

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

Light Horse

Item number: 10/16/17

Title: 11th Australian Light Horse
Regiment

February 1917

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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.

WAR DIARY
 or by Lieut-Col W. GRANT D.S.O.
 INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY C/O 11th L.H. Regt.
 (Erase heading not required.) A.I.F.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
ROADHEAD SERAPEUM	1/2 18 #		<p>A working party of 36 all ranks under Capt C.A. MUNRO left ROADHEAD camp at 1245, and proceeded up WADI UMM MUHKSHEIB to Hill 680 (Square C3. 5.0) where it bivouacked for the night, with its camel Convoy of 100 camels which had left ROADHEAD at 0700 and arrived at 680 shortly before the working party. The party left the bivouac at 0900 and arrived at MOIYA HARAB at 1230, the Convoy arriving at 1530.</p> <p>Two pumps were started at 1600 and worked until 2000 and again the following day from 0600 to 1400, when all the water was pumped out.</p> <p>The Cistern is approx. 30 ft by 34 feet, by 6 feet, and contained 4 feet of water. The doorway was sealed up with corrugated iron and concrete, and the opening on top similarly blocked, afterwards being covered with sand and stones. This completed by 1800 on 3rd inst.</p> <p>The Rock hole in bed of WADI half a mile N.W. of MOIYA HARAB was filled in.</p>	<p>Ref Map Little bitter Lake 100,000 <u>C19</u></p>
	2/2 19			<p>AS 1/1914 E 52 1</p>
	3/2 19 4/2 19			

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
ROAD HEAD SERAPEDI	4/2 19		<p>The party then returned to Hill 680 (Sq C3. 5.0), where it bivouacked for the night.</p> <p>I accompanied the working party, and inspected the cisterns at MUBASSIA which had recently been sealed up by us. They had not been disturbed since the work was completed.</p> <p>On the return journey I located KHABRIT-EZ-ZOGHA, which is a pool amongst the sand dunes at the foot of ER RIGUM (Square D4 - 10.1) and not as shown on the map.</p> <p>The Turks had a considerable camp here during their operations two years ago and obtained their water from this Pool, which is filled from the WADI. It is about 60 yards by 40 yards and about 4 feet deep. It would be difficult to drain as the present surface is about five or six feet below the bed of the WADI.</p> <p>The whole party returned to ROAD HEAD Camp.</p>	<p>Little Bitter Lake map</p> <p>100,000</p> <p>Apr 1914</p> <p>EW</p>

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WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118.

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

by Lieut-Col. W. GRANT, D.S.O.
C/O 11th LH. Regt.
A.I.F.

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
ROADHEAD SERAPEUM	9/2 19		<p>Capt J. H. SHEARER and Lieut. A. R. BRIERTY seconded to Training Regt. to relieve Lieuts. W. F. WHITFIELD and J. K. JOHNSTONE, who had been with the Training Regt. for six months.</p> <p>Lieut. J. K. JOHNSTONE reported to this Regiment for duty, and was posted to B. Squadron.</p>	
	10/2 17		<p>Major SMITH ALEXANDER, R.E. came out to interview me with regard to men for the new Field Squadron of Engineers for the new Division being formed. It was arranged that he should interview applicants on Monday, 12th inst.</p> <p>I went in to FERRY POST to see O/C NORTHERN AREA.</p>	
	11/2 17		<p>Arranging details of convoys for pending operations.</p> <p>Lieut. F. FARLOW left with 6 men to reconnoitre THEMADRA for water.</p> <p>The Adjutant, Lt. MARSHALL and Lieut. CLIFFORD, went into Southern Canal Section Headquarters, in reference to a cipher system.</p> <p>An advance Convey left with fantasses for KHABRIT-EZ-ZOGH.</p>	<p>2nd LH. A.I.F.</p> <p>24th 1914 E.S. 1/4</p>

