

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

Formation Headquarters

Item number: 1/64/1 Part 1

Title: General Staff, Headquarters Desert
Column

January 1917



AWM4-1/64/1PART1

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118

ons regarding War Diaries and Intelligence
maries are contained in F. S. Regs., Part II,
and the Staff Manual respectively. Title Pages
will be prepared in manuscript.

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

GENERAL STAFF, DESERT COLUMN

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
EL ARISH	1917 Jan. 1.		Three enemy aeroplanes flew over EL ARISH, MASAID and Railhead between 1005 and 1025. Six bombs were dropped on EL ARISH and seven on Railhead, causing the following casualties:- Killed O.R., one: Wounded O.R. six, of whom two subsequently died. With the approval of Naval C.-in-C. submarines appearing off EL ARISH are to be regarded as hostile. Military Railways were informed that escorts were unnecessary for formation and survey parties owing to the proximity of so many troops. No. 7 Light Car Patrol came under the orders of Desert Column. Instructions were issued by Column Commander as to the future use of the Signal Service. Eastern Force and Northern Canal Section were asked to cooperate in preventing the sending of telegraph messages unconnected with military operations. A copy of Circular Memorandum No. O/247 with amendments is attached as Appendix Orders were issued to 5th Mounted Brigade to concentrate in the neighbourhood of BITTIA. The N.Z.M.R. Brigade and the 3rd A.L.H. Brigade were moved back to Kilo 139 to assist camel supply convoy arrangements.	Appendix I

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
EL ARISH	Jan 2		5th Mounted Brigade concentrated at BITTIA. The Warwick Yeomanry, which had been employed on convoy duty, was directed to rejoin, escorts being no longer required. A recommendation was received and transmitted to Eastern Force, from G.O.C., A & N Z Mounted Division regarding the provision of a Lieutenant-Colonel and a Major (Second in Command) for I.C.C. Battalions. An increase of 4 signallers per Battalion was applied for also. A ruling was received from Eastern Force that the 5th, 6th, and 22nd Mounted Brigades are on War Establishment Part IX, No. 345, dated 31st August 1916. These units will come later on to Part XI, now in preparation. Orders were issued to No. 4 Coy., I.C.C. to proceed from ABD to EL ARISH. 5th L.H. Regiment took over GEISI and GE'EILA posts from Section No. 16 Coy., I.C.C. ordered to MALHA. A warning was issued to A. & N. Z. Mounted Division that troops would probably carry out two days' operations about the 5th instant.	

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
EL ARISH	1917 Jan 3		Track laid to Kilo 152.9. H.Q. 160th Brigade moved from ABD to MAZAR. A report by Military Governor of EL ARISH as to damage done during the Turkish occupation was submitted to Eastern Force. Instructions were issued to G.O.C. 52nd Division as to construction of the Advanced and Second Line Trenches at EL ARISH. A copy as Appendix A report on the operations of the Desert Column for the period 1st to 31st December, 1916, was submitted to Eastern Force. Copy attached as Appendix	Appx <u>II</u> Appendix <u>III</u>
	4		Track laid to 154.3. The first railway construction train reached EL ARISH this afternoon. A conference was held at Column Headquarters between Column Commander and G.O.C. and Brigadier-Generals A. & M. Z. Mounted Division and 5th Mounted Brigade. The 5th Mounted Brigade with "B" Battery H.A.C. reached EL ARISH. The N.Z.M.R. Brigade and 3rd A.L.H. Brigade returned to neighbourhood of MASAIID from Kilo 139. 2 sections of No. 16 Coy., I.Q.C. reached MAGHITHRA from Southern Canal Section and came under orders of 3rd A.L.H. Brigade. The two sections which were ordered to MALHA on the 2nd inst. arrived there today.	

