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war diaries, 1914-18 War

Light Horse

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Regiment

May 1918

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Australian Imperial Force.

WAR DIARY

OF

5th LIGHT HORSE REGIMENT A.I.F.

FOR

MAY

191 8

Signature of Officer compiling

Geo Hicks Capt

Signature of Officer Commanding

Donald Cameron Lieut Colonel
Commanding 5th Light Horse Regiment A.I.F.

MAY 1918

WAR DIARY

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.) *Sheet I*

FOR MONTH OF MAY

5TH. LIGHT HORSE REGIMENT

2ND. L. H. BRIGADE.

A. & N. Z. MOUNTED DIVISION.

Army Form C. 2118.

No. _____

Date _____

* A. I. F. *

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
	1	0445	Arrived at Australian Mounted Division about 2 miles from ES SALT. Had breakfast and fed horses and marched at 0715. Passed through ES SALT and reached AIN HEMAR and relieved 2 Squadrons of the 10th. L.H. Rgt. At 1415 the Regiment moved to attack Hill 2900. 2 Squadrons "A" & "B" in attack "C" in support. Position occupied without opposition at 1600. Outpost position taken up covering all roads in vicinity. At 1900 received instructions to withdraw. Joined Brigade at 2000 and marched to ES SALT and moved down NIMRIN road about 0300. <i>GA</i>	
	2	0300	On NIMRIN road about 1 mile past ES SALT. Instructions received to advance on foot for two miles along NIMRIN road. "A" Squadron under Major Patrick sent to support Yeomanry post on East of road. At 1330 instructions received to return to horses and move up AMMAN road where Regiment occupied a position between 7th. L.H. Rgt. and 3rd. Bde. with 2 Squadrons "B" & "C" in front line and "A" Squadron in support. <i>GA</i>	
	3		In outpost line between 7th. L.H. & 8th. L.H. Rgts. Turks attacked at dawn and our reserve Squadron was sent to support the 8th. Rgt. At 1600 Commanding Officers of Regiments were sent for to attend Brigade and instructions received that the force would retire from ES SALT. Retirement commenced at 2300. The Brigade marched through ES SALT thence via No. 7 road and reached bivouac site on West bank of JORDAN one mile South of JERICHO at 0930 on 4/5/18. <i>GA</i>	
	4		In bivouac one mile South of JERICHO 0930. Men and horses very tired. Meat ration was only WAS issued on 2nd. & 3rd. and horses were on their third day without a forage issue, although grazing in many places was very good. Total casualties for this operation amounted to 13. One man who was wounded late on the evening of the 3rd. was taken to ES SALT hospital after Medical units had withdrawn; as this man was too severely wounded to ride it was impossible to bring him along. <i>GA</i>	
	5		In bivouac South of Jericho. Lt. Radcliff returned from duty with Desert Mounted Corps Headquarters. <i>GA</i>	
	6		In bivouac South of JERICHO. <i>GA</i>	
	7	0530	Six enemy planes bombed the Brigade camp. 7th. L.H. had 8 men killed and 10 wounded in one troop. No casualties in this Regiment. <i>GA</i>	
		1430	Captain J.M. Boyd left with three troops to relieve 7th. L.H. in outpost line at HAJLA Ford, KASR YESUD and HENU. <i>GA</i>	
	8	0500	Three enemy planes again over our camp, but did not bomb brigade area. 1 Squadron New Zealand Brigade relieved our Squadron on outpost line. <i>GA</i> Troop of B Squadron under Lt. Hanson relieved from duty from Divisional Headquarters. Horses being watered in WADI KEBT-watering arrangements not good. <i>GA</i>	

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WAR DIARY
or
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.) *Sheet 2*

FOR MONTH OF MAY.