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or

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
ROADHEAD SERAPEUM	12/2 19		I went to SHALLUFA N. to confer with General PITT, with reference to the pending operations.	Ref. map
	13/2 17		Q. Coy. of the Camel Transport Corps, and a Wireless Section reported at RAILHEAD today.	250,000 SINAI 3.
	14.2 17		Preparing for operations against NEKHL. A Camel Convoy left for the Dump established at ZOGHA.	
	15.2 17		The Regiment (Strength 420) left at 0715 for ZOGHA, Lieut. MORGAN remaining in camp in charge of the balance of the Regiment, including transport.	
	15.2 17		I commanded the column known as the NORTHERN COLUMN, of which the Regiment joined the with a detachment of 60 men from the Imperial Camel Corps, formed the fighting force.	
	15.2 17		Lieut. W.F. WHITFIELD of this Regt. had charge of the supply arrangements at ZOGHA.	
	15.2 17		The Column left ZOGHA at 0700, and arrived at BIA EL GIDDI at 1430, passing through broken country, and the roughest portion of the route. Good water was found here.	
	15.2 17		16 wells containing an ample supply for the column, at this time, just after rain.	

Apr 1914
E.G.M.
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C/O 11th L.H. Regt.
A.I.F.

Army Form C. 2118.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
BIR EL GIDDI	16-2 17		The Column left GIDDI at 1030, after watering the horses, in anticipation of a late watering at THEMADA, the next camping place.	SINAI 3 <u>250,000</u>
BIR THEMADA			Four miles E. of GIDDI, the BAHHA pass was entered, the Regiment passing through in about 40 minutes. THEMADA was reached at 1800 and on arrival I found that the advance party I had sent ahead under Lieut G.H. HOFFMAN had put in good continuous work, having developed 4 four wells about 8 feet deep, giving about 4 feet of water in each.	
	17-2 17		The Regiment left THEMADA at 0845, reaching a point on the HASSANA road, about 7 miles N. of NEKHL at 1600. Lieut. F.G. FARLOW had left earlier with a small patrol to pick out a site for an Advanced Base and to reconnoitre the pass. THILMET EL THAMAMAT, 4 miles N. of NEKHL. At 1530 this patrol reported at 1530 having heard three shots fired at about 1300 by a Bedouin who made off on a camel in the direction of NEKHL.	AT 17/1917 E.S.M.

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WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY by Lieut-Col W. GRANT D.S.O. C/O 11th L.H. Regt. A.I.F.

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
18.7.17 NEKHL	17.2 17		<p>At 1645 a further report was received from Lieut FARLOW that the pass was unscouted, and that men could be seen leaving NEKHL in an easterly direction.</p> <p>At 1710 I sent forward B. Squadron under Capt CA. MUNRO to support the advance party, which had succeeded in capturing four of the enemy with ten camels but were prevented from crossing the plain by heavy fire from the enemy, who had halted temporarily in the hills east of NEKHL.</p> <p>An Aeroplane landed at the advanced base at 1740 and reported that the town was empty.</p> <p>NEKHL was actually entered by B. Squadron at 1945. Two Bedouins and one Turk, the only occupants of the town, being captured.</p> <p>A cordon was placed round the town for the night, and the plain patrolled during the night, as it was impossible to pursue the enemy, owing to the darkness, and uncertainty of the direction taken by the enemy.</p>	<p>4 1914 E.S.</p>

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WAR DIARY

by Lieut-Col W. GRANT D.S.O.

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or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

C/o 11th L.H. Regt.
A.I.F.

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
NEKHL	19.2 17		<p>At oboos the Column entered the town, and patrols were sent eastward, with orders not to proceed more than 15 miles. They were unable to gain touch with the enemy, though two more prisoners were taken, many signs of his hurried flight were seen in arms, ammunition, stones etc.</p> <p>One mangle loading field gun was captured but as we were unable to bring it away, it was dropped down one of the wells.</p> <p>Later in the day two Arabs and a Turk were found hiding in the hills - the latter being shot in attempting to escape; the former however, surrendered.</p> <p>Prisoners state that the garrison was approximately 40 Armed Bedouins and 24 soldiers, the whole under the command of a Turkish officer ^{and} FUAD EFFENDI, an Arab, both of whom escaped with the Bedouins. Of the soldiers one was killed, nine taken prisoners. Six away at HASSANA, two at BIR SABA, and six escaped.</p>	<p>4 24-1914 E.S. 2/2</p>

WAR DIARY by Lieut-Col W. GRANT D SO.

or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY Co 11th L.H. Regt.

(Erase heading not required.)

A.I.F.

