

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

Camel Corps

Item number: 11/6/2

Title: 1st ANZAC Battalion, Imperial Camel
Corps

May 1917



AWM4-11/6/2

WAR DIARY

or

~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY~~

(Erase heading not required.)

1st BATTALION
IMPERIAL CAMEL CORP.
Date _____
ORDERLY ROOM

Army Form C. 2118.

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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.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Ferry post	May 1		No change in dispositions -	
	2		No 2 & 3 Companies under Lieut Campbell moved out at 0800 for El Arish under orders for AUJA from the Northern Canal Section.	
	3 rd		Disposition unchanged.	
	4		No 1 Company and Bn H'Qtrs moved to KHAN YUNIS for entrainment and relief - Entrained and moved in two Sections- one at 1730 under Lt-Col G.F.Langley and the other at 2030 under Major A.J.Mills.	
	5		Arrived at KANTARA at 0430- second train at 0930- marched to BELLAH and bivouacked for the night.	
	6		Marched to Ferry Post arriving at 1630.	
	7		No 1 Company moved out to relieve 4th Bn I.C.C at the following posts FERDAN $\frac{1}{2}$ SECTION. TOUSSOUM $\frac{1}{2}$ SECTION. SERAPEUM $\frac{1}{2}$ SECTION. DEVERSOIR $\frac{1}{2}$ SECTION. KEBIT $\frac{1}{2}$ Sections. Lewis Guns at Kabrit. Company H'Qtrs at Serapeum.	
	10		No 4 Company arrived at Kantara. marched to Bellah and bivouacked.	
	11		No 4 Coy arrived at Ferry post.	
	16		No 2 & 3 Companies arrived at Ferry Post from AUJA.	
	20		11 Officers & 290 other ranks marched out to Serapeum. point of concentration of Column under Major A.J.Mills under orders from Southern Section, for NEKHL.	
	22		NEKHL Column marched out. Escort of 2 Officers & 62 other ranks to TOPO party marched with Nekhl Column to BIR EL GIDDI.	
	27		Wells destroyed at NEKHL (full report attached App A.)	

[Signature]
Adjutant 1st Bn Imperial Camel Corps

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APPENDIX "A"

Subject:- O.C.'s report on NEKHL.

26/12

The mission upon which the Nekhl Column was dispatched has been successfully carried out.

NEKHL. The five wells at NEKHL were despoiled. (see R.C. reports)

THEMADA. One Native well was found here about 6 by 2 ft with about 2 1/2 ft water. This was left, by arrangement of the Topo party.

I am of the opinion that water could be obtained in parts of this Wadi, and that the Natives have other wells than the few found by our party.

GIDDI.

11 or 12 Wells. 6 containing water.

1 with about 4 to 5 ft of water.

3 with 2 1/2 inch of water

2 with about a few inches of dirty water.

these wells, as many others in the Sinia do, improved considerably on being cleaned out and pumped dry, so much so that 500 Camels were watered in 2 days.

These wells were not despoiled but were left for the Topo party.

MOYIA HARAB

One well dry and filled with scrub earth and stone

HARABA NEHE MUBASSIA.

Big cistern cut out of solid ~~xy~~ stone, about 20 x 15 x 30 ft (not actually measured) containing about 150000 gals pumped dry. not cemented at the request of the O.C. Topo party.

Cement buried under a kerosene tin on the left hand side of the left hole facing the hill.

HARABA HAG HASSAN.

KHEL ZOGHA.

KH EL MALHR

KH EL HABBAL

All these wells and ponds were dry.

SUPPLIES.

All that could be desired.

CUMMINICATION W

Visual. Was not successful. Several stations were set up and many attempts to get through were made with out avail. (see Sig Officers report att)

WIRELESS.

Not successful. Although subsequently it was found that our sent messages were received the machine did not record replies.

WATER.

The class of Fantasia used were not suitable for Camel transport. all were inspected before leaving ~~xxxxxxx~~ and found correct, but on arrival at Giddi fully 5% of water was found ~~ix~~ to have been lost through leakage.