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
EL ARISH	Jan 4		A scheme for operations against RAFA was issued to all concerned. Instructions were issued to A. & N. Z. Mounted Division and to 52nd Division regarding the division of the ARISH outpost line into two sectors. Copy as attached as Appendix	Appx IV
	5		Orders were issued for No. 4 Coy.; I.C.C. on arrival at EL ARISH to come under orders of G.O.C.. 1st Camel Brigade.	
	6		Track laid to Kilo 154.7. Copies of establishment of personnel proposed for Nos. 1 and 3 Armoured Trains as sanctioned previously by G.H.Q. were received from Eastern Force. A report by G.O.C. A. & N. Z. Mounted Division on visual communication was received and forwarded to Eastern Force with a recommendation that two more visual stations may be provided. Hostile aircraft flew over EL ARISH at 1420. Desert Column Order No. 9 was issued. A copy is attached as Appendix	Appx V

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
EL ARISH	Jan 7		Three hostile aircraft flew over EL ARISH in the forenoon and again at 9 p.m. In the morning raid 28 Egyptian Reservists (Railway Construction Party) were killed and 25 were wounded. As the result of the night raid one Egyptian coastguard attached to Desert Column Signals was buried in his dugout and suffocated. A conference was held at Column Headquarters. The G.O.C. A. & N. Z. Mounted Division attended with Brigadier-Generals of the 1st and 3rd L.H. Brigades, N.Z.M.R. Brigade and 5th Mounted Brigade. Desert Column Order No. 10 was issued. A copy attached as Appendix Owing to a case of small pox amongst the civil population of EL ARISH, the town was placed out of bounds to troops.	Appx VI
	8		Track laid to Kilo 155.3 Hostile aircraft flew over EL ARISH at 1215 and dropped bombs. 5 men were wounded. A proposed establishment for 5 1 Pr Pompom guns as an immobile battery for use in EL ARISH defences was submitted to Eastern Force.	
		1330	The Flying Column detailed for the operations at RAFA concentrated E. of WADI EL ARISH at 1530 and moved off at 1600. A report on the operation is attached as Appendix with copies of orders and instructions to R.F.C. and Medical units. Hostile aircraft did not see the concentration.	Appx VII

1875 Wt W593/826 1,000,000 4/15 J.B.C. & A. A.D.S.S./Forms/C. 2118.

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
EL ARISH	Jan 9		Track laid to 155.350. An enemy aeroplane flew over EL ARISH dropped bombs and then flew East over SHEIKH ZOWAIID the force attacking Later, two enemy aeroplanes dropped bombs on SHEIKH ZOWAIID and on our troops and on our troops at RAFA. Five men were slightly wounded at ARBA. RAF at RAFA. On the night of the 9th/10th the Force bivouaced at SHEIKH ZOWAIID (on returning from RAFA) in accordance with the plan attached. Up to the time of arrival of main body outposts were commanded by Captain DAY, 3rd L.H. Brigade, and consisted of 1 troop Light Horse and 2 Troops Yeomanry with details of camel convoy escorts told off as inlying picquets. The rearguard with prisoners reached SHEIKH ZOWAIID at 2300. Desert Column Order No. 11 was issued. Copy attached as Appendix	Appx. <u>VIII</u>
	10		A composite squadron with No. 7 Light Car Patrol proceeded to RAFA to clear the ground and bring in the wounded. The cars continued this work until about 1330 when Turkish troops could be seen advancing about 3 to 4 miles away, besides numerous Arabs. (A copy of the report of O.C. No. 7 Light Car Patrol is attached as Appendix) Instructions regarding the formations of the Headquarter Units of the Camel Brigade were received and circulated to all concerned.	Appx. <u>IX</u>

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
EL ARISH	Jan 11	1200	I.C.C. Brigade came under direct orders of Desert Column. A report was called for by Eastern Force with regard to the march equipment of the Infantry with special reference as to whether the pack, or the haversack (with rolled groundsheet separate) should be carried. Intimation of the despatch of 5 pompoms for use in the ARISH defences was received from G.H.Q. A report was made to Eastern Force as to completion of the reorganisation of the Field Ambulances in accordance with the tables attached to G.H.Q. letter No. G.S. 327/14 of 20/12/16. Instructions were given for the immobile echelon 1st Lowland Field Ambulance to remain at Kilo 139 to act as Railhead Receiving Station until the ambulance Train can proceed further East. As the result of three months' experience in the field, certain alterations were proposed by G.O.C. A & N. Z. Mounted Division in the establishment of M.G. Squadrons. These were approved and submitted to Eastern Force for favourable consideration.	

