

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

Light Horse

**Item number: 10/17/15**

**Title: 12th Australian Light Horse**  
**Regiment**

April - May 1918



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.

or  
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

E53/1

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Belah.	1/4/18	1200.	Regiment moved off from Camp. Brigade concentrated in vicinity of ST. JAMES PARK and moved off in column of line of troops columns. The usual march halts were observed & GAZA reached at 1415, the Brigade camping N. of Australia Hill at 1450. Horses moved off to water.	
AUSTRALIA HILL.	2/4/18	0530	Reveille. Cold & slight showers.	
		0830	Horses moved off to water.	
		0930	Regiment moved off bivouac area, and grazed whilst waiting for Yeomanry Division to pass.	
		1030	Yeomanry Division passed (Brigade moved off)	
DIR SINEID.		1205	Halted for mid-day meal 1 mile S. of DIR SINEID.	
		1235	Moved off again.	
MEDJEL		1630.	(Arrived Bivouac area MEDJEL) Received visits from old members of Regiment now in 1 <sup>st</sup> A.F.C.	
	3/4/18	0530	Reveille. (Regiment watered at 0700, moved off at 0900) Order of March B. 26. G. 12 <sup>th</sup> . 4 <sup>th</sup> . 11 <sup>th</sup> .	
ESDUD.		1200	Contact successfully established with aeroplanes. 3 messages sent by panel shutter.	
SUKEREIR		0530	Reveille. (Regiment watered at 0730, & moved off 0930.	
YEBNAH		1130.	Passed YEBNAH and arrived DEIRAN 1245. went into bivouac but had to shift 1/2 mile further S.	
DEIRAN	5/4/18	0530	Last camp very good. Reveille. Regiment moved off to water at 0715. Owing to breakdown was unable to water. Moved off at 0950.	
SELMEH			Arrived SELMEH 1300. Good camp.	
	6/4/18		Advanced training & shock tactics, used the bayonet as a weapon mounted, was carried on during this period. 24 of ranks were granted leave daily to visit JAFFA from 1230 to 1830. This privilege was much appreciated and availed of.	
	19/4/18.		Brigade received instructions to be prepared to move to TALAT ED. DUMM on 20/5/18.	
	19/4/18.		(Bde moved off.) 4 <sup>th</sup> . 11 <sup>th</sup> . 12 <sup>th</sup> . M. G. Sqn, ground much drier than when we came up, & march very dusty.	
DEIRAN	20/4/18	0745	(Passed DEIRAN & camped on previous bivouac area used on 4/4/18.	
		1130.		
	21/4/18	0500	Reveille 0500. Moved off to water 0615.	
		0930.	Brigade moved off passing NAANE and BARRIYE.	
BARRIYE		1200	Contact patrols demonstrated by aeroplane, but very unsatisfactory owing to confusion of messages by units. Great interest was felt at passing these places as we were able to see the ground over which we were to charge on 18/11/17.	
LATRON	21/4/18	1400	Arrived at Bivouac Area, & watered horses at 1430.	
		2000	The following maps were received from B. H. Q & issued as under:-	
			R.H.Q. HAIFA 5 SHEETS. 12 1 15 5 17 1 18 5	
			A. Sqn " 6 " " 1 " 5 " 1 " 5	
			B " " 7 " " 1 " 6 " 1 " 6	
			C " " 5 " " 1 " 7 " 1 " 7	
			N.C.O.'s " " " " " " 3 " 3	

April 1918.

