

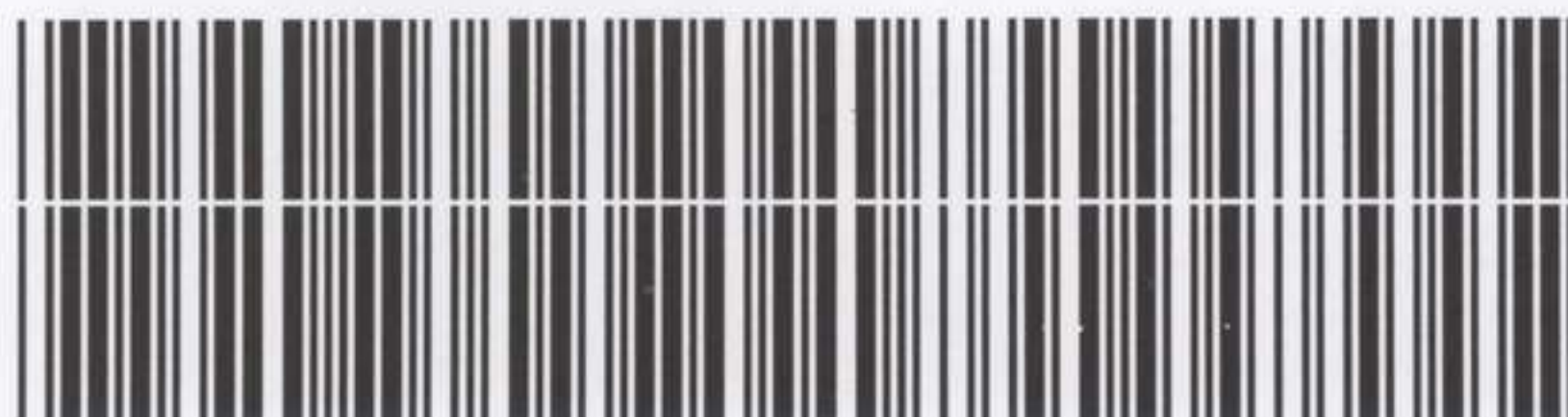
AWM4
Australian Imperial Force unit war diaries,
1914-18 War

Medical, Dental & Nursing

Item number: 26/51/1

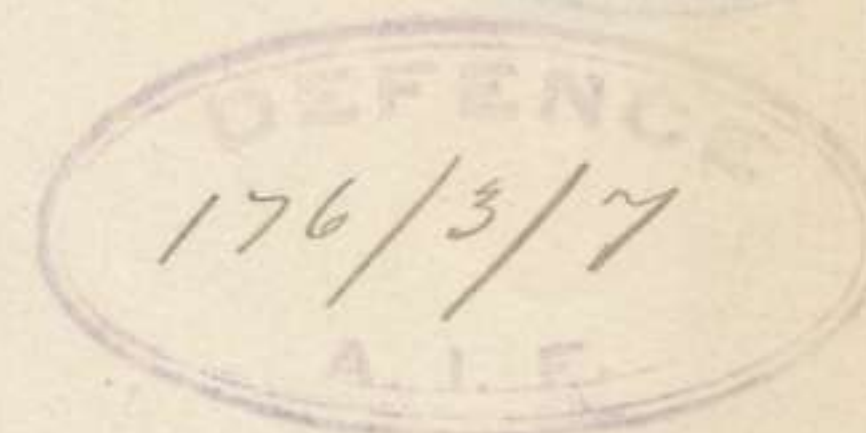
Title: 8th Australian Field Ambulance

January - March 1916



AWM4-26/51/1

Duplicate of ^{*Part of*} Volume No. *1*



MEDITERRANEAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE.

WAR DIARY.

Unit *8th Field Ambulance A.D.F.*

From *19.1.16* To *31.1.16*



MEDITERRANEAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

WAR DIARY.