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
EL ARISH	Jan 12.		An enemy aeroplane flew over EL ARISH in the afternoon and dropped bombs, no damage being done. Instructions were received from Eastforce as to the reorganisation of the M.G. squadrons of the 5th, 6th and 22nd Mounted Brigades and were communicated to the G.O.C. 5th Mounted Brigade. Load tables for Lewis Guns packsaddlery were transmitted to the 42nd and 52nd Divisions, also to the A. & N. Z. Mounted Division and to the 5th Mounted Brigade.	
	13		An enemy aeroplane approached EL ARISH from the N.E. at 1400 and dropped bombs. G.H.Q. sanction was received (pending approval of Australian Government) to the proposal put forward on the 6th instant for an increase of two more visual stations with the A. & N. Z. Mounted Division. The reorganisation of Divisional Artillery having been completed, the composition of the re-organized Brigades was reported by B.G.R.A. Desert Column. A copy of the report is attached as Appendix One officer and 25 O.R. (Turks) were brought in.	Appx I

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
EL ARISH	Jan 14		An enemy aircraft visited EL ARISH, flying at a very high altitude. Instructions were issued to the A. & N. Z. Mounted Division, to the 52nd Division and to B.G.R.A. Desert Column as to utilising the lull in active operations for special training. Eleven Turkish prisoners were taken.	
	15		The establishment proposed for an immobile battery of 5 1 pr. Pompoms (submitted to Eastern Force on the 8th instant) was provisionally approved. Instructions were received from Eastern Force as to grouping of the I.C.C. Companies in the 1st Camel Brigade. A copy is filed as appendix During the 14th and 15th, 1415 Turkish prisoners taken at RAFA were evacuated from EL ARISH. Eight Turkish prisoners were brought in.	Appx. <u>XV</u>

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			Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Place	Date	Hour		
EL ARISH	Jan 16	0825	Hostile aeroplanes visited EL ARISH, dropping two bombs, but causing no casualties. The proceedings of a board assembled to draw up a Mobilization Store Table for Light Car Patrols were forwarded to Eastern Force. Desert Column Order No. 12 was issued. Copy attached as Appendix	Appx <u>XII</u>
	17		A proposed establishment for a Machine Gun Company with the Camel Brigade was submitted to Eastern Force. Seven Turkish prisoners were taken.	
	18		Two hostile aeroplanes flew over BARDAWIL and EL ARISH between 1125 and 1135. Three Turkish deserters were brought in. Reports were called for as to whether the magazines of Lewis Guns are so damaged in transit (a) by camels or (b) by hand, up to the guns in action as to interfere with the working of the gun. Five Turkish prisoners were captured.	

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
EL ARISH	Jan 19		Reports from the 42nd and 52nd Divisions on Machine Gun belts specially treated with paraffin wax were submitted to Eastern Force. One Turkish prisoner was captured.	
	20		Fifteen Turkish deserters were brought in.	
	21		An enemy aeroplane flew N.E. over EL ARISH at 0900. No bombs were dropped. 42nd Division took over the right section of the EL ARISH defence line from the 52nd Division. G.O.C. and B.G.G.S. Eastern Force visited EL ARISH. 1 Turkish deserter surrendered.	
	22		Instructions were received from Eastern Force that G.H.Q. had approved the formation of a 4th L.H. Brigade from the 4th, 11th and 12th L.H. Regiments, the dismounted squadrons of these Regiments to be formed into 4 I.C.C. Companies.	
	23		Approval pending War Office sanction was received to certain amendments in the establishment of the M.G. Squadron, A. & N. Z. Mounted Division.	