A. Johnson  
M. & Adjutant  
12<sup>th</sup> L.H. Regt. A.S.T.

D. D. & L., London, E.C.  
(A8004) Wt. W1771/M2 31 750,000 5/17 Sch. 52 Forms/C2118/14

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E 53/2

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
LATRON ENAB	22/4/18	0500	Reveille. Brigade commenced watering at 0800, and moved off.	
		1300	Reached Bivouac area.	
F 24	23/4/18	0400	Reveille. Regiment moved off and watered 0620.	
		1300	Arrived at Bivouac area passing JERUSALEM at 1000.	
	24/4/18	0500	Reveille. Regiment moved off to EL MESHARAB, arriving new bivouac area at 1100. Area congested and dusty at foot of high hills, from summit of which the DEAD SEA and RIVER JORDAN can be plainly seen.	
EL MESHARAB	25/4/18		In camp EL MESHARAB.	
	26/4/18		In camp EL MESHARAB: Dusty dirty camp. Watering difficult owing to the rough and precipitous country leading to the wadi EL-KELT.	
		1900	Regiment moved to JERICHO) Order of March 26 Q. A. B & C Sqns. 200 yds between squadrons.	
JERICHO			Route - along the old Roman Road.	
		2200	Regiment arrived bivouac area 2 miles due N. of JERICHO.	
	27/4/18		In camp. Trenches dug, protection against hostile aircraft.	
	28/4/18		In camp. Preparations made to move out on operations.	
	29/4/18	2000	(Regiment moves out on operations) Order of March, A. B. & C. Sqns. C. Sqns. 6 Sqns. 6 Sqns. detailed as escort to 19th Bde R. H. A. Type first two pages of Appendix as marked	
		2215	Crossed GHORANIYE Bridge, marching N.	
	30/4/18	0100	Regiment halted.	
		0330	Regiment moves forward, fast pace	
		0615	Point 3 miles E. of JISR ed DAMIEN.	
		0630	A & B Sqns take up a line overlooking a wadi about 2 miles E of DAMIEN and sent out forward patrols.	
		0730	C. Sqns arrives with the guns.	
		1300	Regiment commenced to water at a point about 3 miles N.E. of DAMIEN.	
		1900	C. Sqns move out to take up a night outpost line, at a point 3 1/2 miles E of the JORDAN River.	
		2030	A. Sqns moves out and takes up a line on the left of C. Sqns. B. Sqns remain in reserve.	

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A. Johnson's  
12th H. & A. Coy.  
12th H. & A. Coy.

See Appendix 1.  
April 1918.

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E 53/3

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
DAMIEH.	<del>2/4/18</del> 1/5/18.	0400	Officers Patrol moves out to reconnoitre DAMIEH Bridge, and ES SAULT - ed DAMIEH Road	
		0420	Night outpost line withdraws.	
		0730	Enemy were observed in large bodies on the E. side of the River JORDON.	
		0830	Enemy attack develops. C. Coy ordered to reinforce left flank. A. Coy find escort to Machine Guns.	
		0930	B. Coy commenced to withdraw to hills in rear under heavy fire.	
		1200	Regiment were holding a good line, & checking enemy's advance.	
		1400	Regiment withdraw to a line 7 miles S.	
		1800	Night outpost line established. Defences built, and dug in.	
	2/5/18	0330	Regiment stand to arms.	
		0430	Officers Patrol moves forward to reconnoitre the country in front.	
		0445	Outpost reports situation normal, & withdraws.	
		1600	Enemy launch an attack against the right flank of Brigade line. No attack against the line held by Regiment.	
		1630	A. Coy moves out to reinforce 2 <sup>nd</sup> L.H. Regt.	
		1800	Strong standing patrols sent forward, remainder of the Regiment improve defences, & put up barbed wire. Men work hard & suffer hardships owing to shortage of water.	
		2300	Half the Regiment's horses leave for water to River JORDON, 4 miles away. 56 hours since they were watered last.	
	3/5/18	0330	Stand to arms.	
		0400	Officers patrol moves forward to reconnoitre in front of the line. Enemy attack on right flank of Brigade. No attack on our sector of the line.	
		0600	Watering of horses completed. Reciprocal artillery activity along the line throughout the day.	
		1800	Strong standing patrol sent forward. Remainder of Regiment continue consolidating the position.	

SEE APPENDIX I.  
May 1918.

