

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

Light Horse

Item number: 10/1/29

Title: 1st Australian Light Horse
Brigade

December 1916

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.)



Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
ARNUSSI	December 1st.		Patrol to HILL 255 despatched at 0800. Escort of one troop sent with G.O.C. 42nd. Division to GERERAT. Escort of one troop from GERERAT to HILL 133 supplied by Squadron at GERERAT. Patrol of one officer and 8 other ranks reconnoitred the country between GERERAT and BIR-EL-MAZAR to find best route for ration camels.	
"	"	2nd.	Daily Patrol to HILL 255 despatched at 0900. Escort of one troop sent with Brigadier to GERERAT. Party of officers with escort reconnoitred country to North of GERERAT to find best route for Camel Transport. Two officers with escort of one troop reconnoitred the country between ARNUSSI and GERERAT to find most suitable route to move Brigade with Transport.	
"	"	3rd.	Daily Patrol to HILL 255 despatched at 0830. Escort of one troop sent with Brigadier to GERERAT. Water at GERERAT being at present only sufficient to water 2 Regiments, decided to send one Regiment to NEW WELLS approximately 3 miles North West of GERERAT.	
"	"	4th.	1st. A.L.H. Brigade, less 1st.L.H. Regt., left BIR ARNUSSI at 1030 and marched to BIR-EL-GERERAT. 1st.L.H. Regt. left BIR ARNUSSI at 1100 and marched to NEW WELLS, which are 3 miles, 700 yds. on a bearing of 281' true from BIR-EL-GERERAT. Brigadier selected Outpost Line which he divided into Northern and Southern Sectors, dividing line running East and West through BIR-EL-GERERAT. Northern Sector to be held by 3rd.L.H. Regt., Southern Sector by 2nd.L.H. Regt. The Outpost line to be patrolled every hour between picquets and patrols, to be sent once by day and once by night to ARNUSSI and to EL MAADAN (point 133), 1st.L.H. Regt. to send patrols by day and night from NEW WELLS to BIR-EL-GERERAT.	Appx. LX. (8.0.31)
GERERAT	"	5th.	Patrols of one troop each to point 2 miles East of ABU ARTAA and to EL AABASH (point 304) were despatched at 0815. Special Patrol of one troop under two officers with detachment of Field Engineers (taking Norton Tube Set) attached left GERERAT at 1750 for WADI EL ARISH. This party is to get to a point where the WADI is wide but South of BIR LAHFAN and test the centre of the WADI for water.	

Major
R.M. 1st A.L.H. Bde

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
GERERAT	December	6th.	<p>Patrols of one troop each to two miles East of ABU ARTAA and to EL AABASH were despatched at 0830.</p> <p>Special Patrol of one troop to WADI EL ARISH returned to GERERAT at 1500. The test for water was was unsatisfactory, the ground being too hard for the drills to penetrate.</p> <p>Brigadier, accompanied by Divisional Staff Officers, and escorted by one troop, left GERERAT at 0845 and proceeded to RAS-EL-AHMAR, 8 miles South of WADI EL ARISH.</p> <p>A party of 3 scouts and 6 camels was captured at RAS-EL-AHMAR. Brigadier returned to GERERAT at 1930.</p>	
"	"	7th.	<p>Patrol of one troop to two miles East of ABU ARTAA, despatched at 0910.</p> <p>Patrol of one troop to EL AABASH despatched at 0900.</p> <p>Brigadier conferred with the G.O.C. Railway Construction escort and G.O.C. N.Z.M.R. Bde. as to action to be taken in case of attack.</p>	
"	"	8th.	<p>Patrols of one troop each despatched as follows:-</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">To EL AABASH at 0900.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">To ABU ARTAA and North to EL ARISH Road at 0920.</p> <p>Brigadier accompanied water prospecting party working the country to 8 miles East of GERERAT, under escort and protection of three troops. Country was prospected as far as EL AABASH. Norton Tube sunk in two most likely looking spots to a depth of 24 feet, but without any success.</p>	
"	"	9th.	<p>Daily Patrols of one troop each despatched at 0800 as follows :-</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">To ABU ARTAA and thence to EL ARISH Road.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">To EL AABASH at 0830.</p> <p>Tested for water at spot three miles from GERERAT on a bearing of 75 degrees. Drove Norton Tube 28 feet but without success.</p>	
"	"	10th.	<p>Daily Patrols of one troop each were despatched as follows:-</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">To ABU ARTAA, then East to UM ZUGHLA at 0900</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">To EL AABASH at 0830.</p> <p>Patrols to UM ZUGHLA reported fair going for transport from ABU ARTAA to UM ZUGHLA? but very difficult from GERERAT to ABU ARTAA.</p> <p>Tested for water at spot 1½ miles West of EL MURRA, drove Norton Tube 36 feet without getting any sign of water.</p>	