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
EL ARISH	Jan 24		Two hostile aircraft flew over EL BURJ, KILO 141 and EL ARISH between 0956 and 1015. New draft mobile establishments for Field Ambulances of the A. & N. Z. Mounted Division and Mounted Yeomanry Brigades were received from G.H.Q. A conference of medical officers to consider them was ordered.	
	25		Instructions were given to Military Governor of EL ARISH to move the Arabs at BIR EL BURJ to MASMI. Orders were given for 5th Mounted Brigade (less 1 Regt.) to relieve 1st A.L.H. Brigade at BIR EL BURJ on 29th instant.	
	26	1640	1st A.L.H. Brigade captured 3 Turkish deserters from SHELLAL, making 78 taken since the action at RAFA. Desert Column Order No. 13 issued giving definition of Northern Canal Section boundary. Copy attached as Appendix Two enemy aeroplanes flew over EL ARISH. No bombs were dropped.	Appx <u>XIII</u>
			Application was made to Eastern Force to sanction an additional horse for the Q.O. of Infantry Battalion.s. Orders were issued to 42nd and 52nd Divisions as to artillery distribution for the EL ARISH defences, pending the arrival of additional guns. Instructions were received from Eastern Force that one Coy., I.C.C. and one section HONG KONG & SINGAPORE BATTERY are required for service on the Western Front. Copy of Eastforce telegram 1875 Wt. W593/826 1,000,000 4/15 J.B.C. & A. A.D.S.S./Forms/C. 2118.	Appx <u>XIV</u>

E.C. 34

WAR DIARY

or

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
EL ARISH	Jan 27		A scheme for the training of Officers and O.R. at a seheer Central Gas School established at TEL EL KEBIR was received and communicated to all concerned.	
	28		1st L.H. Brigade captured 5 deserters from SHELLAL. Two enemy aeroplanes flew over EL ARISH. No bombs were dropped. Draft establishments submitted to East Force for the following units of Imperial Camel Brigade	
	29		(a) Ammunition Column (b) Field Ambulance. (c) Supply details. (d) Police (e) Post Office. Orders were received that the 42nd Division would leave Desert Column and be concentrated to proceed to France. Desert Column Order No. 14 was issued accordingly. Copy filed as appendix Orders were received that the Company of I.C.C. and the section HONG KONG & SINGAPORE BATTERY, detailed for duty on the Western Front on the 26th instant, were not required in the meantime. Certain points covering command, artillery, the use of machine guns and lewis guns and the general control of the action at RAFA were communicated to Eastern Force. These points had already been brought to the notice of the Commanders concerned. Minor additions to the proposed Establishment for the Camel Brigade M.G. Coy. were submitted to East Force.	Appx. XV
			1875 Wt. W593/826 1,000,000 4/15 J.B.C. & A. A.D.S.S./Forms/C. 2118.	

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
EL ARISH	Jan 30	0845	Two enemy aeroplanes flew over EL ARISH. Six bombs were dropped. One man in 7th Manchesters was wounded, also two natives.	
	31	1840	Instructions issued to 5th Mounted Brigade for the move of the Regiment remaining at EL ARISH to BIR EL BURJ on 1st February. Three Turkish prisoners were captured.	
		2125	Track laid to 156.82 K. Instructions received for the non-composite and the Depot sections of 52nd Division to move to EL ARISH about 7th February. Headquarters, 53rd Division arrived at EL ARISH.	

*J. H. Pershaw Major
General Staff
Desert Column.*

Appx I

CIRCULAR MEMORANDUM No. 9/247

1. In future no message which is not directly connected with military operations will be accepted at any signal office, with the exception of those mentioned in para. 2.

2. (a) Messages relating to Railway Construction.
 (b) Messages relating to water arrangements
 (c) Messages relating to ~~forwarding of~~ supplies and ~~ammunition~~. *And also stores & RT services.*
 (d) Messages relating to casualty returns and the supply of medical stores.
 (e) Messages within Brigades.

3. All other messages are absolutely forbidden.

4. Messages connected with military operations and those allowed in para. 2 will only be accepted if franked by an officer authorised to frank messages, namely, Brigade and Divisional Commanders, staff officers and heads or representatives of an administrative service or department and senior supply officer at each main depot, O.C., Royal Flying Corps and Military Governor. *Forwarded commanders, senior staff officers & administrative services have discretionary powers with regard to franking messages which must be kept to the lowest limit.*

5. Signal operators have instructions to refuse all telegrams other than those mentioned in paras. 1 & 2.

6. Only officers entitled to frank telegrams (see para. 4) will use trunk telephone lines. All calls using the main telephone routes between EL ARISH, LAZAR, EL ABD, and BANTARA, etc., will be considered as trunk calls.

7. No officer other than one entitled to frank telegrams (see para. 4) will frank letters for dispatch by D.R.L.S. Names and rank must be signed in full, otherwise the message will not be accepted.

8. This order will be published in the orders of all formations and units for four consecutive days and copies of the order will be posted up in every signal office.