5TH. LIGHT HORSE REGIMENT A. & N. Z.
2ND. LIGHT HORSE BRIGADE.
A. & N. Z. MOUNTED DIVISION

Army Form C. 2118.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	9	0500	Party of 1 Officer and 34 Other Ranks proceeded to Bridgehead at GHORANIYE to erect barbed wire. Owing to delay in obtaining material party did not start work till 0800 and returned to camp at 1800. Weather extremely hot. <i>94</i>	
	10		In bivouac South of JERICHO. <i>94</i>	
	11		Regiment moved at 1415 to fresh bivouac sight about 4 miles North of JERICHO. Very strong hot wind blowing with dense clouds of dust. <i>94</i>	
	12		Bivouac North of JERICHO. Attached for duty AUSTRALIAN Mounted Division. Working party of 1 Officer and 50 Other ranks sent out at 1700 forming and improving roads <i>94</i>	
	13		Working party of 1 Officer and 50 other ranks sent out to AUJA crossing digging fire trenches. <i>94</i>	
	14		Working party of 1 Officer and 50 other ranks reported to 4th. Bde. Hqrs. at 1700. for roadmaking <i>94</i>	
	15		Bivouac north of JERICHO. 1 Officer and 4 other ranks granted 7 days leave in Egypt. <i>94</i>	
	16		Bivouac North of JERICHO. <i>94</i>	
	17		The following working parties engaged in roadmaking and trench digging. <i>94</i>	
		1600	1 1 Officer and 26 other ranks to Headquarters Australian Mounted Division. <i>94</i>	
		1830	1 Officer and 55 other ranks to Headquarters 4th. L.H. Brigade. <i>94</i>	
	18	0500	1 Officer and 30 other ranks reported to 2nd. L.H. Brigade for roadmaking. returned to camp 0820 <i>94</i>	
		1645	1 Officer and 62 other ranks reported to 4th. L.H. Brigade for construction of fire trenches. <i>94</i>	
	19	0500	1 Officer and 30 other ranks reported to 2nd. L.H. Brigade for roadmaking. <i>94</i>	
		1645	1 Officer and 50 other ranks reported to 4th. L.H. Brigade for trench digging. <i>94</i>	
	20	1830	1 Officer and 50 other ranks reported to 2nd. L.H. Brigade for roadmaking.	
		0500	1 N. C.O. and 25 other ranks reported to 2nd. L.H. Brigade for roadmaking. <i>94</i>	
	21	0500) 1630)	3 Officers and 150 working party and 33 horseholders reported to 2nd. L.H. Brigade for roadmaking. <i>94</i>	
	22		2nd. L.H. Bde took over portion section of Outpost line on WADI AUJA (NO. 4 sub-section). Regiment moved to bivouac position at AIN DUK and took over a sector of outpost lines from the 6th. L.H. Rgt. This sector was held by 2 Squadrons the 3rd Squadron being in reserve? <i>94</i>	
	23		In outpost line, stand to 0330, patrol of 1 Officer and 8 other ranks was sent to TEL-EL TRUNY and remained in position till 1700. This patrol came under machine gun fire, 1 horse hit which had later to be destroyed. Lieut. R.S. Billington M.C. resumed duty with Regiment on completion of Staff Trainee Course. Received 25 remounts and 12 reinforcements. <i>94</i>	
	24		Stand to at 0330. Quiet night in outpost line. Patrol again sent to TEL-EL TRUNY small parties of enemy seen but did not become engaged. Lieut. A. Currie M.M. left for musketry School Zeitoun. Lieut. E.G. Ogg M.C. left for Bombing School EL ARISH. Lieut. G.E. Hanson left for Scouts School EL ARISH. "C" Squadrons horses which had been sent out grazing were shelled by enemy artillery, no casualties. <i>94</i>	

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FOR MONTH OF MAY.

5TH. LIGHT HORSE REGIMENT A.I.F.

2ND. LIGHT HORSE BRIGADE A.I.F.

A. & N. Z. MOUNTED DIVISION

Army Form C. 2118.

SHEET 3.

(Erase heading not required.)

Sheet 3

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
	25		<p>Outpost lines stand to 0330. Patrol to TEL EL TRUNY left at 0430. This patrol was fired on at about 0830 and one man killed (Pte Howarth). Working parties were sent out as follows; 1 Officer and 50 men for roadmaking. 1 Officer and 50 men for wiring. 1 Officer and 37 men to report O.C. Field Troop. Relieved by 7th. L.H. Rgt. on outpost line. Returned to bivouac at AIN DUK. <i>SA</i></p>	
	26		<p>1 Officer and 60 men for erecting barbed wire report O.C. Field Troop. 1 Officer and 50 men for roadmaking. <i>SA</i></p>	
	27		<p>Working parties of 1 Officer and 50 other ranks reported to O.C. Field Troop for roadmaking, and 2 Officers and 50 men wiring round entrenched positions in outpost line. <i>SA</i></p>	
	28		<p>Relieved 7th. L.H. Rgt. on outpost line for 3 days. "A" Squadron moved out and took over posts, Remaining 2 Squadrons and Regimental Headquarters moved out at 1845. All available men employed improving trenches and clearing communications. Lieutenants Crawford and Fredericks rejoined Regiment from ZEITOUN School of Instruction. <i>SA</i></p>	
	29		<p>"A" Squadron on outpost line? Remainder of Regiment in bivouac at AIN DUK. 1 Officer and 2 other ranks granted leave to ALEXANDRIA and 3 other ranks for leave elsewhere in EGYPT. <i>SA</i></p> <p>Usual patrol of 1 Officer and 8 men to TEL EL TRUNY at 0430. Reserve ammunition stored in trenches. All available men employed in improving trenches and communications between posts. <i>SA</i></p>	
	30		<p>On Outpost. Stand to 0330. Usual patrol sent out to TEL EL TRUNY, returned 1700 and reported all clear. Only small parties of enemy seen. All available men employed improving trenches. <i>SA</i></p>	
	31		<p>On Outpost. Stand to 0330. Usual patrol sent out to TEL EL TRUNY, and reported all clear at 0545. Regiment relieved on outpost line by 7th. L.H. Rgt. at 1900. Working party of 3 officers and 130 other ranks sent to report O.C. Field Troop at 1700 for roadmaking. <i>SA</i></p>	

Donald Cameron Lieut Colonel.
Commanding 5th. Light Horse Regiment A.I.F.