Edmondson
Majr.
Bm, 1st A.L.H. Bde

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Place	Date	<u>Hour</u>	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
GERERAT	December 10th.		The locality previously referred to as NEW WELLS has been officially named BIR PARRAMATTA.	
"	"	11th.	<p>Daily patrols of one troop each were despatched as follows :- To ABU ARTAA, then North to EL ARISH Road at 0900. To EL AABASH at 0800.</p> <p>Water Reconnaissance :- At point 2 1/4 miles from HILL 133 on bearing of 115 degrees, water was struck at 7 and 9 feet but is not suitable for horses. At Point I in GHURFAN-EL-GIMAL water was struck at 11 feet. If developed this will water at least one Brigade. This water is suitable for horses.</p>	
"	"	12th.	<p>Daily patrols of one troop each were despatched as follows:- To ABU ARTAA, then North to EL ARISH Road at 0800 To EL AABASH at 0730</p> <p>Brigadier, accompanied by escort of one troop, met G.O.C. Desert Column, at Railhead and examined the country to the East of HILL 133.</p>	
"	"	13th.	<p>Daily patrols of one troop each were despatched as follows:- To ABU ARTAA, then East to UM ZUGHLA at 0815. To EL AABASH at 0900.</p> <p>Field troop at under escort of one troop further prospected the country in vicinity of GHURFAN EL GIMAL for water. Drove ten holes and obtained water at depths varying from 7 to 15 feet. The water from 6 of these spots suitable for horses, supply good. One Senior Officer, Engineer Officer, Subaltern and full troop with detail of engineers left GERERAT at 2300 to prospect for water in WADI EL ARISH North of BIR LAHFAN.</p>	Appx. LXI. (Special Order)
"	"	14th.	<p>Daily patrols of one troop each were despatched as follows:- To ABU ARTAA, then North to EL ARISH Road at 0830. To EL AABASH AT 0815.</p> <p>Brigadier attended Field Day carried out by troops of the Desert Column not employed in front line. Water prospecting party to WADI EL ARISH found 4 wells containing good water 8 feet from the surface. This party reached WADI at 0610 and left at 0725, arriving at GERERAT at 1530. Five Bedouins and 2 Turkish soldiers were captured.</p>	

1577 Wt.W10791/1773 500,000 1/15 D. D. & L. A.D.S.S./Forms/C. 2118.

[Signature]
 R.M. 1st A.L.H. *[Signature]*

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
GERERAT	December	15th.	<p>Daily patrols of one troop each were despatched as follows:- To ABU ARTAA, then North to EL ARISH Road at 0845. To EL AABASH at 0800.</p> <p>Two troops to GHURFAN EL GIMAL as escort and protection to well digging parties from 52nd Divn. G.O's.C. Desert Column and ANZAC Mounted Division visited BIR-EL-GERERAT and inspected the Camp of this Brigade.</p> <p>1st. A.L.H. Regt. moved from BIR PARRAMATTA to GHURFAN EL GIMAL to take up position covering the Wells at that place and to connect with right of 127th. Brigade. Move completed at 1330.</p>	
"	"	16th.	<p>Patrols of one troop each were despatched as follows :- To UM ZUGHLA as escort to G.S.O.I, A. & N.Z. Mounted division, and other officers at 0845. To EL AABASH at 0830.</p> <p>One Squadron was provided by Regiment at GHURFAN EL GIMAL as escort and protection to well digging parties East of that locality.</p> <p>Reconnaissance of region of KHIRBET EL ASHUSH to find good landing ground for aeroplanes was carried out by one troop. Good landing grounds were discovered in Bay above B. in BARDAWIL and East from EL in SABKHET-EL-BARDAWIL. West of from this the Sabkhet is too wet and unsuitable.</p>	
"	"	17th.	<p>Daily patrols of one troop each were despatched as follows:- To ABU ARTAA, then North to EL ARISH Road at 0830. To EL AABASH at 0830. To EL MURRA and ABU FELEIFEL South at 0800.</p> <p>One Squadron being found daily for protection of well digging parties East of GHURFAN-EL-GIMAL. 58 Remounts received.</p>	
"	"	18th.	<p>Patrols of one troop each were despatched as follows :- To vicinity of UM ZUGHLA marking best covered road, at 0830. To EL AABASH at 0800. To EL MURRA at 0800.</p> <p>Two Bedouins captured by EL AABASH patrol in direction of EL KAF.</p>	<p><i>Major</i> <i>B.M. 1st A.L.H. Bde</i></p>