From 1st April 1918 to 30th April 1918

To 1st May 1918

PAGE 1

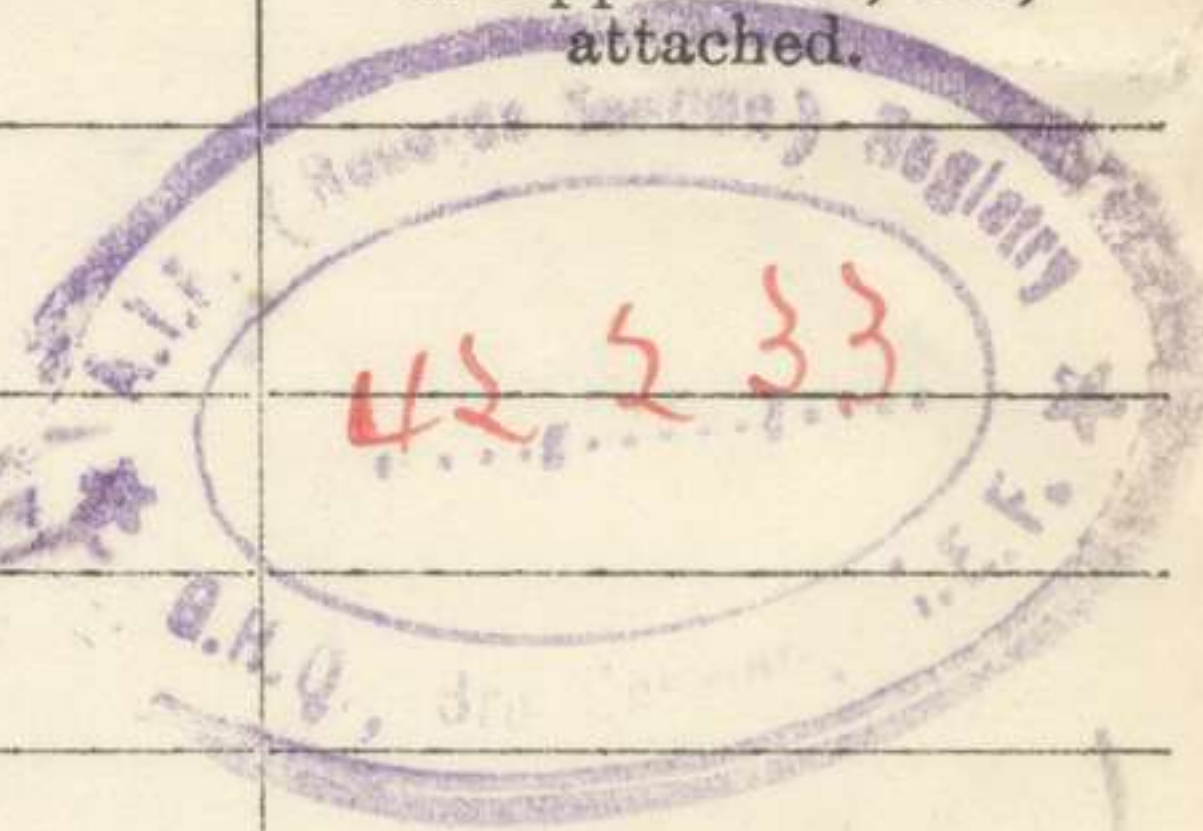
Date.	Place and Time.	8 TH FIELD AMBULANCE	Remarks or References to Appendices, &c., attached.
1916 19 JAN	PORT SAID 9.30 pm.	Arrived from FREEMANTLE 9.30 P.M.	A.I.F. (Records Section) H2229
20	CAIRO 6.30 pm.	Arrived & report for duty	
21	" 9.30 am	Reported Intermediate Base instructions from unit at SERAPEUM	
22	" 9 am	Reported to Gen HAINSE then proceeded to SERAPEUM where I arrived at 5 pm & joined 8 TH F.A.	
23	SERAPEUM	Reported by phone to DOWNS Col ROBINSON, also to D.C. 8 TH Brigade Col. TWEY. Health and training of 8 TH F.A. unit found to be excellent.	
31. 1. 16	SERAPEUM	Took up duty as S.M.O.B.	All kept him out of 8 TH Ambulance
1	"	4 pm. Observed that men are using water from old wells for washing	

