

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

New Zealand Units

Item number: 35/4/3

Title: Otago Mounted Rifles Regiment

May 1915



AWM4-35/4/3

WAR DIARY

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.

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	16/4/15.		<p><u>OTAGO MOUNTED RIFLES.</u></p> <p>From this date up till the present 14/5/15 - there has been no change in the disposition of the regiment - 2 squadrons. M.G. Section and Headquarters.</p> <p>(Original of above appears on the same sheet as entries for end of previous month and will be found with the diary for that month.)</p>	

3-11

remaining at MEX. while the 12th Squadron remained at Cairo.

Moves

On the 10-5-15 the M.G. section embarked for the Dardenelles - to be brigaded with the rest of the M. Corps from the Corps.

The riding horses (19) were not taken. Limbered wagons & horses - also the pack animals went. Ammunition was put on the transport by Hdqrs arrangement.

On the 15-5-15 the 12th Squadron (from Cairo) leaves for the Dardenelles - having been specially outfitted to act as infantry.

On the 11-5-15 - The regiment at MEX had orders to go off & embark (as infantry) - next morning the order was cancelled & we were told to stay where we were.

Horses.

MEX is much cooler than Cairo - on one side is the Mediterranean & on the other is a salt lagoon.

The ground is limestone - of a chalky nature. The camping ground is close to the salt lake & is to some extent on the shores of it.

The health of the horses has been good - but ^{after} about 3 weeks here they contracted a form of influenza & the coughing of the horses on the lines at night was quite painful to listen to. There is evidence at present that the worst is now past & that the health of the animals will be quite satisfactory. Our veterinary officers were afraid of pneumonia as a result of this coughing.

horses
feeding.

The scale of forage & fodder did not seem adequate for our large boned over-sea horses.

After our horses were undoubtedly losing condition I applied to the A.Q.M.G. & told him of the difference of the ration issued at Cairo & Alexandria.

The case was this

	Cairo			MEX	
	Jan	FEB	Mar	Apr	May
Barley	9	12	12	9	9
Bran	3	3	3	1 $\frac{1}{4}$	1 $\frac{1}{2}$
Tibbin	14	14	12	6	6
Dried Hay	6	5	3	6	9
	32	34	30	22 $\frac{1}{4}$	25 $\frac{1}{2}$

On our showing that the horses skins were getting very dry - an alternative was given in the shape of berseem (3rd crop) which is just now (15. 5. 15) available.

The general condition of our horses is far ahead of the Australians - who share our camp & so are seen daily.

Harness

I have again made efforts to acquire the G.S. harness - quick release - for all our wagons. That which we brought from Dunedin - ordinary chain-link traces being very inferior. The driving of horses in wagons by the ordinary reins is of no use in a campaign. The ordinary horse collars too, are bulky & awkward except when actually in use. Breast collars give good return & results.

Sea bathing

Sea bathing is taken by most of the men and horses daily & the general health of the personnel of the regiment is good.

22 15
6 15
ANZAC
COVE

near
GABA TEPE

Gallipoli
Peninsula

The regiment left MEX dismounted on the 25th May to join the main body in the Dardanelles - where the Divⁿ (minus the mounted men) have been for 3 weeks.

Reports of the fighting there & the casualties have reached us through unofficial channels.

The horses - 800 approx. were left in camp at MEX in charge of Major Nutsford N-ZSC with a Veterinary officer (Capt HOWARD) & sufficient personnel to look after them. It was hoped that local native labour might be obtained to assist the troops in this work. The proportion of men to horses is roughly 1 to 8 not enough to do the work justice.

CARRIERS
VIEWS

Several of the farmers, in answer to no plea when charged, that they were asked to do farmers work & they consented but they offered as fighting men & did not think their chances of fighting should be spoiled on account of their offer.

Their pay as farmers of course ceased & they were allowed to proceed. The transport being at sea before they were discovered on board. Fresh farmers will be accordingly appointed.