MAY 1918

WAR DIARY

OF

5th. LIGHT HORSE REGIMENT A.I.F.

FOR

MAY 1918

LIST OF APPENDICES.

No. 1.

Subject. OPERATIONS ROUND ES SALT
FROM 27TH APRIL TO 4TH MAY 18.

Appendix "A"

5TH. LIGHT HORSE REGIMENT A.I.F.
NARRATIVE ACCOUNT OF OPERATIONS ROUND ES SALT FROM 27TH. APRIL TO 4TH.
MAY 1918.



- MAY 1918

REFERENCE MAP.
COMPOSITE MAP EAST OF JORDON. (ES SALT).

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On 27th. April at 2100 the Regiment left bivouac on WADI KELT and crossed the JORDAN on pontoon bridge at GHORANIYE at 2300 and marched down to HAJLA ford. B Squadron under Major Nimmo forming advance guard to the Brigade, A Squadron under Major Patrick the left flank guard, and C Squadron under Capt. Boyd the head of the main body. Arrived at 0100 and held outpost line till the Patiala Infantry arrived. They and the 6th. L.H. Regt then formed the outpost line, and this Regiment went into bivouac in the broken ground near JORDAN at 0215.

At 0400 on 28th. the Regiment stood to arms, and three patrols were sent out, each one troop strong to the North East and East and were to remain out all day, withdrawing at 1700. Meanwhile working parties were put on and trenches dug to form a defence for both outer and inner Bridgehead. At 1800 one Troop was sent on night outpost.

On 29th. usual stand to arms at 0400 and the 6th. L.H. found the day patrols. We drew three days rations for men and two for horses to be carried on man and horse. We received orders to march to Brigade concentration point at BUTMET HALUL at 2300. The night outpost was held by A Squadron till 2200, then relieved by B Squadron to allow A Squadron time to get ready to move. We arrived at concentration point at 0100 on 30th. inst and took cover in gullies near the Jordan before daylight. Meanwhile the 7th. L.H. and Patiala Infantry had marched to KABR MUJAHID and KABR SAID which they occupied after some opposition. Two Brigades of the 60th. Division supported by the N.Z. Bde. were attacking SHUNET NIMRIN and EL HAUD. At 1030 we were ordered to send a Liaison Officer to Desert Corps and sent Lt. Radcliffe. At 1530 the Brigade, less 7th. Regt, was ordered to proceed to the left flank via UMM ES SHIRT road and join the Australian Mounted Division, the Regiment forming the advance guard. Marched via GHORANIYE and watered in WADI NIMRIN. About 2100 we halted for an hour opposite UMM ES SHIRT. Guide from the Australian Division joined us and we cut across to the foothills and marched up No. 7 road. It was very precipitous and rough and out of the question for any wheels which had all been left behind. We all had to dismount and lead our horses to the top of the plateau, arriving at the Divisional Headquarters 0445 on 1st. May about 2 miles from ES SALT which had been taken by the 3rd. L.H. Bde the night before. We halted here fed up and had breakfast and waited till Divisional Headquarters and the 1st. L.H. Bde had got clear, as the road was so rough and narrow we could only march in single file.

At 0715 we left bivouac and marched through ES SALT and had some difficulty in getting along owing to the track being so narrow and precipitous and made slippery by some heavy showers of rain, several horses losing their footing and disappearing ~~the~~ over the precipice. We marched along the ES SALT-AMMAN road relieving two squadrons of the 10th. L.H. on outpost our objective was Hill 2900 overlooking AIN HEMAR and high ground guarding an enemy advance from AMMAN or AIN ES SIR. The 10th. Regt. reported the enemy were holding Hill 2900 in some force. The Regiment was ordered to attack this position. A and B Squadrons in the advance and C Squadron in support. The enemy however withdrew and we occupied AIN HEMAR and Hill 2900 without opposition. At 1600 we formed our Outpost line covering all the roads in vicinity. We found excellent water at AIN HEMAR from a running stream also good grazing. At 1900 we received orders to withdraw to the position we had started the attack from. Owing to a thick fog were unable to withdraw some of our outpost lines till 2000. Meanwhile Brigade Headquarters had moved from their position to the ES SALT road and much delay was caused by our having to send out patrols to discover their whereabouts. It was nearly midnight before we joined up. The Brigade then marched past ES SALT about two miles along the main road to SHUNET NIMRIN and halted at 0300 on 2nd. May.