1st January 1917.

W. J. W.
 Lieutenant-Colonel,
 General Staff,
 DESERT COLUMN.

GENERAL STAFF
DESERT COLUMN
O/51A/3
4/1/1917.

1-16
52nd Division.

In confirmation of telephone conversation of this evening with Colonel Russell, D.S.O.

1. The Column Commander does not wish your division to dig the trenches on the advanced line which was selected by him in conjunction with you unless there is reason to suppose an attack on the position is imminent.

2. With regard to this line all that is required of you is the selection, siting and marking of the actual trenches which will be dug and revetted by the E.L.C. under the direction of the C.E.

3. With regard to the second line, which runs by the villages of UMKHOZIGA and NEKHL ABU SAGAL and joins the advanced line near MAXIM Post, the Column Commander desires you to undertake the construction of the trenches where they are in clay but to leave such as are in sand for the E.L.C. to dig and revet later.

4. It will therefore be unnecessary for you to continue to keep any troops on the advanced line to the East of EL ARISH after the actual trenches have been selected, sited and pegged out by you.

5. The Chief Engineer will continue the wiring of the position as soon as more R.E. stores are available.

(sd) V.M. FERGUSON,

Lieutenant-Colonel,
General Staff,
DESERT COLUMN.

3rd January 1917.

1-17
Appendix III

WD

0/43/9.

DESERT COLUMN.

Report on operations for the period 1st December to 31st December 1916.

On the 1st December the 52nd Division less 1 Infantry Brigade Group moved forward to ABU TILUL leaving 1 Infantry Brigade Group as garrison of SALMANA. On the following day Desert Column Headquarters moved to ABD, and the 52nd Division less the garrison at SALMANA reached MAZAR and took up a defensive line covering that place. The Battalions in garrisoning at HOD EN KHIRBA were relieved by troops of the 160th Infantry Brigade. Hostile aircraft bombed MAZAR on the 3rd killing 2 men and wounding 6 others.

The battalions of the 52nd Division at ABD were also relieved by the 160th Infantry Brigade and moved up to SALMANA to rejoin their Brigade.

On the 4th December Northern Canal Section took over the Lines of Communication as far East as BIR EL ABD exclusive.

13 Armenian engineers from MAGHARA came in and surrendered to No. 14 Company I.C.C. near TILUL.

On the 5th December a Brigade of the 42nd Division was moved up to Railhead (Kilo 126) to cover further railway construction. No. 3 Company I.C.C. was placed under the orders of Brigadier General ORMSBY, C.B., Commanding the Brigade.

On the 6th December water trains could be filled at ABD from the 12" pipe.

On the 7th December I Arrived at ABD and assumed command of the Desert Column relieving Major-General Sir W. Douglas, K.C.M.G., C.B., D.S.O.

During the night of the 6th/7th a patrol of the Anzac Mounted Division reached the Wadi EL ARISH south of LAHFAN and tested the bed of the wadi for water with spear points without success. The patrol captured and brought in 3 Bedouin and 6 Camels. 2 Turks were killed.

2.

On the 8th December the 157th Infantry Brigade Group of the 52nd Division reached MAZAR and rejoined their Division.

A Brigade group of Artillery of the 42nd Division was sent up to strengthen the force at Railhead under Brigadier-General CRAMBEY, C.B.

On the 11th December the 5th Mounted Brigade was ordered up from HILL 70 to BIR EL ABD. Desert Column Headquarters moved to MUSTABIG on the same date.

A Water dump at KILO 128 was opened on December 13th and the Brigade covering railway construction moved forward.

The construction of wire roads between MAZAR and Kilo 128 was pushed forward.

On the 14th December A. & N.Z. Mounted Division was ordered to send a Regiment to GEURFAN EL GIMAL to cover the wells there and to connect up with the right of the construction escort Brigade.

On the 16th December the 5th Mounted Brigade was ordered up to MAZAR and the I.C.C. Brigade commenced to assemble at MAZAR. On the same date a Brigade of the 52nd Division moved up to KILO 128 to strengthen the railway escort.

On the 17th December I submitted a plan for the attack on the MASAID position to EASTFORCE. The force to be used consisted of 3 Mounted Brigades 1 Camel Brigade I.C.C. and 2 Divisions. The 5th Mounted Brigade arrived at MAZAR on the 13th.