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
NEKHZ	18.2 17		Before leaving the town, I had the telephone wires cut, & posts removed.	
	19.2 17		The Column returned to THEMADA and bivouacked for the night.	
	20.2 17		The Column moved back to GIDDI, where I considered it advisable to rest the horses for a day, the 21 st , moving on again to ZOGHA on the 22 nd .	
	21.22 17		The Column returned to ROADHEAD Camp, arriving at 1600.	
Roadhead	23.2 17		Brig-Gen. PAULIN C.B. (GOC Southern Canal Section) visited the camp, in reference to the operations.	
SERAPEVA	24.2 17		Preparing to move the Regiment to FERRY POST, to join up with the 4 th L.H. Brigade and the Imperial Mounted Division.	
	25.2 17		Major-Gen. HODGSON, GOC. Imperial Mt. Div. visited the camp.	
	26.2 17		Shipping baggage by motor lorry to No 3 Sidling, Serapeva & trucks being provided for transport to MONTSCAR.	

all pack horses returned to camp after being examined

15/1/1917
E.S.M.

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or
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by Lieut-Col W. GRANT DSO.
C/o 11th L.H. Regt
A.I.F.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
ROADHEAD SEARAPEN	26-2 17		I sent Lieut C.P. STUMM with an advance party of 120 Pps and a lumbered wagon, to prepare the camp at FERRY POST. Capt L.C. KESSELS arrived with the 18 th Coy ICC. who relieved our post at Hill 580.	
FERRY POST EAST	27-2 17		The Regiment moved across the desert on the E. side of the Canal to FERRY POST and occupied a site E. of the Canal, and South of the Roadhead Road. The wagons were sent across empty and arrived about 1500.	
	28-2 17		Brig. Gen. MEREDITH rode round our lines in the afternoon. Settling and clearing camp. The whole of the M.G. Section were transferred to the 4 th Brigade Machine Gun Squadron. Lieut G.H. BRYANT, 28 Other Ranks, 20 Hides, 16 Draft horses, 4 lumbered wagons, and 2 Maxim Guns. Three men were transferred to Brigade Police.	Feb 1914 E 5/12

Feb 17 11/2/17 E5 2/11
REPORT ON OPERATIONS AGAINST NEKHL
BY LIEUT-COLONEL W. GRANT D. SO.
Commanding 11th . LIGHT HORSE REGIMENT A.I.F.
Feb 1914

copy
Appendix
Reference Map
SINAI PENINSULA
1/250,000

At the beginning of February information received by the Intelligence Branch of the General Staff led to the belief that, after evacuating SINAI, the Turks had sent a small force of approximately 130 men, the majority of whom were armed irregulars, back to NEKHL, in an attempt to maintain their supremacy in the eyes of the Bedouins.

A decision having been arrived at to operate against this force I received instructions from Headquarters, SOUTHERN CANAL SECTION, on TUESDAY, 6th. February, and commenced arrangements for the proposed operation, The scheme being that a column under my command moving by BIR EL GIDDI and TRHWADA should act in conjunction with a column moving from the South via HENIAK and AYUN SUHR. The special mission assigned to my column being ^{the} severance of the enemy's communications between NEKHL and AUJA.

By the 14th. February a Supply Dump had been established at ZOCHA, the point of concentration and on that date the column under my command, consisting of the troops noted in the margin and known for purposes of this operation as the NORTHERN COLUMN, moved out to that place.

In addition to Lieut-Colonel A.W. JENNINGS BRAWLEY, whose services had been lent by the Egyptian Government and whose knowledge of the country and its people was of the greatest assistance to me throughout, the Column was accompanied by Capt. F.D. STIRLING, General Staff, General Headquarters, and Lieut. A.H. STUART of the Intelligence Branch, General Staff.

On the 15th. February I advanced to BIR EL GIDDI at which point I was joined by a Detachment of No 9 Coy. Imperial Camel Corps, of a strength of 60 rifles, which had arrived that morning from SHALLUFA. Here also I received the report of an Officer's patrol which I had sent forward to examine the wells at TRHWADA - the last available water

11th A.L.H. Regt
Strength 420
1 R.H. Officer &
4 O/R
1 R.A.M.C Officer
Ditchmt 124th
F.Amb. Str. 26
1 R.F.C Officer
& 2 O/R
2 Aeroplanes
2 Wireless Pack
Stations

Reference Map
SINAI PENINSULA
1/250,000

11th ALH (2) Feb 17
Feb 1914. E 5 2 / 12

before reaching WEHHL.