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
GERERAT	December 19th.		Patrols of one troop each were despatched as follows :- To ABU ARTAA and EL AABASH at 0830. To EL MURRA from GHURFAN EL GIMAL at 0800.	
"	"	20th.	Patrols of one troop each were despatched as follows :- To ABU ARTAA at 0830. To EL AABASH at 0800. To EL MURRA at 0800. First A.L.H.Regt. moved from BIR GYMPIE at GHURFAN EL GIMAL and rejoined the Brigade at GERERAT. <u>Attack on EL ARISH.</u> Brigade left GERERAT at 1900 to take up a line from N in CULTIVATION 3 miles East of EL ARISH to the Sea with the intention of attacking EL ARISH. The march was made over difficult desert country until the bed of the WADI was reached at 0510.	
EL ARISH	"	21st.	The Brigade arrived on the Sector allotted to it at 0630. No resistance being offered, the town was entered at 0700, and arrangements made with the Sheikh for all the male population to be assembled. One Turk and two spies were handed over by the Sheikh. The Brigade occupied the area EL RISA and EL SATH and took up an Outpost Line, HILLS 110 - 100 - 160, joining up with I.C.C. on the right. Major-General H.G. CHAUVEL visited the Brigade at 1345.	
"	"	22nd.	Brigadier inspected the Outpost Line, and fixed the positions and strength. One Troop to be stationed at each of the three HILLS 110. 100, 160, with one troop to supply patrols between the posts. <u>Attack on MAGDHABA.</u> This Brigade moved from EL RISA at 1900 and arrived at point of concentration in WADI EL ARISH decided on by G.O.C. Anzac Mounted Division, at 2015. Supplied Advanced Guard for movement of Division against MAGDHABA.	
"	"	23rd.	Arrived at point in WADI EL ARISH 3 miles from MAGDHABA at 0830. Report of operations attached. One Squadron, 1st.L.H.Regt. remained with one Squadron from 3rd.L.H.BRIGADE and N.Z.M.R. Bde. under C.O. 1st.L.H.Rgt. for the purpose of collecting arms, ammunition, etc.	Appx. (16/202) LXII.

Especially
Maj. A.L.H. Bde.

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FIRST AUSTRALIAN LIGHT HORSE BRIGADE.

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WAR DIARY
or
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
EL ARISH	December	24th.	Brigade moved from Point in WADI EL ARISH 3 miles from MAGDHABA at 0055 and arrived at EL ARISH at 0630. One Squadron escorting prisoners reported at EL ARISH at 1230. C.O. 1st.L.H.Regt. reported his party in at 2430.	
"	"	25th.	Arms, ammunition, etc., including 4 mountain guns handed over to D.H.Q. Brigadier inspected horses and lines of Brigade.	
"	"	26th.	G.O.C. DESERT COLUMN addressed the Brigade and complimented all ranks on the complete victory achieved at MAGDHABA on 23/12/16.	
"	"	27th.	Usual Outpost Line maintained.	
"	"	28th.	Reconnaissance of Road and Telegraph line to EL BURJ carried out by one Squadron. Water found to be plentiful between EL ARISH and EL BURJ.	
"	"	29th.	Usual Outpost Line maintained.	
"	"	30th.	Brigade left ZEL RISA Camp at 0800 to carry out reconnaissance of EL BURJ and SHEIKH ZOWAIID as per Appendix. Outpost Line handed over to I.C.C. at 0800.	Appx. (B.O.32) LXIII.
"	"	31st.	Brigade left SHEIKH ZOWAIID at 0800 to return to EL RISA Camp. Report on reconnaissance.	Appx. LXIV.

Major
DM 1st Lt. A. L. F. Blei

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Secret

APPX. LX

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BRIGADE ORDER. No. 31.

COPY. No.....

by
BRIGADIER-GENERAL. C.F. COX, C.B., V.D.
Commanding First Australian Light Horse Brigade.

Headquarters,
2/12/1916.

1011
16/1916

Reference Maps:- SABKHET EL BARDAWIL, 1/125,000.
EL ARISH, 1/125,000.

1.- INFORMATION:-

(a). Agents report that the advanced guard of MOHAMED ALI PASHA'S army, numbering about 2,000 reached MASAI'ID on the 25th. inst. It may be assumed that the remaining 3,000 troops under this Commander are in or close to MASAI'ID BY THIS DATE.