On the 19th December hostile aircraft wounded 1 soldier and killed one native and 4 camels with bombs at MUSTAGIDDA and MAZAR respectively.

On the 20th I moved my Battle Headquarters to KILO 128. Aeroplanes reported that the MASAID position had been evacuated. Orders were at once issued for A. & N.Z. Mounted Division Headquarters with 3 Mounted Brigades and 1 Camel Brigade to move on EL ARISH on the night of the 20th/21st and for the 5th Mounted Brigade to tap the enemy's position about MASAID. Railway construction was hurried on. The 42nd Division was ordered to return from KILO 128 to MAZAR on the 21st December and take over the defence of that place.

Early on the morning of the 21st A. & N.Z. Mounted Division and Camel Brigade reached EL ARISH without opposition and at once pushed out patrols East, South-east, and south of the town.

199
5th Mounted Brigade reached MESHALFAT near BITTIA at 0600.
At 1100 the situation was as follows.

A. & N.Z. Mounted Divn. H.Qrs.
1st Light Horse Brigade
3rd Light Horse Brigade
N.Z.M.R. Brigade

Camel Brigade

at point 120.
East of EL ARISH.
at MASAD.
at MASMI with patrols in
EL ARISH.
in Wadi EL ARISH with
H.Q. at Point 200.

By 1230 Headquarters A. & N.Z. Mounted Division were established in EL ARISH.

5th Mounted Brigade was ordered back to Kilo 123 en route for BIR EL MALHA.

52nd Division was ordered to move up 1 Brigade Group to BITTIA - MESHALFAT area on the evening of the 21st, to push on into EL ARISH and arrange (a) for defence of the town (b) unloading of stores, on the 22nd December.

On the 22nd December the 156th Brigade reached EL ARISH at 1045. The remainder of the 52nd Division less 1 Infantry Brigade and section Heavy artillery, moved out to MESHALFAT which was reached at 1815.

On the morning of the 22nd December the Navy arrived at EL ARISH and commenced clearing the mine field. On the morning of the 24th December stores were being landed both by boat and a pier which had been constructed by the Royal Australian Caval Bridging Train.

On the evening of the 22nd December special instructions were given to the G.O.C. A. & N.Z. Mounted Division with regard to operations on 22nd/23rd December against MAGHARA. This operation is dealt with in detail in my O/144/81. forwarding the report of G.O.C., A. & N.Z. Mounted Division.

52nd Division less 1 Infantry Brigade group was concentrated at EL ARISH on the 23rd and Major General Smith assumed the ^{duties} ~~command~~ of Military Commandant.

On the 23rd December Battle Headquarters moved to EL ARISH.

The period 23rd to 26th is covered in my

On the 27th December the Army Commander visited EL ARISH.

A light car patrol with Camel Corps screen visited MAGHDABA.

On the 30th and 31st December the 1st Light Horse Brigade reconnoitred EL BURJ and the country around and 2½ miles East of SHEIKH ZOWAID.

(sd) PHILIP W. CHETWODE.
Commanding Desert Column, Lieutenant-General,

1-20
 1st L.H. Brigade.
 I.C.C. Brigade.
 A.S.N. Mounted Division.
 2nd Division.

Appx IV

O/51A/5

The outpost line is divided into 2 Sectors.

Left Sector. - Commander, Brig-General COX, 1st A.L.H. Brigade.

From the sea N. of the 3rd A in MABWALA to Hill 160 (3 miles south) exclusive.

Hills 110 and 100 will be occupied by observation posts by day and the three roads leading to EL ARISH from the east in this Sector will be patrolled to a distance of 5 miles from the observation line at uncertain hours.

By night a standing patrol will be kept out on each of these roads at a distance of not less than 3 miles from 1st L.H. Brigade Headquarters.

Right Sector. - Commander, Brig-General SMITH, V.C., I.C.C. Brigade.

From Hill 160 inclusive to MASMI inclusive.

Hills 160, 220 (1½ miles west of SHAKAL) 320 (GOZ EL DHABAA) 260 (west of Wadi) and 120 west of MASMI will be occupied by observation posts by day and all roads leading into EL ARISH from E. and S. will be patrolled to a distance of 3 miles beyond the line of observation posts at uncertain hours. By night standing patrols will be kept on all these roads.