This report was somewhat discouraging as it was to the effect that the wells had been completely silted up and that no water was available. Being uncertain as to the opposition I might encounter I had fortunately allowed for the necessity of the Column spending 3 nights at an Advanced Base established at some point as near as possible to WEHHL. It was not, therefore, necessary for me to materially alter my plans as I calculated that even if no water could be made available at THEMADA, my supply arrangements would afford me sufficient to allow me to spend two nights at the Advanced Base.

Early on the morning of the 16th. I despatched an advance party to THEMADA with instructions to develop the water supply to the best of their ability. I moved forward from BIR EL GIDDI later in the forenoon of that day after the horses had had a good drink. Weather conditions were in my favour as the cold and wet prevented the horses from becoming unduly hot and thirsty.

On arrival at THEMADA I found that the Advanced Party under Lieut. G.H. HOFFMAN had done exceedingly good work in digging 4 wells to an average depth of 3 feet which were then showing about 4 feet of water in each. This level was well maintained even when the pumps were rigged and the whole Regiment watered from these wells.

The next day, February 17th., I sent forward an Officers patrol in advance of my main body with orders to pick a suitable spot for the Advanced Base and to reconnoitre the pass THILMETL EL THAWAMAT, 4 miles North of WEHHL.

About 1530 I received a report from this patrol that three shots had been fired from the ~~W~~ high ground North of Point 1380 on the HASSANA ROAD, shortly after 1500, by a Bedouin who had then made off on a camel in the direction of WEHHL.

Reference Map
SINAI PENINSULA
1/250,000

11th A.I.H. 3. 2/15/17 Feb 1917 E 5th 13

At 1600 I reached a point on the HASSANA road, South of point 1380, about 7 miles North of NEKHL which I fixed on as my Advanced Base. At 1645 a further report was received stating that the pass was unoccupied and that men could be seen leaving NEKHL in an Easterly direction, whether soldiers or civilians it was impossible to state. The Officer Commanding the patrol asked for support as he was pushing ~~the~~ on in pursuit.

At 1710 I sent forward "B" Squadron, 11th. Light Horse Regt, giving the Officer Commanding such information as I possessed and warning him that NEKHL might not be completely evacuated and that he would have to be guided by circumstances in deciding on his course of action and ordered ^{ing} him to render me an hourly report.

Meanwhile, the advanced patrol had succeeded in intercepting and capturing four of the enemy with ten camels but had been prevented from crossing the plain to the Eastward of NEKHL by rifle fire from about 50 of the enemy who had temporarily halted in the foothills at the point where the NEKHL-AKABA road leaves the plain.

An aeroplane which landed at the Advanced Base very shortly after the departure of the reinforcing Squadron was sent to reconnoitre NEKHL and returned at 1740 reporting that the town was empty but having been unable to discover the enemy on the roads to the East.

NEKHL was actually entered by B Squadron at 1945, two Bedouins and one Turk, the only people in the town being captured.

Owing to the darkness and uncertainty as to the direction taken by the enemy further pursuit was impossible, the Officer Commanding therefore bivouacked in the town placing a cordon round it and patrolling the plain during the night.

At 0600 on the 18th. I entered the town with the main body of the Column, having left my Advanced Base at 0400.

Patrols were forthwith sent out to the Eastward with

11th 4.

July

Sept 1914 E 5² 74

Reference Map
SINAI PENINSULA
1/250,000

orders not to exceed a radius of 15 miles, but they were ~~not~~ unable to regain touch with the enemy, though two more prisoners were taken and many signs of his hurried flight were found in abandoned arms, ammunition, stores, etc.

At 0830 helio communication was established with the Southern Column which reached the town at 0905.

After a thorough search of the town and neighborhood had been undertaken and arrangements made for the demolition of the field gun captured, the Southern Column commenced the return journey at 1030.

In the course of the search later in the day two Arabs and a Turk were found hiding in the hills: the latter was shot in attempting to escape but the two former surrendered.