A. D. Johnson  
12<sup>th</sup> Lt. M. & Adjutant.  
L. H. Regt.

D. D. & L., London, E.C.  
(A8004) Wt. W1771/M2 31 750,000 5/17 Sch. 52 Forms/C2118/14

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E 53/4

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
DAMIEH	3/5/18	1945	All horses less necessary rides and packs left under the command of Major P. A. Chambers, and one officer from each Squadron to a bivouac site near el AJTA.	
	3/4/5/18	2400.	Situation quiet. Men work well & all night.	
	4/5/18	0330	Stand to arms.	
		0400	Outpost line reports situation normal. Officers Patrol sent forward reports very little movement of enemy.	
		0600	Received orders from B. D. Q. to be prepared to withdraw at any time.	
			Throughout the day enemy artillery machine gun fire very active.	
		1600	Received orders from B. D. Q. that the Regiment would withdraw at 1845.	
		1900	Regiment commences to withdraw.	
		1915.	Withdrawal completed. Led horses picked up in rear, on the GHORANIYE Road assembling at a point 2000 yds in rear of the line, joining the remainder of the Brigade, returning to the old bivouac site, JERICHO.	
JERICHO	5/5/18	2345	Crossed GHORANIYE Bridge.	
		0230	Regiment arrived in bivouac 2 miles N. of JERICHO, in a somewhat exhausted state.	
			Casualties during the operations, period 29/4/18 - 5/5/18: -	
			2 of R killed, 3 of R, 17 of R wounded, 18 animals killed, 14 wounded evacuated.	
	5/5/18.		Regiment rested the remainder of the day.	

See Appendix 1.

May 1918.

A. Dobson Lieut A/Asst  
12<sup>th</sup> A.L.H. Regiment A.I.F.

# APPENDIX I

DETAILED REPORT OF OPERATIONS. PERIOD 29/4/18-5/5/18.

12TH A.L.H. REGIMENT. A.I.F.

8/5/18.

*April 1918*

Ref- Maps 1/63360. Sheet 15. & 1/63360 Composite Map E. of JORDON.  
(ES SALT) 2nd Edition.

29/4/18.  
JERICHO.  
2000.

The Regiment moved off. Order of March- A, B, Hqrs, & C Sqn. C Squadron ordered to report to 19th Brigade, R.H. Artillery, as escort to the guns.

2215.

The Regiment crossed GHORANIYE Bridge, and marched in a north-erly direction

Up to this point there was a certain amount of straggling owing to the crossing of Wadis, and the splitting up of the Regiment on GHORANIYE Bridge.

2400.

Night.

29/30th.

30/4/18.

0100.

0330.

0415.

Regiment moved through barbed wire, C Squadron put out flank guards.

Regiment halts.

Regiment moves forward at a fast pace.

Enemy observed to be retiring from UM SHURT. Enemy artillery active.

Regiment came under heavy shell fire. Casualties were very slight owing to a good extension of troops being kept.

0445.

A Squadron ordered to reconnoitre RED HILL, (C 19-14). This was carried out and a report sent in that the enemy held this hill in large numbers. The advance was still carried on with, and under heavy shell fire most of the time.

0615.

A point 3 miles East of JISR ed DAMIEH on the ES SALT-ed DAMIEH Road.

0630.

A. & B Squadrons took up a line overlooking a Wadi about two miles East of DAMIEH, with orders to send forward patrols. B Squadron to reconnoitre the ed DAMIEH-ES SALT Road, running into Wadi and crossing River JORDON, where it was thought the enemy had a punt. (It was afterwards discovered that a bridge crossed the river). Two troops of enemy Cavalry were observed to take up a position 600 yards South of the Wadi, covering the ed DAMIEH and ES SALT Road. These troops kept up a brisk and accurate fire while the reconnaissance was being made. Other enemy posts were in position on different high knobs in Wadi covering certain parts of the road. There were also snipers on the West side of the River JORDAN, on the North side of the road. The country was too broken to permit any reconnaissance, so Observation Posts were sent forward to different points. A Squadron were to reconnoitre a position  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile South of ed DAMIEH. At 0700 they reported "All clear". Both Squadrons remained on outpost until dusk.

0730.

C Squadron reported with the guns at a point about 126 S 12 central (Sheet 15), reporting two Ammunition Limbers out of action, one by shell fire, and one by overturning. Several guns and Ammunition Limbers were delayed owing to poles breaking and difficult crossings in Wadis.

0735.

One troop of C Squadron moved as escort to Artillery Officer to reconnoitre for gun positions.

0745.

Artillery deployed and went into action in Wadi, about two miles East of DAMIEH Bridge.

0900.

C Squadron returned to a point about 126 T 7 a (Sheet 15) and were heavily shelled before reaching this point. They remained in reserve.

1300.

Regiment commenced to water at a point about three miles North of Regimental Headquarters, which was about 126 T 7 a (Sheet 15) and completed just before dark.