Equip-
ment

Due to the horses being left behind & no transport of any sort being obtainable a practicable on the Peninsula. The regiment had to procure a knapsack to carry their kit in. The ordinary war equipment was not obtainable & an emergency article was procured in Cairo from Davis & Bryant. It consisted of a modified German Rucksack, with two web arm straps & a light duck 'SAC'. The whole outfit was very shoddy & unfit for service - even under the most favorable circumstances.

Equipment
Contd

In this messsac. The troops carried everything they could. Overcoat was rolled (collar shape) & worn over bandolier. In this messsac then the contents roughly comprised, one blanket & one change of under-clothing - i.e. - under-shirt & under vest.

This outfit with 150 rds of 8mm rifle & overcoat did not seem a great load for our men. The helmet which had been issued in Egypt was taken with us, & although we were informed that these would need to be left on ship-board. The men are still wearing them & getting good value for them in this tropical summer weather.

Generally speaking. The troops are very well clothed for any sort of work. Riding breeches are being exchanged for slacks trousers - covered on the shins with the ordinary puttee.

The number embarking on the "City of Troopship Edinburgh" Troopship was 370 - while we were joined by about 200 of the 4th A.L.H. going to LEMNOS also to join their main-body.

After a very fine passage we arrived at LEMNOS on Sunday May 24th 1919 & reported to the Staff Headquarters (Capt Dunlop "ARAGON" who told us we would probably re-embark on destroyers & go over to Gaba Tepe.

After waiting till Thursday 27th we got word to prepare that night to go off - the A.L.H. having gone off on Tuesday.

We made a moonlight passage in arrival at a mine-sweeper "CLACTON" & arrived at Gaba Tepe at 2 A.M. & immediately went on shore & were shown to a sleeping place - on the beach by the A.Q.M. (Major Reid) - where we waited till daylight.

Reported to G.O.C. at 9 A.M. & was told that we were to be in No 4 Section of the Outpost - Brig. Gen. Russell A.H. being G.O.C.

Our barge - with stores was shelled coming on shore & we lost some of our perishable goods through the muck of salt-water.

28.5.15

Trench

4
Outpost
work.

We were told off for duty on the 29. May
& we joined our 12th Squadron who had been
already holding posts a short distance in front
of the main trenches - low down on WALKER'S Ridge.

(We are together again as a Regiment
after 6 weeks separation).

We took over the trenches from the Canterbury
Regiment - who also gave us their bivouacs on
Walker's Ridge.

All the troops - in & out of the trenches
"stand to arms" at 7-8 P.M. & at 3-4 A.M.

One Squadron (an infantry platoon) manns
the trenches in front of bivouac - while the other
two Squadrons relieve one another on the post
about a mile along the beach. They are called
No. 1 posts & have some outlying positions occupied
from them.

On account of snipers these posts have
to be occupied & relieved after dark - & the
passage to them is made along the beach. A
trench is in course of construction to give cover
all the way.

The G.O.C. Section (No 4) on the 4th May decided
we should take over the No 1, 2 & 3 posts - on
the extreme left of the position - touching the beach
& running from there along River bed, in front of
No 3 & 2 posts & pushing at No 1 post - above
a razor-backed clay ridge called "Shepherd's Hut"
Ridge.

This is a good arrangement for the
regiment bivouacs close to its fighting position. It
can get continuity of work in the trenches on
the posts. - It saved a lot of time going to &
from its bivouacs at Walker's Ridge - & with
the exception that stores & water have to be brought
from the main bivouac at Walker's ridge - it is
quite economical in energy & rest to the troops.

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			<p><u>OTAGO MOUNTED RIFLES.</u></p> <p>The regiment after leaving MEX (near Alexandria) was 370 strong. This meant 150 men from the 5th. and 7th. squadrons, plus the headquarters.</p> <p>On our arrival at GABA TEPE (ANZAC) we were joined by our 12th. Squadron plus the 50 men who had been detailed as a body guard to the C. in C. The regiment was consequently about 540 strong when it took over this trench work.</p> <p>(Original of above appears on the same sheet as entries for the beginning of the subsequent month and will be found with the diary for that month.)</p>	