(b). The 52nd. Division (less 1 Infantry Bde. Group) reaches MAZAR from SALMANA on 2nd. December. On arrival it forms the General Reserve.

(c). The remaining Bde. of the 52nd. Division will find, until relieved by two battalions 160th. Bde, the garrison of ABD, and will also provide protection of the L. of C. posts at SALMANA and ABU TILUL.

(d). The G.O.C. 42nd. Division will select a position to be held by one Division to cover the railway station at MAADAN.

2.- MOVES:-

Sunday, December 3rd., 1916:- The Squadron of 2nd.L.H.Regiment at ZOABATIA will be relieved by 1 Squadron of N.Z.M.R. Bde. and will march to ARNUSSI. Relief is to be carried out by 1200.

Monday, December 4th., 1916:- The 1st. A.L.H. Bde. will leave ARNUSSI at 1030 and march to BIR-EL-GERERAT.

2nd.L.H.Regt., M.G.Squadron, and 1st. A.L.H.Regt., will be formed up in column of Squadron lines of Troop Columns just clear of their present lines, facing West, 3rd. L.H.Regt. facing East and 1st. A.L.H.Fd.Amb. by its transport lines, facing West at 1015.

3.- ORDER OF MARCH:-

Advanced Guard.

1 Sqn. 1st. L.H. Regt.)
Commander,)
Major D.V.A. SMITH.)

C.O. 1st. A.L.H. Regiment will detail one Squadron as Advanced Guard.

B.H.Q.

1st. Sig. Troop.
2nd. L.H. Regt.
M.G. Squadron.
1st. L.H. Regt.
3rd. L.H. Regt.
1st. L.H. Fd. Amb.
6th. Mob Vet. Sec.

Order of March as per margin.

Right Flank Guard.)

1 Troop, 2nd. L.H. Rgt.)

Left Flank Guard.)

1 Troop, 2nd. L.H. Rgt.)

C.O. 2nd. L.H. Regt. will detail one Troop each as Right and Left Flank Guards.

Rear Guard.)

1 Troop, 3rd. L.H. Rgt.)

C.O., 3rd. L.H. Regt., will detail one Troop as rear Guard.

4.- LOCAL PROTECTION:-

On arrival at GERERAT, C.O., 2nd. L.H. Regt., as Duty Regiment, will be responsible for the local protection.

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5.- PATROLS:-

From december 5th. the following patrols will be detailed daily and sent out at varied hours:-

- (a). Officers' Patrol, strength one Troop, to ABU ARTAA and two miles to the East
- (b). Officers' Patrol, strength one Troop, to EL-AABASH (point 504) thence South West and returning North West.
- (c). Patrol of one N.C.O. and two sections to ARNUSSI to report to Squadron of M.Z.M.R. Brigade, once by day and once by night.
- (d). Patrol of one N.C.O. and two sections, once by day and once by night, to report to I.C.C. at EL MAADAN (Point 133).

Day patrols to ARNUSSI and EL MAADAN will arrange hour at which night patrols will reach these places.

6.- BLANKETS:-

Owing to limited amount of Camel transport available, each man will carry his blankets and Water-proof Sheet.

7.- RATIONS AND WATER:-

The unexpended portion of the day's rations and full water bottle will be carried on each man and two feeds on each horse.

From the afternoon of december 4th., rations and forage will be drawn from Dump at KILO 123, with First Line camels.

A. CHISHOLM, Major,
Brigade Major, 1st. A.L.H. Brigade.

Copies issued at 1000 to :-

Copy No.1	File.
" 2	War Diary.
" 3	ANZAC Mounted Division.
" 4	1st.L.H.
" 5	2nd. "
" 6	3rd. "
" 7	M.G. Squadron.
" 8	1st.L.H.Fd.Ambulance.
" 9	Supply Officer.
" 10	Camel Transport Officer.
" 11	1st Sign.Troop.
" 12	6th M.V.Sect.
" 13	3rd A.L.H.Brde.
" 14	N.Z.M.R.Bde.

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FIRST AUSTRALIAN LIGHT HORSE BRIGADE.
-----oOo-----

16/19.12

Headquarters,
3/ 12/ 1916.

With Reference to Brigade Order, No. 31.

1st. A.L.H. Regiment will leave ARNUSSI at 1100 to-morrow and march to WELLS, approximately 3 miles North-West of GERERAT where the Regiment will camp.

C.O., 1st.A.L.H. Regiment, will be responsible for the local protection of his camp, and will send Patrols of 1 N.C.O. and 8 men, once by day and once by night, at varied hours to GERERAT.