Prisoners' statements taken the same evening seemed to indicate that the original report of the strength of the garrison was exaggerated. They state that the strength was approximately ⁴⁰ ~~50~~ armed Bedouins and 24 soldiers, the whole under the command of a Turkish Officer ~~and~~ ~~and~~ FAUD Effendi, an Arab, both of whom escaped with the Bedouins. Of the soldiers, one was killed, nine taken prisoners, six were away at HASSANA, two at BYR SABA, and six escaped.

Before leaving the town telegraph and telephone wires were cut and posts removed, though the Turks did not appear to have used this system of communication since the original evacuation. The placards supplied for the purpose to Lieutenant Colonel JENNINGS BRADLEY were posted in the town. It was observed that beyond making everything exceedingly dirty little damage had been done by the enemy during his occupation.

A hurried examination of two prisoners on the evening of the 17th. had revealed the fact that six Turkish soldiers were expected to return that evening from HASSANA where they had been sent to fetch rations. A detachment of the Imperial

11^a A.L.H

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John Feb 1914 E 5²/₁₅

Reference Map
SINAI PENINSULA
1/250,000

Camel Corps were accordingly detailed to waylay and capture them but only succeeded in securing six camels laden with stores. The two Bedouins with them made good their escape and nothing was seen of the soldiers.

On the morning of the 19th. the return journey was commenced during which no incident of any note took place.

I considered it advisable to halt for a day's rest at BIR EL GIDDI and this was accordingly done the Column remaining there from the night of the 20th to the morning of 22nd.

SUPPLY ARRANGEMENTS.

Supplies throughout were based on a daily ration of 4 lbs weight and one gallon of water per man and 20 pounds of compressed fodder and 6 gallons of water per horse.

1600 camels of "B" and "Q" Companies of the Camel Transport Corps were employed under Captain SWALLOW, now Deputy Inspector, Camel Transport Corps, Anzac Mounted Division.

I wish to place on record my very high appreciation of the work performed by the C.T.C. I do not hesitate to say that the efficiency shown by Captain J.L. SWALLOW in the handling of the Convoys under his command very materially contributed to the success of an expedition which depended so largely on satisfactory supply arrangements.

In this connection it is interesting to note that practically all the Camels employed were Somalis. They were not heavily laden and marched exceedingly well. The average days march was never less than 20 miles and they appeared to cover this distance without difficulty at a slightly faster pace than that usually shown by the Egyptian Camels.

COMMUNICATIONS.

Communication to the rear was very satisfactorily maintained by the two Wireless Telegraph Pack Sections with the Column but lateral communication with the Southern Column was not so good. For this I had to depend on Aeroplanes and Visual Signalling. The latter is exceedingly difficult to

GENERAL
CONCLUSIONS
CONTINUED.

11th ALH 6. Feb 17 Feb 1914 E52
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use satisfactorily in broken country such as that in which
both columns were operating.

With regard to the former I would suggest that in any future operations of this nature orders be given that the attendant aeroplanes should get into touch with the Column Commanders as early in the day as possible. Owing to late arrival and engine trouble the most important message which I wish to send to General PITT was never delivered.

The experience of this Column would also tend to show the inadvisability of attaching great importance to aeroplane reconnaissance of small bodies of troops. It would seem that such parties can hide from an aeroplane without much difficulty - on one occasion an aeroplane came over and completely failed to see the whole of my Column.

under all circumstances
Where all have done their utmost "it is difficult to single out individuals but I consider that the greatest credit is due to Captain (Temporary Major) L.S. ALEXANDER, who acted as my Staff Officer & was invaluable to me in the preliminary arrangements, to Lieut F.C. FARLOW, who did excellently as Officer Commanding the advanced patrol which reported on the water at THEMADA & also carried out the reconnaissance on the 17th. & to Lieut. A.H. STUART who accompanied him & whose knowledge of Arabic was of the greatest assistance. Capt. F.D. STIRLING, General Staff, General Headquarters, also rendered valuable assistance throughout the operations and also in compiling the information acquired during the reconnaissance.

I am glad to be able to report that both men & horses have returned to Camp fit & well, no casualties or sickness having been sustained.