Rations

Rations were on the whole good except in the case of a few tins of M.A.V which on being opened were found to be bad. Would suggest that small surplus be issued to meet cases of this kind on similar expeditions.

*cf memo map
of Nekhl Column*

1st BATTALION
IMPERIAL CAMEL CORPS
Date
ORDNANCE ROOM

REPORT.

By Capt R. Goldsmith

ROUTE TO NEKHEL FROM SERAPEUM via MALHA ZOGHA- BIR EL GIDDI AND BIR EL THEMADA.

26/3

Ref. Map:- SURZ 1 : 250,000

TOPOGRAPHICAL. SERAPEUM to ZOGHA

No definite road exists, up to as far as 607, The sand is moderately firm providing easy going for all traffic except heavy wheeled.

After 607 it is passed sand dune country is encountered, the sand is soft and heavy in places, though presenting no obstacle to movement. Light sand carts could travel.

On approaching the WADI MUKHASHEIB the country broadens out into low undulating scrub covered ground passable to all Arms except heavy wheeled vehicles

In the bed of the WADI itself the sand is hard and provides a level though winding route to ZOGHA.

Troops can move the whole distance from SERAPEUM on as broad a front as desired, there are no obstacles to free movement on both flanks.

ZOGHA ACROSS RUEISAT EL JERAD TO ROAD JUNCTION TWO MILES SOUTH OF 1600.

The RUEISAT EL JERAD is an obstacle to rapid movement. From ZOGHA it rises gradually in a series of alternate sand ridges, astride of the route, and hard open patches of rubble ground.

On approach to 1524 the sand ridges are more frequent and difficult of passage. Near 1600 stony ground is encountered, then the country drops in easy stages into bed of WADI el GIDDI to the road junction.

The latter Section is rough and with heavy laden Camels the rate of march is reduced to 1 1/2 to 2 miles per hour. Taken in its entirety the RUEISAT EL JERAD is passable to all ARMS though movement would be slow and restricted. Sand carts could be taken with difficulty.

FROM ROAD JUNCTION SOUTH OF 1600 TO BIR EL GIDDI

The route along the road marked on the map is good. The path is well defined.

From Road junction to 1930 troops are reduced to moving on a narrow front, in places not more than 8 animals abreast. The country broadens as GIDDI is neared, and low undulating scrub covered ground is encountered.

All Arms could travel except heavy wheeled vehicles.

BIR EL GIDDI to WADI EL BAHA.

BIR EL GIDDI itself stands in a broad Wadi which gradually narrows to the pass leading into the Wadi el Baha. The ground is hard and troops could move on a broad front up to as far as 3 miles east of BIR el GIDDI- the pass itself is only negotiable in single file- the path is stony but good, and animals can move along it at an ordinary walking pace. Heavily laden camels can move through it in 25 minutes. No form of wheeled transport could move along it- if held it would be easy to clear - the sides are steep and regular-

REPORT (sent 2)

1st BATTALION
 IMPERIAL CAMEL CORPS
 TO: _____ Date: _____
 ORDERLY ROOM

WADI EL NAHA TO WADI EL HAMTH 6 MILES WEST OF NEKHL.

The whole of this track is a slightly undulating gravelly plain over which vehicles of all descriptions could pass-

WADI EL HAMTH TO NEKHL .

The track marked on the map as passing one mile S of 1729 on the GEBEL EL GHARRA is clearly defined.

It is broad and passable to all Arms- at the point where it leaves the GEBEL EL GHARRA and enters the WADI EL ARISH it is steep and narrow-camels have to pass down it in a single file. The Wadi el Arish is broad and featureless- NEKHL lies in the middle of it.

SECTION EMBODYING ROAD JUNCTION TO HARABA MABASSIA AND ZOGHA.

The road marked on the map is badly defined- From Road junction to MOIYA HARAB it consists of a winding stony path-steep in places but generally presenting no serious obstacles to movement-although the most part of it Camel can move only in single file-

From MOIYA HARAB to HARABA MABASSIA the track is clearly defined and provides good going.