A. CHISHOLM, Major,
Brigade Major, 1st. A.L.H. Bde.

Copies issued at 2015 to:-			
Copy No. 1	File.	Copy No. 8	1st.L.H.FD.Amb.
" 2	War Diary.	" 9	Supply Officer.
" 3	Anzac Mtd. Division.	" 10	Camel Transport Officer.
" 4	1st. L.H.	" 11	1st. Sig. Troop.
" 5	2nd. L.H.	" 12	6th. Mob. Vet. Sec.
" 6	3rd. L.H.	" 13	3rd. A.L.H. Brigade.
" 7	M.G.Sqdn.	" 14	N.Z.M.R. Bde.

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APPX. LXI

SECRET.

COPY No. Z.....

SPECIAL ORDER.

by
Brigadier-General C.F. COX, C.B., V.D.
Commanding First Australian Light Horse Brigade.

Headquarters,
13/ 12/ 1916.

C.O., 1st. L.H. Regiment will detail one Senior Officer and one Subaltern with one Troop (full strength) to proceed under cover of darkness to WADI EL ARISH to test the WADI North of BIR LAHFAN for water.

O/C. Field Troop will detail one N.C.O. and one man with Nerten Tube set to accompany this party.

Only thoroughly fit horses are to be used on this reconnaissance.

The three pack horses required will be supplied by 1st. L.H. Regiment.

Signallers will accompany the party. O.C. Signal Troop will establish Lookout Station on high ground one mile East of BIR EL GERERAT at daylight, but signalling will only be resorted to in case of emergency.

A. CHISHOLM, Major,
Brigade Major, 1st. A.L.H. Bde.

Copies issued at 1140 to :-

- Copy No. 1 Filed.
- " 2 War Diary.
- " 3 D.H.Q.
- " 4 3rd. L.H. Brigade.
- " 5 N.Z.M.R. Brigade.
- " 6 1st. L.H. Regiment.
- " 7 2nd L.H. Regt.
- " 8 3rd. L.H. Regt.
- " 9 Machine Gun Squadron.
- " 10 1st. Sig Troop.
- " 11 1st. Field Troop.
- " 12 1st. L.H. Fd. Amb.
- " 13 Supply Officer.
- " 14 Mob Vet. Section.
- " 15 Camel Transport Officer.

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APPX. LXII 11

FIRST AUSTRALIAN LIGHT HORSE BRIGADE

16/7072

Headquarters,
24/12/1916.

Headquarters,
A. & N.Z. Mounted Division.

REPORT ON OPERATIONS OF 1st. A.L.H. BRIGADE
AT MAGDHABA ON 23/12/16., COMMENCING FROM
ARRIVAL AT POSITION IN WADI EL ARISH ON
TELEGRAPH LINE ABOUT 3 MILES FROM MAGDHABA.
=====

At 1000 this Brigade was ordered to push through the I.C.C. with left of Brigade resting on telegraph line to the apparent enemy left flank. After proceeding at the trot for about a mile the enemy opened fire on the Brigade with sharpnel. Artillery formation was adopted and the pace increased to the gallop, but after going another half mile, heavy machine gun and rifle fire was ~~xxxx~~opened on my force from enemy positions on ridge North West from hospital at MAGDHABA; these positions being on my right front. No cover being available for horses on my front I swung the brigade to the right and gained cover in a rugged, blind Wadi at a point about 1900 yards N.W. of enemy redoubt (No.1).

At 1045 I ordered the C.O., 3rd.L.H.Regiment to attack the enemy trenches and redoubt at head of BLIND WADI and detailed 4 machine guns to come under his orders. My orders to C.O., 3rd.L.H.Regiment were to attack up the Wadi and along the bank round to the right.

At 1115 the Hong Kong and Singapore Mountain Battery opened fire on the redoubts at head of the Wadi from a position about 1000 yards E. of the point where the Brigade entered the Wadi. Better position being available in the Wadi, I had the guns moved and they brought direct fire to bear on the enemy position at a range of 1950 yards. The firing of this Battery was excellent.

My left got touch with the right of the I.C.C. and pushed forward along eastern edge of Wadi. The troops in the Wadi came under very heavy fire from redoubt and their advance was enfiladed from the second ridge which overlooked the Wadi from the South West. The cover afforded by the Battery on the redoubt and the Machine Guns on the second ridge enabled the troops in the Wadi to advance to within 100 yards of the enemy redoubt, when it surrendered at 1350. Prisoners taken 3 officers, 92 other ranks.