Five appendices are attached: -

- No 1 dealing in detail with the route followed.
- No 2 showing a list of prisoners with particulars of their examination.
- No 3 giving a list of arms etc. captured or destroyed
- No 4 Map LITTLE BITTER LAKE 1/100,000 showing position of water pools in the WADI UM MUKHSHIB.
- No 5 Map SINAI, Sheet 3, SUEZ, 1/250,000 showing route followed to NEHEL.

W. Grant Lieut.-Col.
Commanding 11th. Light Horse Regt. A.I.F.

Appendix II

11th a.l.H

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Feb 1917

DETAILED REPORT ON ROUTE FOLLOWED BY NORTHERN
COLUMN DURING OPERATIONS AGAINST NEKHL 14/18th Febr'y, 17

Reference Map

SINAI SHEET 3
1/250,000
ALL BEARINGS TRUE

SERAPEUM ROAD-
HEAD TO ZOGHA.
23 miles

Leaving SERAPEUM ROADHEAD the route followed leads over heavy sand for 5 miles to Point 580, a prominent sand dune on which is established a Signal Post in telephonic communication with ROADHEAD CAMP.

From this point the track which is quite undefined runs on a bearing of 116 degrees for 18 miles to ZOGHA passing at the 12th mile from ROADHEAD, the WESTERN POOL (now dried up). Thirteen miles out two pools ^{of good water} are reached within about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile of each other; the larger of these TODD'S HOLE (^{MALHA} EI HABBAL) is of an area of about 60 yards square and affords an ample supply of good water. Drainage trenches having been dug round this pool last year it is now shrinking rapidly and will shortly be dry.

At ZOGHA a similar pool of approximately the same ~~size~~ size is found which is also shrinking for the same reason.

The going between ROADHEAD and ZOGHA is very heavy steep banks of sand being met with at intervals, but on the whole the country may be said to be possible for vehicles ^{and guns} if fitted with sand tyres and ped-rails but impossible for motor cars.

A possible but difficult landing ground for aeroplanes is found in the Wadi bed at ZOGHA ~~and another~~ and another of similar character about a mile South East of the Pool.

ZOGHA TO BIR EL
GIDDI.
21 miles.

From ZOGHA the track runs over rough and hummocky ground on a bearing of 153 degrees, having on the left the MUKHSHEIB hills and on the right RUEISAT EL JARARD. Eight miles out a patch of scrub covered ground is passed which would make a good landing place for aeroplanes if

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ZOGHA TO
BIR EL GIDDI
21 miles

believed to be SHEIKH EL
MASHRAUKH

if cleared of the scrub. At the 11th. mile a steep winding descent about half a mile in length leads into the Wadi GIDDI at a fork of the Wadi by a native cemetery not marked on the map. Thence nine miles of uneven going following the main direction of the Wadi ~~by the~~ brings the track which is here slightly more defined to BIR EL GIDDI.

These wells are sixteen in number of an average depth of 8 feet 6 inches and diameter about 6 feet with about 6 feet of water in each. All our situated in a length of about 200 yards in the bed of the Wadi in the drift sand of which water is found. The standing capacity seems to be about 8,500 gallons, the wells re-filling at the rate of about 40/50 gallons an hour each. The ~~wells~~ wells are lined with soft stone, the apertures at the top being of a width of about 15". A considerable quantity of silt has fallen into all the wells which are of course subject to surface contamination and it would seem probable that their original depth was about 12 feet. There are many old and disused wells which have completely fallen in and there is little doubt but that further supplies could be developed.

A bedouin who guided the patrol to these wells seemed surprised to find the water sweet and it is possible that when no rain has fallen for a considerable time that it is distinctly bitter.

The ground between ZOGHA and BIR EL GIDDI is of such a rough and broken character that it is quite unfit for any form of vehicle.

BIR EL GIDDI
TO BIR EL
THEMADA
23 miles

Four miles from BIR EL GIDDI the route crosses the water shed through a difficult pass into the Wadi el BANA. This pass is two miles in length and is bordered by ~~steep~~ steep cliffs, the track being very narrow and only passable in single file. The time occupied by the 11th. Light Horse Regt in passing through it being about 40 minutes.

BIR EL GIDDI
TO
BIR EL THEMADA
23 MILES

3. 11th A.H. 767
1914 E 5²/₁₉

Numerous goat tracks used by the Bedouins when grazing their flocks are visible on each side of the pass; one to the North leading over into the Wadi RUMANA.