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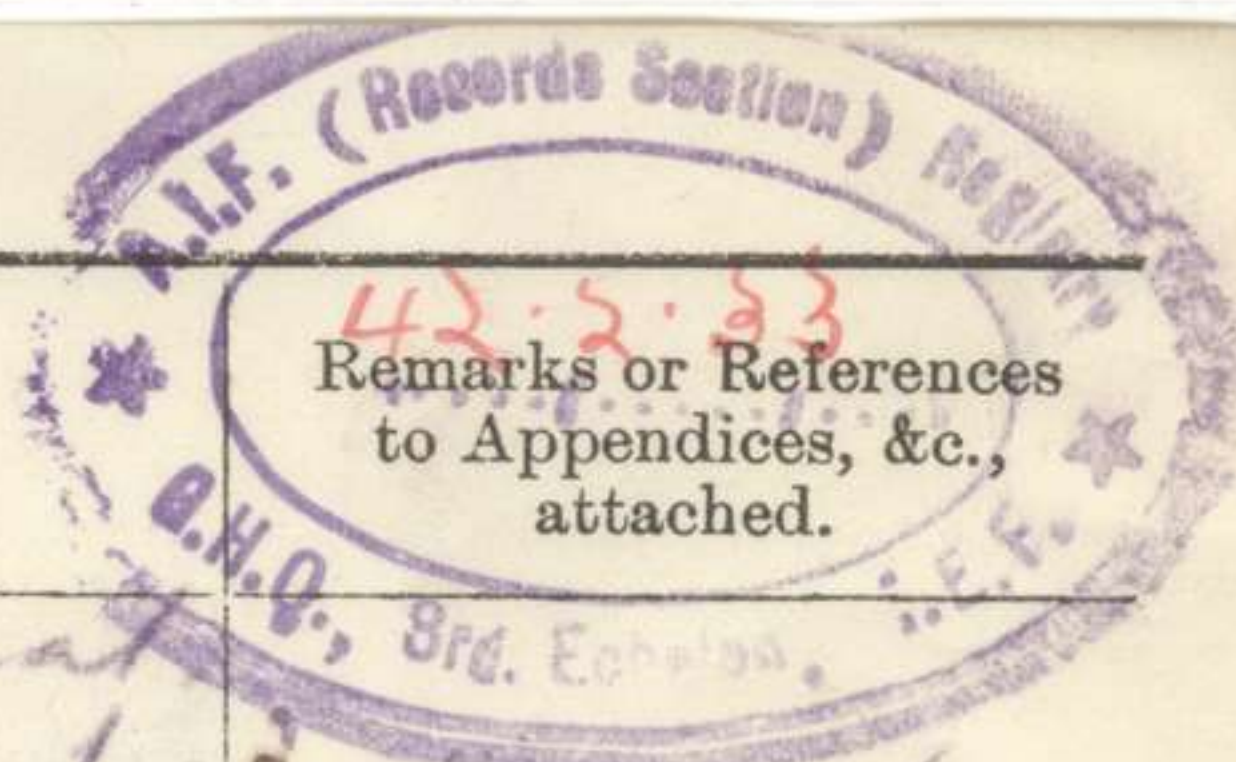
Date.	Place and Time.	8TH FIELD AMBULANCE	Remarks or References to Appendices, &c., attached.
31. 1. 16	SERAP 1600 EU 17 4 P.M.	Remains and clothing. This	
		dangerous, advised Brigade HQ	
		of necessity of digging fresh wells	<p>Adaptation of of J. Ambulance</p>
		replacing a water fountain which	
		to be posted at new and old	
		wells and of latter to be	
		proof checked.	

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Date.	Place and Time.	Remarks or References to Appendices, &c., attached.
		8TH FIELD AMBULANCE
	SERA	Companions to 1st Division
6.2.16	BEUM 0800	Instruction received to dispatch 1 officer by train at 0900 to TEL EL KEBIR. advance party. CAPT. IRVING detailed.
8.2.16	"	1st A.C.C.S (Lt NEWLAND) moved across canal to form camp. 2nd A.C.C.S camped $\frac{3}{4}$ mile E of canal.
		1920 called on a/pms 1st Division.
		DM. dispatched to SUEZ to take over lentage equipment arrived there.
9.2.16	T. 11.2.16	but. went on training
11.2.16	T. 14.2.16	Brigade Train & 20 A.S.C camped W of Canal. I warned O/C regarding