The troops working along the Eastern edge of the Wadi were the first to enter the enemy trenches, and these in co-operation with the troops working up the Wadi pushed on to the attack of the second ridge. From trenches on second ridge and Redoubt No.2 the enemy offered strong resistance. At 1245 I ordered C.O., 2nd.L.H.Regiment to despatch one Sqdn., mounted, to attack enemy's extreme left. This Squadron pushed round and became engaged with enemy position No. 2 Redoubt, which position was S.W. of ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ MAGDHABA and commanded the entrance to the wells. This movement very materially assisted the ~~xxxxxxx~~ attack on the second ridge. The position of the troops at this stage was - frontleft to right; 3rd.L.H.Regiment, one Squadron 2nd.L.H.Regiment.

At 1430 I ordered C.O., 2nd.L.H.Regiment to send one Squadron to reinforce the line between the Squadron on the right and the 3rd.L.H.Regiment. At 1530 I send the remaining Squadron of 2nd.L.H.Regiment to reinforce the 3rd.L.H.Regiment line on N.

[Handwritten signature]

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of Redoubt No.2.

From the time the first position fell into our hands the attack was pushed with great vigour. At 1515, the first line of trenches on second ridge was taken with the bayonet by "B" and "C" Squadrons of 3rd.L.H.Regiment, assisted by the I.C.C. Prisoners taken 70.

At 1600, Redoubt No.2 was taken with the bayonet by "A" Squadron, 3rd.L.H.Regiment and "A" and "B" Squadrons of 2nd.L.H.Regiment. Prisoners taken 7 officers 130 other ranks, amongst whom was KIDEIR BEY, the C.O., of the Garrison. This officer informed my interpreter that the capture of the garrison was complete.

Right flank was reported "All clear" at 1615.

Total prisoners taken 10 officers, 292 other ranks.

Machine Guns. 5 machine guns were employed in affording covering fire for advance of troops up the Wadi and on extreme right flank. After the surrender of the first redoubt, an additional three guns were brought into action on the position of this redoubt and many good targets were found at ranges from 900 to 1300 yards. On the second ridge targets were obtained from 500 yards.

During the operation one gun was put out of action with bullet hole through the barrel casing.

Brig.-General.
G.C.C. 1st. A.L.H. Brigade.

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SECRET

BRIGADE ORDER. No. 32.

Copy No.....

by
Brigadier-General C.F. COX, C.B., V.D.
Commanding First Australian Light Horse Brigade.

Reference Maps:-

EL ARISH - 1/125,000.
RAFA - 1/125,000.

EL RISA.
29/12/16.

1.- INTENTION.

1st.A.L.H. Brigade will carry out a reconnaissance of EL BURG and SHEIKH ZOWAIID on 30th. and 31st. December, 1916, to obtain information regarding :-

(a). Roads:-

Coast Road and the other further South.
Suitability for Motor Transport.
Rate of march for infantry on them.

(b). Water:-

On roads and at SHEIKH ZOWAIID.

(c). SHEIKH ZOWAIID itself.

The Brigade will bivouac at SHEIKH ZOWAIID on night 30th./31st. December.

Patrols will not go farther than 5 miles east of SHEIKH ZOWAIID.

2.- INSTRUCTIONS:-

The Brigade will leave EL RISA Camp at 0800, to-morrow, December 30th., to carry out the reconnaissance. Units will be formed up in Column of Squadron lines of Troop column 300 yards South of B.H.Q., facing east at 0745.

3.- ORDER OF MARCH:-

ADVANCED GUARD.

One Sqn.,)
3rd.L.H.Reg.) C.O. 3rd.L.H.Regt. will detail one Squadron as Advanced Guard.
Commander)
Major Lewis.)

B.H.Q.)
1st.Sig.Troop.)
Field Troop.) Order of March as per margin.
M.G.Squadron.)
3rd.L.H.Regt.)
1st.L.H.Regt.)
2nd.L.H.Regt.)
1st.L.H.Fd.Amb.)
6th. Mob.Vet.Sec)

Right Flank Guard C.O., 2nd.L.H.Regt. will detail one Sqn. as Right Flank Guard.
1 Sqn., 2nd.L.H.Regt.

Left Flank Guard C.O., 1st.L.H.Regt. will detail one Troop as Left Flank Guard.
1 Troop, 1st.L.H.Regt.

Rear Guard Escort to Camel Convoy will provide small Rear Guard.

4.- ESCORTS

C.O., 2nd.L.H.Regiment will detail one Troop as Escort to 1st. Line Camel Transport, and one Troop to report to O.C., Field Troop as Pumping Party on arrival at SHEIKH ZOWAIID.