C Squadron ordered to relieve one Squadron of the 11th Regiment after watering at a point near the water but were informed by

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- the 4th L.H. Regiment that the 11th Squadron had withdrawn. They remained with the 4th Regiment until 1600, then returned to Regimental Headquarters.
1800. A Squadron and two troops from B Squadron notified that the Artillery would withdraw at dusk, and that they would escort them. This was carried out successfully.
1900. C Squadron moves out dismounted to take up night outpost line at a point about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles EAST of JORDON.
2000. A & B Squadrons return to Regimental Headquarters.
2030. Outpost report "dug in" & "all clear".
- GENERAL. Throughout the day the enemy artillery was very accurate searching Wadis, shelling FIELD AMBULANCE and our Batteries, and parties moving to water. Casualties for the day:- 1 O/R killed. 7 O/R wounded. 1 horse killed. 5 animals wounded and evacuated.
- Night  
30th/1st. Situation quiet all night.
- 1/5/18. One troop from B Squadron moves out on patrol, and reconnoitres in the vicinity of ed DAMIEH Bridge, and ES SALT-ed DAMIEH Road reporting that the Bridge and surrounding points were strongly held by the enemy.
0400. Night outpost line withdraws.
0420. One troop from B Squadron sent out to move along the Wadi running N.W. for 1 mile from Regimental Headquarters to act as Observation Post.
0430. Enemy were observed in large bodies on E. side of River JORDON.
0730. One limber G.S. containing Technical Tools, and 1 Water Cart was ordered to retire South.
0800. Enemy attack develops. They advance in open formation across the plain under cover of machine gun and shell fire. The troop from B Squadron withdrew and linked up with the remainder of the Squadron who had taken up a position N. of the ed DAMIEH-ES SALT Road, about  $\frac{1}{2}$  a mile from the foothills.
0830. C Squadron ordered to reinforce the left flank of the 11th L.H. where enemy was threatening our left flank. They reached the 11th Regiment after passing through an Artillery Barrage and heavy machine gun, and rifle fire.
- A Squadron sent out one troop as escort to a section of Machine Guns who subsequently joined the 4th L.H. Regiment.
- A Squadron ordered to reconnoitre for a road through the hills in rear of position. A suitable track was found and the three remaining troops were sent to B.H.Q., and from there occupied a position C 12 central (ES SALT).
0930. B Squadron commenced to withdraw to hills in rear under heavy fire, and over rough and precipitous hills to a point about D 8 a (ES SALT).
1100. C Squadron were holding the high ground on the Wadi ISH KARARA at a point about C 4 b (ES SALT), but had to withdraw to a position about D 7 central (ES SALT).
1200. The Regiment was now holding a line as follows:- A Sqn C 12 C Sqn D 7, B Sqn & Hqrs D 8 (ES SALT). This line was held until the 4th L.H. Regiment withdrew.
1400. Regiment withdrew to a line D 19 central to C 23 central with the 11th Regiment on the right flank, and the Middlesex Yeomanry on the left flank.
1800. Night outpost line established with 4 strong posts which built defences and dug in.
2200. Outpost line reports "dug in" and "all clear".
- General. Casualties for the day:- 1 O/R killed, 3 Officers & 5 O/R wounded, 17 animals killed, 9 wounded and evacuated. Losses for the day:- 1 limber G.S. containing Technical Tools Signalling Gear etc, which had to be abandoned owing to the animals bolting (caused through shell fire) and breaking the pole. One water cart which was hit by a shell and practically destroyed. A quantity of saddles which had to be left owing to the horses being killed. 4 pack saddles with pioneer