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The road here is narrow and in many places steep drop into the WADI, and four horses fell over in the night, one of them was killed. I received orders to report to the G.O.C. Brigade with the other Regimental Commanders to make a personal reconnaissance down the SHUNET NIMRIN road, with a view of an attack on the Turkish position in conjunction with the 5th. Mounted Brigade. The Regiment was to be ready to move at 0715, a start was not made till 0900 and instructions were given to advance on foot two miles down the road, leaving all horses behind and take up a position under cover in the high ground to the right of the road—Major Bolingbroke brought the Regiment along, but after marching about one and a half miles a helio message was received from the Yeomanry post on East of the road that 100 Turks were advancing and asking for assistance. So A Squadron under Major Patrick were sent to hold the hill and the remainder along side the road till I rejoined the Regiment.

At 1330 I received instructions to return to the horses and move up to AMMAN road and take up a line between the 7th. L.H. Reg. and the right of the 3rd. L.H. Bde. as the enemy were apparently concentrating for an attack in that quarter. We got into position about 1500 with our left in touch with 8th. L.H. Reg. at KL EL FOKAR and our right in touch with the 7th. L.H. Reg. who were holding a line South to EL AWAB. Two squadrons in the line (B and C) and one in support A Squadron. This position commanded the approach from AMMAN and several scattered bodies of enemy, both Infantry and Mounted men, were in positions some 2000 yards to our front, though up to the present nothing more serious than a considerable amount of sniping was going on.

About 700 yards in front of centre of our position was a steep ridge which we had orders to hold, I did not like the look of this position as it was completely "in the air", but it appeared necessary to hold it as anyone occupying it had complete observation of the approaches via the No. 7 road (JMM ES SHIRT-ES SALT). I decided to occupy it at night with one troop, and next morning reinforce with the balance of the Squadron. At 1900 Lieut. Ogg M.C. took his troop to occupy this position, and at 1930 a burst of machine gun and rifle fire occurred and Lieut Ogg drew back with two men wounded (one Trooper Huggins died shortly after). He went out again and occupied the position without any opposition. Ridge in front now named "BALD RIDGE".

On 3rd. May the Turks had advanced in the dark close up to the 8th. L.H. Rgt. on our left, and were attacking at dawn. I then sent Major Patrick with my reserve Squadron to reinforce them. They took part in repelling the Turkish attack with heavy loss, and in the capture of 305 prisoners, who had advanced so far they could neither advance nor retire without being annihilated. Lieut Heidke and his troop escorted these prisoners to ES SALT. During the attack "A" Squadron lost one man killed (Tpr. Smetzer). Trooper R.L. Andersen did well, advancing on the Turks with bombs practically on his own. C Squadron was now sent to occupy BALD HILL under Captain Boyd, and Lieut Ogg's Troop was withdrawn. They meanwhile had two other men, one of whom died shortly afterwards (Trooper Potter). I then receive orders that all available men were to be made use of for the firing line, so most of the horseholders were withdrawn and all details such as batmen etc brought into the line. The Turks were now seen in considerable force along the AMMAN road, about 600 advancing in wave apparently making for the main ES SALT road, but the fire from the Mountain Battery attached to the 3rd. L.H. Bde. scattered these. Enemy machine guns kept up a fairly hot fire throughout the day and anyone exposing himself drew a burst of fire at once. Two of their 4.2 guns kept up a constant fire on the line killing one horse in B Squadron, and killing Trooper Ellis on BALD RIDGE.

At 1600 I attended a conference of Commanding Officers at B.H.Q. and instructions were received that a general withdrawal would commence that night, as large Turkish reinforcements had occupied KEFR HUDR to the North, and were also advancing from AMMAN, and the position looked serious. At about 2100 the 6th. L.H. Rgt. took on the outpost line, and remained in position till midnight. We withdrew at 2300 and with the 7th. L.H. Rgt. held the high ground to the west of ES SALT till the 3rd. Bde. had all passed through, when we continued to withdraw down the No. 7 road, arriving in the plain about 0800 on the 4th. May, followed by the rest of the Brigade. We then marched via GHORANIYE and recrossed the JORDAN, arriving in



- MAY 1918

E.H.6/6

camp on the Wadi KULT about 1000.
Want of sleep was the greatest hardship during the operations,
for five days there was practically no sleep, and all ranks
again showed their cheerfulness and fighting spirit and the
greatest endurance. Again the nature of the country was all
against mounted men, destroying their mobility.



Donald Cameron Col.
Comdg. 5th L.H. Regt.