5.- OUTPOSTS.

After passing through SHEIKH ZOWAIID, the Advanced Guard will form an Outpost Line which will be relieved at 1640 by 1 Sqn. of 1st.L.H.Regt. This Squadron will be responsible for the local protection of the Brigade during night 30th./31st. December and until relieved by 1 Sqn., 2nd.L.H.Regt. which will act as Rear Guard and supply Outpost Line as usual on line HILLS 110, 100 and 160 on night 31st. Dec/1st. Jan.

Whilst the Brigade is away the present Outpost Line will be held by the I.C.C., who will take over at 0800 tomorrow. The day posts will then join the Column going out

6.- RECONNOITRING PATROL.

C.O., 3rd.L.H.Regiment will detail one Squadron to reconnoitre the country to 5 miles East of SHEIKH ZOWAIID to gather information as per para. 1.

7.- SUPPLIES AND WATER.

One and two third rations and extra ration will be carried by each man and 2 feeds on each horse.

One day's forage and water will be taken on ~~frontline~~ first line camels.

The camels will report to units at 0700 tomorrow

8.- AMMUNITION.

200 rounds S.A.A. will be carried to each man, 3,500 rounds to each Machine Gun and 3,000 rounds to each Lewis Gun.

9.- MEDICAL.

The Mobile Section (complete) 1st.L.H.Fd.Amb., will accompany the Brigade.

10.- COMMUNICATIONS.

O.C., Signal Troop will detail a party to proceed with patrol East of SHEIKH ZOWAIID to inspect the telegraph line.

11.- REPORTS

Reports to head of Main Body.

A. CHISHOLM Major,
Brigade Major, 1st.A.L.H.Bde.

Copies issued at 1530 to :-

No.1	B.H.Q.
No.2	File.
No.3	War Dairy
No.4	D.H.Q.
No.5	Sig.Troop.
No.6	Fd.Troop
No.7	M.G.Sqdn.
No.8	1st.L.H.Regt.
No.9	2nd. "
No.10	3rd. "
No.11	1st.L.H.Fd.Ambulance.
No.12	Supply Officer.
No.13	Camel Officer.
No.14	I.C.C.

16/2037

APPX. LXIV¹⁵FIRST AUSTRALIAN LIGHT HORSE BRIGADE.Headquarters,
31st. Decr. 1916.Headquarters,
A. & N.Z. Mounted Division.Report on Reconnaissance of Road from
EL ARISH to SHEIKH ZOWAID.Reference Maps :- EL ARISH - 1/125,000.
RAFA - 1/125,000.ROADS:-

The coastal track as a Road practically does not exist, and the going is very heavy. The main road is in fair condition, but if fresh brushwood (which is very plentiful) were put on it, motor transport could use this road. The South road, which branches off just East of EL BURJ is just an ordinary desert pad varying in width from 12 to 18 feet.

MOVEMENT OF TROOPS :-

Infantry could move along the main road at the rate of two miles per hour.

After passing a point $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles East of a line drawn through HILLS 110 and 100, the going is as good as the road for 1000 yards on both sides of the Telegraph line up to EL BURJ, where the ground on both sides of the telegraph line is under cultivation and therefore very soft. From EL BURJ to SHEIKH ZOWAID, owing to the amount of tilled ground, the movement of Infantry would be mostly confined to the road and its immediate vicinity.

East from SHEIKH ZOWAID the country is slightly undulating and rising all the way towards EL MAGRUNTEIN. This country offers good going for all arms.

WATER.

From EL ARISH to BIR ABU HAMTHALA there are many pot holes along the coast, depths 2 to 4 feet, containing fresh water, but there are no permanent wells.

At EL GERADI there is a stone well about 8 feet deep with 2 feet of water in it.

At BIR EL BURJ there is a stone well about 30 feet deep with 6 to 8 feet of water in it.

At BIR GABRAMAIR there is a native well with no revettment containing good water about 4 feet from the surface.

Near Palm groves about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile West of SHEIKH ZOWAID there are 12 good timbered wells with pump on each well, only 8 of which are intact, the remainder are short handles and plungers.

Immediately North of SHEIKH ZOWAID there are 2 cement wells (large) and 2 cement reservoirs.

1st. well - 5 feet diameter, 20 feet to water, 3 feet 6 in water in it, slightly brackish. Semi-retary pump complete.

Reservoir - 18' X 12' X 3' 6" with cement trough all round.

2nd. well - 9 feet diameter, 14 feet to water, containing 3 feet water, quite fresh. Portion of engine.

Reservoir - 18 feet X 12 feet X 3' 6", with cement trough all round.