had affair here  
slow down here

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- equipment etc, also horses killed, and one Hotchkiss Rifle which fell from a pack, through the clamps becoming unclasped, whilst galloping out of action.
- Night.  
1st/2nd.  
1/5/18.  
0330.  
0430.
- Situation quiet.
- Stand to arms.
- A Squadron sent a mounted patrol forward and reported fired on by enemy 2000 yards N. of our line, and considerable movement of enemy at RED HILL. (C 12 central) (ES SALT).
0445. Outpost report situation normal and withdrew with the exception of one troop from C Squadron who took up a position about 600 yards in front of the night outpost line, to act as Observation Post. This Observation Post reported considerable movement of enemy all day in the vicinity of RED HILL, and on the right flank of the line which was held by the 4th L.H. Regiment.
1500. Orders received from B.H.Q. to water horses in small groups at el AUJA.
1530. Horses stand fast. Enemy appear to be preparing for an attack.
1600. Enemy launch an attack against the right flank of Brigade line No attack on the line held by Regiment, but Regiment standing to arms. B.H.Q. issue instructions that line must be held at all costs.
1630. A Squadron moves out to reinforce 4th L.H. Regiment.
1700. A Squadron goes into action.
1800. Strong standing patrols sent forward. Remainder of Regiment improve defences, and put up barbed wire. Men work hard and suffer hardships owing to shortage of water.
2200. Standing patrols report no movement of enemy on our front.
2300. Half of the Regiment's horses leave for water at River JORDON, a distance of about 4 miles. They have now been without water for 56 hours.
- One troop of Auckland Mounted Rifles took up a position on the right flank, filling the gap of 1000 yards between our right flank and the left flank of the 11th L.H. Regiment.
- 6 cases of Mills bombs arrive, and are distributed along the line
2400.  
2nd/3rd.
- Situation quiet.
- General. Casualties for the day:- 2 O/R wounded.
- 3/5/18.  
0330.  
0345.
- Stand to arms.
- Enemy attacks right flank of Brigade line. No attack on our front.
0400. Outpost line report situation normal. A mounted patrol from B Squadron moves forward and reports movement of enemy in the vicinity of RED HILL. Otherwise situation normal.
0600. Watering of horses completed. Horses move to Wadi, 50 yards in rear, as present position of horses comes under enfilade fire from a position occupied by enemy at D 15 central (ES SALT). Report received from A Squadron (now attached to 4th L.H. Regt) that enemy attacked their position at 0330 in force, and got to within 15 yards of the line held by them, but were driven back by rifle and machine gun fire without losses.
- GENERAL. Throughout the day there was reciprocal artillery activity along the line, most of the shells falling 200 yards in front of our line.
1800. Strong standing patrols sent forward. Remainder of Regiment continue consolidating position and putting up Barbed wire.
1945. All horses less necessary rides and packs left under the command of Major P.A. Chambers, and one Officer from each Squadron to a bivouac site near el AUJA.
2000. Enemy artillery active, causing disorganisation amongst the led horses, where no doubt a good deal of equipment was lost.
2100. One troop from A Squadron reports and take up a position occupied by Auckland Mounted Rifles on the previous night.

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2400.  
3rd/4th.

E53/8

Situation quiet, men work all night consolidating positions.  
Casualties for the day:- 2 O/R wounded.

4/5/18.  
0330.  
0400.

Stand to arms.  
Outpost line reports situation normal.  
Officers Patrol sent forward reports small bodies of troops on RED HILL. No other movement on our front.

0430.  
0600.

Outpost line withdraws leaving forward Observation Posts.  
Orders from B.H.Q. to be prepared to withdraw at any time, but in all probability the line would not withdraw until after dark.

1300.  
1600.

General. Throughout the day the enemy artillery and machine gun fire was very active, shelling our line at various points. One troop from A Squadron ordered to report to 8th L.H. Regt. Orders received from B.H.Q. that the Regiment would withdraw at 1845, led horses would be in the rear.

1900.  
1915.

Regiment commences to withdraw.  
Withdrawal completed. Led horses picked up in rear on the GHORANIYE Road. A Squadron were late in picking up the horses as they had a considerable distance to cover. Eventually all were mounted and the withdrawal carried out, assembling at a point 2000 yards in rear of the line, and joining the remainder of the Brigade.

2300.  
2345.  
5/5/18.  
0230.

Regiment water horses.  
Cross GHORANIYE Bridge.  
Regiment arrives in Bivouac 2 miles N. of JERICHO.  
Casualties during the operations:- 2 O/R killed. 3 Officers & 17 O/Ranks wounded. 18 animals killed, 14 wounded & evacuated.  
GENERAL. All surplus S.A.A. and Bombs which could not be carried away were buried before the Regiment withdrew.  
The times and in some cases the locations quoted in this report are only approximate. The Adjutant of the Regiment was wounded during the operations and a correct report of the times cannot be obtained.

(Sgd) D. Cameron. Lieut-Col.

C.O. 12th A.L.H. Regiment. A.I.F.

A. D. Cameron  
Lt. Adjutant  
12th L.H. Regt.