After emerging from the pass the beginning of the high plateau on which NEKHL stands is reached and the character of the terrain completely alters.

Sand dunes and scrub give place to stretches of slightly undulating gravelly plain over which vehicles of all descriptions could pass and on which it would never be necessary to proceed far before finding a suitable landing ground for aeroplanes.

With the exception of the SAFRA EL HAMPTH and the GEBEL GHARRA this description applies to the country all the way to NEKHL.

RAS ABU GURUM, the highest point of GEBEL YELLEG to the North and RAS EL GINDI to the South are the prominent features.

From the ^{Eastern} entrance of ^{BARRA} GIDDI Pass BIR EL THEMADA lies 16 miles distant on a bearing of 104 degrees, trees half a mile East of the well being visible from the distance but lost to sight on closer approach.

Two clearly defined tracks, one leading from Wadi SEALA and the other from SUDR HEITAN to HASSANA are crossed.

Four feet of water were found in each of the four wells, which had been sunk at BIR EL THEMADA to a depth of 8 feet, by the advance party. As in the case of the BIR EL GIDDI the water is found in the drift sand of the Wadi bed and as this Wadi drains a wide area and is of considerable extent it seems likely that many more wells may be developed and that water may be found therein later in the dry season than in the Wadi GIDDI which has not the same catchment area.

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BIR EL THEMADA
TO NEKHL.
27 miles.

From BIR EL THEMADA the line followed was on a general bearing of 126 degrees passing between the North and South ^{groups} slopes of SAYRA EL HAMPTH ~~and~~ striking the HASSANA NEKHL road south of Point 1380 at a distance of about 7 miles North of the latter place, the country traversed being very similar to that of the day before.

The HASSANA NEKHL road is ^a clearly defined track on which wheel marks could be seen but is in no sense a made road. Four miles from NEKHL it passes through TRILMETL EL TEAMAMAT pass.

A considerable amount of work has been done by the Turks in making a cutting ^{in the Pass} and the road which is 8 feet broad is sunk to a depth of about 6 feet. The length of the pass is some 400 yards, the steepest descent being into the plain of NEKHL and though the road is very rough it is quite practicable for small and light cars.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS.

The possibilities of an expedition such as this depend entirely on the water supply and it may be said that owing to recent heavy rain it is somewhat ~~of~~ difficult to form a reliable estimate of the average quantities available throughout the year for a force following the foregoing route.

In this connection, information was given by a Bedouin to the effect that water could be counted on in the wells at BIR EL GIDDI for two months after any considerable rain.

After due preparation beforehand it might have been possible for a Mounted Brigade to find sufficient water ^{on the route} at the date when this Column was operating. On the other hand the probability is that ~~not~~ ⁱⁿ less than two months the pools which afforded supplies for the first two days will be dry and the amounts obtainable at BIR EL GIDDI and BIR EL THEMADA will be very uncertain.

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GENERAL
CONCLUSIONS
continued

It would, therefore, seem very doubtful if any but a small body of troops could pass over this route during the dry season.

The section of country between ZOCHA and the Eastern end of the BABA pass is quite impossible for vehicles consisting as it does of a stretch of rough and broken ground with two steep defiles which have to be negotiated by mounted troops in single file.

During the first day's journey no suitable landing ground for aeroplanes is found till ZOCHA is reached.

On the second day one or two, could, with a little trouble, be found between ZOCHA and the descent into the Wadi GIBDI and again at BIE EL GIBDI.

On the 3rd. and 4th. days, after leaving the Eastern end of the BABA PASS, many suitable spots could be found along the route to, and at, NEKHL.

At NEKHL the Turks had installed a pumping engine which though still in position had been rendered useless by them on their first evacuation of the town.

There is apparently an unlimited supply of exceedingly unpleasant water at NEKHL. The natives drink this and animals will also do so but it has a bad effect on Europeans if drank for any considerable time and during his residence there Lieut-Colonel BRAMLEY JENNINGS had to have his drinking water fetched from THEMET, a distance of 40 miles.

Camping grounds can be found within easy reach of all of the places where water is available on the above route and also at ~~any~~ intermediate points if necessary.