From HARABA MABASSIA to ZOGHA the track is broad and clearly defined running over low undulating ground. Taken generally the route to GIDDI via this track is to be preferred to the more direct one across RUKHSAT EL JARAD - light wheeled vehicles could pass over it with ease from ZOGHA to HARABA MUBASSIA, but no form of wheel transport could move along it from HARABA MUBASSIA to Road junction.

MARCH TABLE.

Left SHRAPEUM at 0630	22nd May	1917
Halted 1130		
Marched 1600		
Halted 1900		
Total hours 8	Distance covered 18 miles	
	23rd May	1917
Marched 0430		
Halted 1030		
Marched 1530	Total Hours 9	Distance 21 miles
Halted 1830		
	24th May	1917
Marched 0430		
Halted 1130		
Marched 1745	Total hours 8½	Distance 14 miles
Halted 1930		
	25th May	1917
Marched 0430		
Halted 1130		
Marched 1630		
Halted 1800		
Marched 1945	Total Hours 10½	Distance 23 miles
Halted 2130		
	26th May	1917
Marched 0430		
Halted 1130		
Marched 1600		
Halted Nekhl 1730	Total hours 8½	Distance 20 miles

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MARCH TABLE

1st BAY CALLED
SERIAL CAMEL CORPS
Date _____
ORDERLY ROOM

cont.

27th May 1917

Rest at NECHL.

28th May 1917

Marched	0430	
Halted	1130	
Marched	1600	
Halted	1830	Total hours 9½ Distance 25½ miles.

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29th May 1917

Marched	0815	
Halted	1200	
Marched	1400	
Halted	1600	Total hours 5½ Distance 16½ miles

30th May 1917

Marched	0530	
Halted at Giddi	0800	
Marched	1000	
Halted	1130	
Marched	1500	
Halted	1800	Total hours 7 Distance 19 miles

31st May 1917

Marched	0430	
Halted at Mubassia	0730	
Marched	1400	
Halted	1850	Total hours 7½ Distance 15 miles

1st June 1917

Marched	0430	
Halted	1030	
Marched	1500	
Halted Serapeum	1900	Total hours 10 Distance 26½ miles

REPORT.

1st BATTALION
SERIAL CAMEL CORPS

CROSSLY ROOM

26
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INHABITANTS.

Few Bedouins were encountered -

At BIR EL GIDDI two families of the AYADI tribe were grazing a hundred sheep and two hundred goats - they were well disposed towards us and gave information concerning the water in the wells freely.

The AYADI people are scattered over the whole district from GEBEL UM MARHASSA to GIDDI - three families were two miles north of HARABA MUBASSIA grazing 200 sheep and goats and a few camels - they gave no information of value.

At BIR el THAMADA their families of the TAIYAH were encountered, most of the men made off on the approach of the column - 300 sheep and goats and 80 Camels were being grazed - there were patches of cultivation consisting of 2 acres of dhurra 18 inches high, 4 acres of ploughed ground ready for sowing and odd small patches of ground sown but not yet showing.

The attitude of these natives was doubtful - they could not or would not offer any explanation as to why the men ran away. An old man accounted for the young men of the tribe as working the crops in the BIR el HASSANA district, an old woman stated that most of the men were away selling their crops at EL ARISH.

From the fact that most of their cloths were SYRIA it was judged that these people have been recently trading in PALESTINE. None of the men gave any satisfactory answer as to the whereabouts of their SHEIKH. they were carrying no arms - and none could be found anywhere.

Two armed natives, one an old man of the SAWALAH and the other a young man of the AWARIM tribe came to NEKHL when the Column was halted there. they were on their way to their families living in the BIR EL SALID district. they came from the direction of HASSANA - they gave no information of value. generally their knowledge of affairs appeared to be quite local. their arms consisted of an old CHASSK POT rifle and two native swords, which were taken from them and destroyed.

It was not considered worth while to bring them in the whole distance of 100 odd miles.

Generally the natives are well clothed and appear well fed - their knowledge of things is quite local and there was no reason to doubt but that they lived in harmless occupation of their fields.

John
Capt & adjt
1st Bn A.C.C.

FERRY Post
3/4/17