

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

Light Horse

Item number: 10/10/27

Title: 5th Australian Light Horse
Regiment

March 1917

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118.

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

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Erase heading not required.)

5th. Light Horse Regiment, A.I.F.

2nd. Light Horse Brigade,
For Month March, 1917.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Sheikh Zowaid.	2nd.		<p>Brigade made good KHAN YUNUS enabling country and road reconnaissance of area to be carried out. ^{Left camp 0600.} "A." Sqn. this Regiment moved along the beach road to TEL EL MAKAREB. Remainder of Regiment formed advance guard to E. of Sand ridges. "C." Sqn. van guard, "B." Sqn. main guard. When advance guard passed E. of BENI SELA it was fired on from Eastward. 6 snipers taken prisoner here. Vanguard then moved on and occupied line running E. and W. through HILL 330, gaining touch with beach Sqn. at TEL EL MAKAREB.</p> <p>Lieut. Hicks made a reconnaissance of Sand Hills from RAFA to TEL EL MAKAREB. Regt. returned to Camp. No casualties. One long range shell from WELI SHEIKH NURAN dropped within a few yards of main guard while at BENI SELA.</p>	
	5th.		<p>Brigade moved to make good KHAN YUNUS, HILL 320, EL FUKHARI and ABASON EL KEBIR. This Regiment formed right flank guard, occupying line 255 (RAFA) to within two miles of ABASON. Sent patrol to FUKHARI, where enemy Cavalry patrol of 10 men seen, but did not come into contact with it. Duly returned to camp. No casualties.</p>	
	8th.		<p>Regiment with rest of Bde. moved from ABU HAMTHALA to BIR ABU SHUNNAR, a distance of 5 miles along the beach.</p>	
Shunnar.	10th.		<p>Brigade proceeded to DERE EL BELAH to enable reconnaissance of roads and country to be carried out. "A." Sqn. this Regt. formed advance guard, Screened as far as figure 6 on beach three miles N. of DERE EL BELAH, one troop "C." Sqn. formed Bde. right flank guard. On arrival at DERE EL BELAH ^{troop C. Squadron} posted on HILL 130, one mile N.E. of DERE EL BELAH. No enemy seen, no casualties.</p>	
	13th.		<p>Regiment made a reconnaissance of area 10, starting at cross roads one mile S. of MAAN, then N.E. along road through ABASON EL KEBIR to point 340 half a mile of the second "t" in Abu Sitta, then by a line Southerly through WELI SHEIKH NURAN to a point where tracks meet about one mile S. of EL MELEK, then by track running S.W. to point on road marked 410, then by that road N.W. to point of commencement. Area occupied by 1100. Reconnaissance reports made by Capt. Stanfield, Lieut. Hicks and Lieut. Billington. Regiment returned to camp at 1815. No casualties and no enemy seen.</p>	



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Summary of Events and Information				Remarks and references to Appendices
Place	Date	Hour		
SHUNNAR 25th.				Left with Bde. at 0230 for DEIR EL BELAH.
DEIR EL BELAH 26th.				Left DEIR EL BELAH at 0230 with Bde. to take part in action against GAZA. Moved with A. & N.Z. Division to BEIT DURDIS, 2nd. L.H. Bd. in advance, 2 troops "A." Sqn. Bde. left flank guard. When near BEIT DURDIS "B." detached to outflank snipers firing on advance guard. This Sqn. moved out 2 miles and captured 7 waggons & 13 prisoners. Divnl. H. Qrs. remained at BEIT DURDIS, "C." Sqn. as escort for 2 hours and then rejoined Regt. at 1230. Remainder of Bde. moved W. to JEBALIE, about 3 miles N.E. of GAZA. 7th. L.H. Regt. with 2 troops of "A." Sqn. (the Bde. left flank guard) covered the beach. This Regt. took up position on ridge overlooking main JAFFA-GAZA road at about 5000 yds. in rear of left flank of Turkish position S.E. of GAZA. One troop "A." Sqn. sent forward 300 yds. towards GAZA as observation post, 2 troops of M.G. Sqn. subsequently sent to same position. Body of Turkish infantry estimated one Battalion was seen from this post marching along road in cactus plantation at 800 yds. distant. The troop and M.G.s opened on them and inflicted numerous casualties. Infantry dispersed amongst hedges. For some time afterwards small parties of these Turks were fired on as seen moving among hedges. During this time Infantry attack on S. and S.E. of GAZA was developing. About 1430 the N.Z. Bde. arrived from BEIT DURDIS and moved on to ridge running from 2nd. L.H. Bde. H. Qrs. to ALI MUNTAR. The Brig. General this Bde. gave me instructions this Regt. to co-operate with the New Zealanders in attack in rear of GAZA. The count to the N.E. of GAZA is as follows:- A ridge runs from JEBALIE to Turkish position at ALI MUNTAR, open sand ridges run close to and parallel with beach and parallel with last mentioned ridge. Between the sand ridges and the ridge JEBALIE to ALI MUNTAR there is a valley running to the rear of the main GAZA town. The S.E. side of this valley consists of an olive grove, the N.W. side consists of small allotments fenced with cactus hedges and in which there are numerous villages. Instructions to this Regt. were to advance through the olive grove as far as possible in co-operation with the N.Z. Bde. At 1430 "C." Sqn. - Major CHATHAM - galloped down the JAFFA - GAZA road which runs through the olive grove with their bayonets fixed, closely followed by "B." Sqn. - Major NEWTON - in support and one troop of "A." Sqn. in reserve, before they could reach the olive grove heavy fire was opened on them from the cactus hedges and Native villages on their right. The Regt. then dismounted and with the assistance of the 2nd. Aust. M.G. Sqn. quickly overcame the fire, killing or capturing numerous Turks. This work was done at very short range, openings had to be cut through the cactus hedges to get at the enemy, as soon as our men got to close quarters the Turks surrendered. Lt. WAITE's troop kept to their horses, jumped the hedges and got amongst them still mounted, Lt. WAITE using his revolver until shot in three places, and some of the troopers firing from their horses. While this work was being done Major BOLINGBROKE took the 2 troops of "A." Sqn. which had originally gone to the beach and with them raided the Turkish Artillery observation post at SHEIKH REDWAN to the N.W. of GAZA, here he captured the observing party 4 in number, together with their range finding instruments and telephones. Fire was then opened on the raiding party by several Machine Guns, the raiding party accordingly rejoined the Regt. with their captures