIN, a fairly large town was hid in amongst the trees + as we arrived late + left early the next morning, it was impossible to see much of the place.	
DENIN.	-			
	20/11/18		We made a very early start + got well ahead of a large artillery train. 1400 camels kept us standing on the road for an hour, whilst they passed. A number of German motor lorries passed, being driven by Germans. It was shameful to see the way they wasted our petrol + oil. 3 o'clock found us all set for another night's camp at MESSUDIAH. Most of the boys made great log fires + slept round them. The artillery came in very late + camped beside us. The water was again very handy, being right alongside the station + ample of it.	
MESSUDIAH.	30/11/18			



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SHEET NO. 90

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
TUL KERAM	1/12/18		Another very good days march was done; when we passed through	
			TUL KERAM, which is now a very busy place, & alongside the station was a large park containing hundreds of <sup>enemy</sup> guns & transport of every kind & description. We then arrived at	
RASELAIN	1/12/18		RASELAIN. The following morning I left on horse before the train	
	2/12/18		with an orderly & rode across country, through several Jewish colonies which I had never seen before, to Luso. reinforce-ment camp, where I enquired after our dumps. Finding the P.O. of C. Ramleh area, I reported to Lieut Major, the Staff Officer.	
RICHON	2/12/18		He sent me to report to the Amzac Division at RICHON. This I did & was told to see MAJOR ALLEN about a camp site. This was allotted to me by him, & as the wagons arrived I made a rough park for the night.	
	3/12/18		In the morning I returned the one sergeant & 16 drivers loaned to me by the 5 <sup>th</sup> A.L.H. SEMARK, to their regiment by rail. I then reported to the D.A.F.M.G. & made sure of whom we were under for.	

(A9475) Wt W2358/P360 600,000 12/17 D. D. & L. Sch. 52a. Forms/C2118/15.

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SHEET NO. 91.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Renson	3/12/18 to 14/12/18		<p>discipline. I spent most of the day in flying round getting tents etc. Being on good terms with the P.O. of C. I was able to get 5 motor carriers for 2 days to move all the dumps from SARRONIA to our present camp. This saved our poor worn out horses a big trip. The gear had to be carted from the SARRONIA RD. to our camp as the motor carriers could not get over the heavy sand. On the last wagon load came Staff Sgt. C.G.L. THOMPSON, one of the main stays of the unit. I sigled a breath of great relief for in a very short time he had the whole of the orderly room work running smoothly once again. Tents were erected for all the men &amp; natives, also for officers &amp; mess; orderly room &amp; P.M. Store. A decent horse line was put up &amp; all the wagons neatly parked. Three cook-houses were built for officers, men, &amp; natives, &amp; a large sand wall all round the camp. A large sump was dug below the camp &amp; a trough &amp; pumps erected. This was filled during the rain &amp; lasted four days, after each fall, thus enabling us to</p>	

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SHEET NO. 92.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
RICHMOND	9/12/18			
	10/12/18		water the horses twice daily instead of one watering at the town supply, which was about a mile away & meant several trips for small numbers of men with the unit. The Agas Races were held at the back of Field Squadron, two days after which the whole division moved to RAFA leaving us on our horses & in peace.	
	15/12/18		LIEUT. R. A. CAMPBELL arrived with 16 men from MOASCAR. They were all put into tents & made at home.	
	16/12/18		The official photographer arrived & took 3 photographs of the unit; one mounted & two groups with portbeams & wagons in background.	
	24/12/18		Fifteen new reinforcements arrived & were examined in the usual manner. Received Amas comforts for us from A. I. F. Comforts Fund & Y. M. C. A. LUDD. which were issued out to the men.	
	25/12/18		Amas Day was spent under very pleasant conditions & all the boys thoroughly enjoyed themselves.	
	26/12/18		As there was very little for the men to do, I found it necessary to	

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SHEET NO. 93.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
RICHON.	27/12/18		give about an hour each day to rifle exercises & drill.	
	29/12/18		Orders were received from Commanding, RAMLEH, to move unit to RAIFA & to have porton wagons, special equipment & horses in at KANTARA.	
	30/12/18		The whole camp was dismantled & wagons loaded ready to take across to the station.	
	31/12/18		The unit left the camp at RICHON-LE-ZION & parked at the railway siding at BIR SALEM where it remained until trucks were available.	

(A9475) Wt W2358/P360 600,000 12/17 D. D. & L. Sch. 52a. Forms/C2118/15.

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SHEET NO. 94.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
			<u>The following are the Distinctions gained by the unit:</u>	
			Awarded the MILITARY CROSS.	
			CAPT. E. J. HOWELLS.	
			Awarded the MILITARY MEDAL	
			No. 17967 L/CPL DAWSON S.	
			Awarded the DISTINGUISHED CONDUCT MEDAL.	
			No. 17947. CPL. BELL. F.	
			No. 17996. 2/CPL LESLIE. R.	
			No. 241. SPR. MCGUIGAN. M.R.Y.	
			Mentioned in Despatches.	
			CAPT. E. J. HOWELLS.	
			No. 1431. SGT. ROBERTS. J. T. H.	
			No 17958 2/CPL. CRAVOS. F. A.	