In addition 1 Company will be kept at LAHFAN and will patrol all roads leading into that place from E., S.E., & S.W.

It must be understood that in case of attack the role of the outpost troops is that of giving warning and such delaying action as is possible. They will fall back gradually, clearing the front of the infantry on the latter's present position, concentrating on the right flank between Hill 200 and MASMI.

When the main position is built and sufficient troops available to ~~occupy~~ occupy it fresh orders will be issued.

(Sgd) V.M. FERGUSON, Lt. Col.
 General Staff,
 DESERT COLUMN.

4th January, 1917.

SECRET

DESERT COLUMN ORDER No. 9.

Copy No. 19

by

Lieutenant-General Sir P.W. Chetwode, Bt., C.B., D.S.O.Commanding Desert Column.6th January, 1917.BOUNDARY.

1. From 1200 on Monday, January 8th, 1917, the western Boundary of the Desert Column will be a line running approximately North and South passing West of MAZAR and East of BIR EL MALHA.

COMMAND.

2. The 2nd Australian Light Horse Brigade in the MAGEIBRA - BAYUD - MALHA area will come from that date under the command of the G.O.C., Northern Canal Section for tactical purposes.

MOVEMENTS.

3. The Infantry Battalions of the 180th Brigade now at BIR EL ABD and on L. of C. Posts East of that place will be relieved by other units under the Command of G.O.C., Northern Canal Section and will be concentrated East of BIR EL ABD.

W. J. P. M.
Lieutenant-Colonel,
General Staff,
DESERT COLUMN.

Issued at 1545.

Copy No.	1	A. & N.Z. Mounted Division.
	2	42nd Division.
	3	52nd Division
	4	5th Mounted Brigade
	5	1st Camel Brigade
	6	'A'
	7	'Q'
	8	B.G.R.A., DESERT COLUMN.
	9	C.E. " "
	10	A.D.S.T. " "
	11	D.D.M.S. " "
	12	Signals " "
	13	A.D.O.S. " "
	14	AP.M. " "
	15	Admin: Cmt: " "
	16	Camp Cmt. MAZAR.
	17	Camp Cmt. ABD.
	18/19	War Diary.
	20/22	EASTFORCE.
	23	Northern Canal Section.
	24	Southern Canal Section.
	25	2nd Light Horse Brigade.
	26	180th Brigade.
	27	R.F.C.
	28	R.N.A.S.
	29	C.E., E.F. (North)
	30	No. 1 Armoured Train.
	31	No. 3 Armoured Train.
	32	Military Mail.
	33	File

2

collecting them under guard about ~~point~~ point 250 where they will be taken over by an escort to be detailed from the I.C.C. Brigade.

The remainder of the Division will move North-east to a position from which they can

- (i) Deal with camp East of the C Group of works;
- (ii) Attack works C and the Reduit from the East and South-east.

(b) I.C.C. Brigade. The I.C.C. Brigade will follow the A. & N. Z. Mounted Division and move to a position from which they can attack Works B from the South-east in conjunction with the attack of the A. & N. Z. Mounted Division, or, if works B are unoccupied, assist in the attack on Works C at the discretion of G.O.C. A. & N. Z. Mounted Division. Both Groups of works being thus taken in flank and rear.

(c) The 5th mounted Brigade (less one squadron) will move from point 210 to a point on the RAFA road about 2 miles to the North-east near the word "of" in "Patches of cultivation" *when it will come into Reserve.*

They will detach one squadron to observe the main RAFA and DARB UM AMAD roads.

Hour of attack

5. The main attack on Works B and C will be launched by the G.O.C. A. & N. Z. Mounted Division after such reconnaissance and artillery preparation as he may consider necessary.

He will make detachments:-

- (a) To protect his right flank and rear;
- (b) Towards RAFA to cut the telegraph wire and observe towards KHAN YUNUS.

Pursuit

6. Should the enemy have retired or commenced to retire the A. & N. Z. Mounted Division will at once take up the pursuit on parallel lines, the 5th Mounted Brigade will take up the direct pursuit, and the I.C.C.

/ will