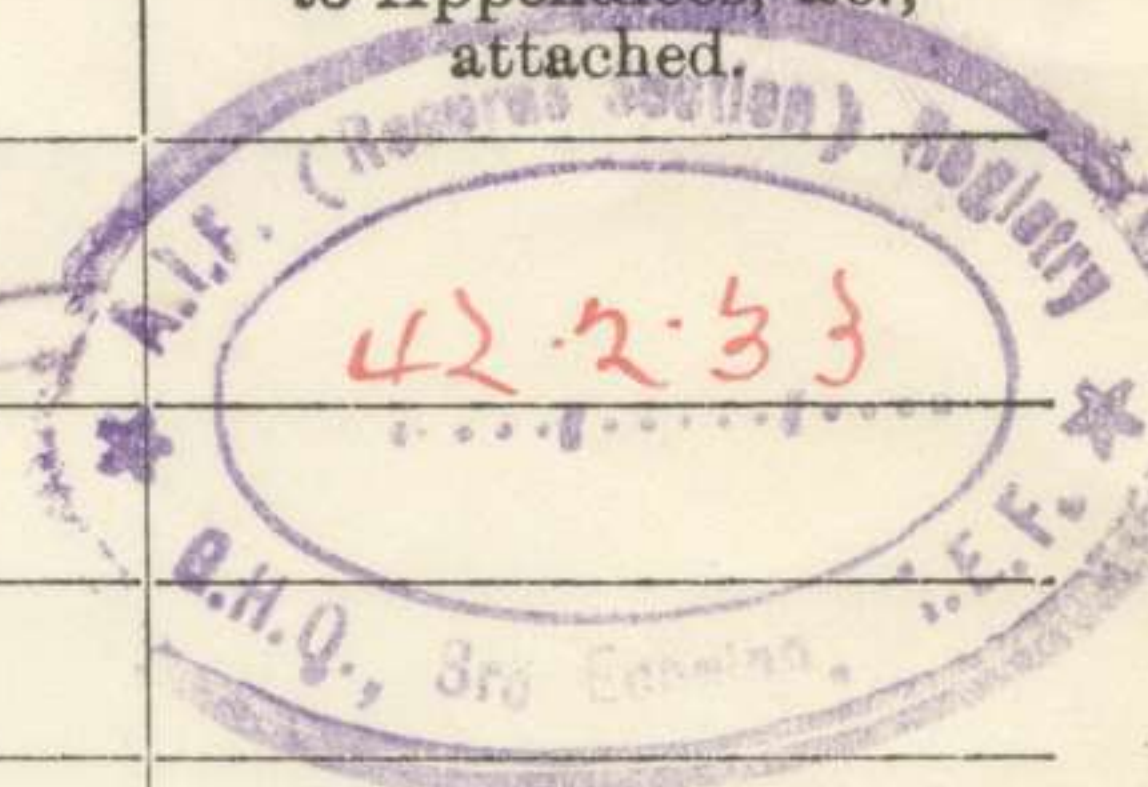
Walter Hunt
O/C 8th Amb.



Date.	Place and Time.		
15.2.16	SERA PEUR	8 TH FIELD AMBULANCE	Use of Sweetwater from the Canal 20 HSE Camped in rear of 8 th FA
to		1 st F. Amb. Col. SHAW arrived and cleared canal. Routine Training proceeded with.	15.2.16
17.2.16	"		
		First orders received from D.O.M.S.	15.2.16
18.2.16	"	AT NZA CORP. Col. ROTH	
		Sanitation of 1 st Div Camps on W.I.	
		Suez CANAL not found so arranged with 4 DMS 1 st Div that he would be responsible.	
19.2.16		Gen CRAVUEL and MAJ. FOOTE in- spected hospital buildings. Orders received from B.H.Q. to be prepared to move to TELEKEBIR any time.	
	4		

Whipham
of 8th FA

Date.	Place and Time.	Remarks or References to Appendices, &c., attached.
		8 TH FIELD AMBULANCE
20.2.16	SERAPEUM	GEN. MURRAY visited and inspected 1 ST DIV. natives who had bathing in Sweet water canal. I placed a guard on the banks to prevent any pollution.
21.2.16 to 23.2.16		Routine training
23.2.16	1820	Message received to move to TEL EL-KEBIR at 0430 on 25.2.16 from SERAPEUM WEST STATION. Necessary orders issued.
	1835	Message received from C Section that they were ordered to move on 24.2.16. Instructed C Section to draw rations for all tanks for 26.2.16.



*Added by hand
24.2.16*

Page 7.