W. Grant Lieut.-Col.
Commanding 11th. Light Horse Regt. A.I.F.

Appendix III
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INTERROGATION OF PRISONERS
CAPTURED AT NEKHL 17/18th. Febry, 1914.

ALI SHADER	21	JERUSALEM	SYRIAN
HAMZA ALI SIRHAN	21	HAIFA	"
ARMED MOHAMED	20	JERUSALEM	"
IBRAHIM ISSA	23	ALEPPO	"
KAMEL ALI	20	ADANA	"
ABDEL HAMED DAUD	22	JERUSALEM	"
MAHMUD DAUD	32	HAIFA	"
ALI OGLU IBRAHIM	35	TARSUS	TURK
ISA ALI	37	SELEVCA	"
TAHA MOHAMED	65	TOR	Deserter. Bash-Shawish SINAI Police

All except the last mentioned belong to the 2nd. Regt. (IKINJI ALAI) Camel Corps. The seven Syrians have from 1 to 1½ years service. On completion of a three months course of Recruit Infantry Training at MAALBEK, (Depot, one hour by train from DAMASCUS, towards HOMS), they were drafted to the 2nd. Regt Camel Corps, under HASSAN ISKANDER BEY at GAZA.

About 5 weeks ago they formed part of a detachment of 2 Arab Officers and 48 O/R. sent from GAZA to re-occupy HASSANA and NEKHL. Lieut KASIM Effendi remained at HASSANA with 24 men while Lieut FOUAD Effendi proceeded with the remainder to NEKHL which he found evacuated.

Their march by camel from GAZA via AUJA and KOSSATMA took 11 days. At NEKHL they obtained their stores by camel from HASSANA, a four days journey there and back. No telephone communication existed. Orders and mail came by camel from AUJA.

On the 17th. February, the garrison consisted of 50 Bedouin Scouts under a Turkish acting-Captain and 16 Camel Corps under FOUAD Effendi. Of his original 24, two men had gone to BIR SABA and six were expected on the 18th from HASSANA where they had gone with six camels to get stores. These camels were captured on the 18th. by the I.C.C.

BAALBEK?

11^A 24

(2)

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The garrison were all armed with the Martini Henry, Single loader and carried 20 rounds per man. They had no Machine Guns.

About 1600 on the 17th, news of the NORTHERN COLUMN'S advance was brought in by Bedouin Scouts. FOUAD Effendi immediately sent out 4 soldiers to bring in the camels of his detachment from grazing. Before the camels could be brought in, however, an aeroplane was sighted and the garrison bolted, Bedouins on camels and the soldiers on foot. The main body proceeded along the AKABA road for some distance but in the ~~the~~ night cut across to the KOSSAIMA road and thus avoided our pursuit.

Nine of the camel Corps were captured and one killed, the remaining six, all Turks, escaped with FOUAD Effendi.

Onbashi ALI SHADER is intelligent and worth further interrogation. At one time he worked for Captain PARKER at the Mosque of OMAR. He knows Lieut IBRAHIM HUSSEINI captured at RAFA. During the September operations he was at MAZAR where *Mohaleq* MOHAMED ALI was in command. He states that there are 30 of the Camel Corps at KOSSAIMA and that at AUJA about a fortnight ago there was a body of cavalry, Turks and Circassians armed with swords. They had come from the HEJAZ via MAAN. He further states that motors have been used between KOSSAIMA and NEKHL via HASSANA.

The Turks have not yet been fully interrogated and TAHA MOHAMED is in his dotage.

An old Bedouin, resident at NEKHL, was released with a view to policy, on the advice of Lieut-Colonel JENNINGS BRAMLEY.

Anstee
2/Lieut.

Intelligence Officer.
Attached NORTHERN COLUMN.

18.2.1917.

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APPENDIX No 3.

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LIST OF ARMS etc. CAPTURED DURING NEKHL OPERATIONS.

14th to 18th February, 1917

Feb 1917

About 9 rifles, Martini Henry
 7 " Snider, (One broken)
 2 " St. Etienne.
 196 rounds, Field Gun Ammunition.
 About 15,000 rounds S.A.A.
 1 Field Gun, muzzle-loading.
 16 Camels (Three of which were dropped, as they were unable to travel).

W. Grant

Lieut.-Col
Commanding 11th. Light Horse Regt. A.I.F.