

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

Signals

Item number: 22/16/21 Part 2

Title: 1st Australian Wireless Signal
Squadron

August - November 1919 Duplicate



AWM4-22/16/21PART2

WAR DIARY

Army Form C 2113

*1st Aus Wireless Squadron
D Troop*

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.

OR
~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.~~

(Erase heading not required.)

Hour, Date, Place	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices.
<p><u>MESOPOTAMIA</u> <u>From AUGUST 1st 1919</u> <u>To Nov. 5 1919.</u></p>	<p>The period opens with the Troop stations engaged with 18th Division - under Maj Gen Casals - on operations in KURDISTAN, and closes with the Troop leaving Basrah - struck off strength of the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force.</p> <p>The work of the Group Control station, during the period was very heavy and exacting, yet all traffic was cleared with the minimum of delay and interruption.</p> <p>The distance between stations, the nature of the country in which the columns were operating + the excessively heavy atmospherics, which persisted with monotonous regularity, made all reception, especially during the night, exceedingly difficult. The strain imposed on the operating personnel, as a consequence was considerable, but a high state of efficiency was well maintained, and no delay of any consequence occurred.</p> <p>The two stations attached to the mobile columns</p>	<p></p> <p><i>to Lt. Standart's book</i></p>

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	<p>were constantly changing position, within a radius of 200 miles of MOSUL, in consequence of which signals of varying strengths, from "just audible" to "strong", reached the controlling station.</p> <p>The country is exceedingly mountainous, and at times the stations, were located on a 4000 ft peak, at others, in little more than a crevice, between hills of a similar height, which operated as a most effective screen, necessitating a most extensive use of other stations, as relays. Atmospheric disturbances also required the nearer stations to act as relays for others farther out, and even the former found difficulty, at times, in passing traffic.</p> <p>The control station worked without ceasing. There was no other means of communication used during the operations. An idea of the magnitude of the task can be obtained from the Traffic Return figures for the month of August. Close on 5000 messages were handled, approximately 200,000 words. These figures were repeated for the month of September.</p> <p>That two consecutive months of such work passed</p>	<p>John Landau</p>

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	<p>without any serious hitch, whatever, is a considerable achievement, the importance and value of which, the G. O. C. Commanding Division, advised, in a congratulatory telegram, to the officer commanding the troop.</p> <p>These results could not have been achieved but for the efficient cooperation of the entire station personnel.</p> <p>On the recommendation of General Cassel, the NCO of the station was immediately awarded by the G. O. C. Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force with the medal for Meritorious Service.</p> <p>No 13. Station was located at ZAKHO, until attached to LUMBCOL, early in August. From the 17th of that month, until the 10th of October the station accompanied the column over a wide area of country to the north of Zakho, punishing the villages of Kurdish sympathy.</p>	<p>See Appendix I</p> <p>See appendix 2.</p> <p>J. L. Landers babe</p>

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	<p>The country is exceedingly mountainous, and communication was frequently established only with considerable difficulty.</p> <p>The station was under fire on many occasions, the Kurds penetrating to the outskirts of the Camp, doing very effective sniping.</p> <p>Sickness was very prevalent, malaria and Colitis, on occasions would sweep through almost the whole column.</p> <p>The rugged mountain passes made transport extremely difficult, and many pack animals lost fasting fell into the ravine below, occasioning both the loss of animals and equipment. Pack transport was used throughout, as the only possible method.</p> <p>The N.C.O. S/C. was awarded the M.S.M. by the G.O.C. Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force.</p>	<p>See Appendix 2.</p> <p><i>to be awarded badge</i></p>

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	<p>No 24 station, during the period under review, was stationed at SUWARA, (except for a hasty advance on AMADIA - and a more hasty retreat.) 90 miles North of Mosul.</p> <p>For the greater part of the time, the station was relaying traffic between the outlying stations, and Mosul (Dimensional H.Q.) The frequency and strength of atmospherics, rendered the double work a necessity, especially as the outlying stations were almost continuously in bottling-up valleys.</p> <p>An attack was made on the camp by the Kurdish forces on the 14th of September. The picket on the Eastern side of the camp was taken, and the Kurds advanced to within 250 yards of the wireless station. The staff was forced to take cover. The land line on both side of the camp was cut, and the message was handed in for Mosul.</p> <p>Continuously under fire, the N.C.O. of the station</p>	<p>J. L. Handal's Capt</p>

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	<p>personally sent the message and received acknowledgement from Mosul. For his courageous conduct, this NCO was immediately awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal by the G.O.C. Mes. Ex. Force. Other members of the station personnel were assisting in quelling the attack as every rifle was needed.</p> <p>Further alarms occurred on the 17th + 18th but amounted to nothing.</p> <p>During the whole time, the set gave little or no trouble, and no stoppages of any moment occurred, and this in spite of the heavy traffic necessitated by the exclusive use of W/T as a means of communication.</p> <p>No. 14. was an additional station, over establishment, and was attached to General Nightingale's column operating in KURDISTAN.</p>	<p>See appendix 2</p> <p>b.h. Sandars leaf</p>

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	<p>The station was an ordinary Pack set, and was efficiently worked over a distance of 150 miles. Being continuously moving, the station was erected and dismantled daily. The whole trek covered some 600 miles, and the station worked at altitudes of from 2500 to 8000 ft. The hills containing ironstone seriously interfered with communication and at a distance of 100 miles from MOSUL, hill screening was also a serious handicap. Atmospheric disturbances were of such a strength as to prevent any communication whatever, during several hours of the night.</p> <p>Sickness was prevalent, 75% of the total numbers, had to be replaced on account of the ravages of malaria etc.</p> <p>During the day, the station personnel acted as fighting troops, while in camp at night</p>	<p>J. L. Sandars leave</p>

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	<p>Communication has to be established with other centres. WTT was the only means possible.</p> <p>There were no roads, and the rough tracks were in a particularly bad condition. Advance parties of road makers had to go ahead + clear the pathway.</p> <p>The M.O. of Station was awarded the M.B.M. by the G.O.B. as tax force.</p> <p>No 15 Station was established at Bagubah as Chief Directing Station.</p>	<p>See appendix 2</p> <p>L. L. Jandals Bak</p>

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22: 10: 19	<p>On August 14th Lt Col Goodman was granted demobilisation in UK and was struck off strength of the unit, leaving only Capt Sandas with the troop.</p>	
5: 11: 19	<p>Nine members of the unit had been returned to Australia, sick, or on demobilisation, and to England on leave, since Feb'y 16th 1919.</p> <p>One N.C.O. and four men were granted one month's leave in the UK, leaving Bombay on the 24-11-1919.</p> <p>2/2nd Lt Blakey was granted demobilisation in the Mesopotamia, and Lt Cpl Cooper was detained in Bombay, ill.</p> <p>The unit left Baghdad for return to Australia.</p> <p>Struck off strength of Mes box force and left-</p>	<p><i>J. H. Sandas</i> Capt</p>