ENEMY POSITION.

I made a personal reconnaissance of the country to the East of SHEIKH ZOWAID. Observation was difficult owing to the misty rain. My position was on HILL 100. My advanced Guard Commander from his position on HILL 164 located enemy posts (about 20) on contour 200 from A of DARB, just South of E of MAGRUNTEIN to about first T in CULTIVATION in Square F.7. *fb*

789

- 2 -

trenches were located.

LANDING FOR AEROPLANES.

There is a very good kindiax landing ground for aeroplanes immediately East of SHEIKH ZOWAIID.

Another piece of ground half mile South West of the village is only suitable for landing if the wind is blowing North West or South East, being too narrow otherwise.

LANDING FROM SEA.

There is no place along the coast as far as SHEIKH ZOWAIID that commends itself as a landing place for either troops or stores.

TELEGRAPH LINE.

From EL ARISH to one mile West of SHEIKH ZOWAIID the telegraph line has been put in good repair, but from that point Eastwards as far as reconnoitred the line has been effectively destroyed, wire removed, poles pulled down and insulators smashed.



Brig.-General,
G.O.C., 1st. A.L.H. Brigade.



THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
CANBERRA, F.C.T.

16th January, 1934.

Dear John,

The enclosed which I have from Senator Cox may be, perhaps, attached with advantage to the Diaries of the 1st L.H. Brigade with respect to the engagements at Maghaba and Rafa. They do not appear in the Diaries now, but they were copied by General Cox into his personal diary at the time, and are quite authentic.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in ink, appearing to be 'W. J. C.', written in a cursive style.



Dear Sir Harry
Enclosed are
the two famous Phone
Messages re Magdhaba
& Rapa fights which
I promised you, they
have been in my possession
ever since & I have signed
them for you

Yours sincerely
J H Cox

buoydon
25/11/33

D. R. L. No. **636**

"A" Form.

Army Form C.2121
(in pads of 100).
No. of Message

MESSAGES AND SIGNALS.

Prefix	Code	m.	Words	Charge	This message is on a/c of:	Recd. at	m.	
Office of Origin and Service Instructions.						Service.	Date	
C O P Y					Sent			
					At	m.	From	
					To		By	
					(Signature of "Franking Officer.")	By		

TO { **1st. A. L. H. BRIGADE.**

Sender's Number.	Day of Month.	In reply to Number.	AAA
* G.K. 65	23		

As enemy still hold out and horses must be watered the action will be broken off and the Force withdrawn. AAA Each Brigade will be responsible for its own protection during withdrawal. AAA Hour of withdrawal to begin at 1500. AAA After withdrawal Brigades will assemble on the MAGDHABA - EL ARISH Telegraph Line just beyond present D.H.Q. AAA All Brigades facing MAGDHABA Brigadiers will report to D.H.Q. on arrival.

True copy of Plot

From	ANBAC MOUNTED DIVISION.
Place	
Time	1450.
<i>The above may be forwarded as now corrected.</i>	
Censor.	(Z)
Signature of Addressor or person authorised to telegraph in his name.	

* This line should be erased if not required.

D. R. L. NO. 636

"A" Form.

Army Form C.2121
(in pads of 100)
No. of Message

MESSAGES AND SIGNALS.

Prefix	Code	m.	Words	Charge	This message is on a/c of:	Recd. at
Office of Origin and Service Instructions.			Sent			Service.
			At	m.		From
			To			By
			By		(Signature of "Franking Officer.")	

TO

TIMED 1640.
per 'phone.

Sender's Number.

Day of Month.

In reply to Number.

AAA

*

FORCE OF ENEMY 2,000 strong marching on EL MAG-
 RUNTEIN from direction of KHAM YUNUS AAA
 Others seen in scattered formation on ridge in
 direction of SHELLAL AAA Distance from redoubts
 about 4 miles at 1615 AAA Force will withdraw
 and assemble at POINT 250 on KARM IBN MUSLEH -
 SHEIKH ZOWAID Road AAA Brigades will find their
 own Rear Guard AAA C.R.A. will arrange for
 Batteries to take up position to cover withdrawal of
 Brigades AAA O.C., 8th. L.H. Regiment will form
 Rear Guard to cover withdrawal of all parties and
 Camels and ANZAC Mounted Division.

From

Place

Time

The above may be forwarded as now corrected.

(Z)

Censor.

Signature of Addressor or person authorised to telegraph in his name.

* This line should be erased if not required.

750,000. W 2183-M509. H. W. & V., Ltd. 6/16.

True copy
[Signature]