Date.	Place and Time.	Remarks or References to Appendices, &c., attached.
		8 TH FIELD AMBULANCE
		also gave instructions re the formation of the new camp.
24.2.16	0700	Shortage of water reported owing to withdrawal of camels without notice.
		Difficulty in obtaining Transport from 20 ASE as horses had been working all night.
	1130	G.S.O. 1 st Div. informed me that my unit would not move till afternoon of 25 th and then would enter at Siding N. of camp.
		Under previous instructions from 8 Bde all native sweepers were put to work to ensure that 29 th & 31 st BATT lines were cleaned up - I inspected these lines and found them unsatisfactory from



W. Phipps
of 8

Page 8.

Date.	Place and Time.	Remarks or References to Appendices, &c., attached.
	SERA-PEUM	8 TH FIELD AMBULANCE Auntany point of view, in morning 1 Sgt. 4 men from my unit and all the Sweepers were engaged all day in clearing up.
25.2.16	" 0800	Informed by RTO that train would be at SERAPEUM W. Station at 10.15. I stated that owing to shortage of train and it would be impossible to make all baggage there in time. & finally a train was arranged to be at Sidang N. of camp at 1330. Borrowed 8 waggon from 20 ASC & transport of Baggage completed 1300. 1200 Certificate from the Contractor for all work done by natives to & include



W. Shephard
25.2.16

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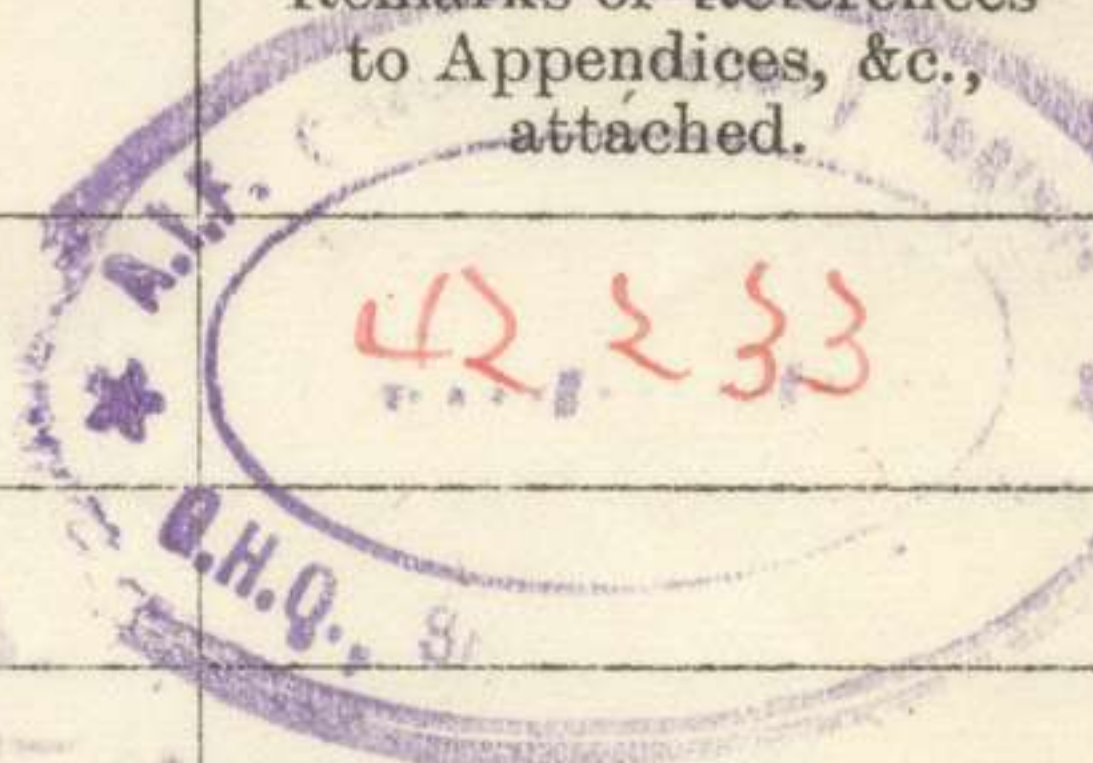
Date.	Place and Time.	8 TH FIELD AMBULANCE	Remarks or References to Appendices, &c., attached.
25.2.16	SERAPEUM	By 25.2.16. Marching out State 9 officers 177 men 4 horses.	A.I.F. (Records Section) Registry 42.1.3.3 B.H.Q., 3rd. Column. I.E.F.
	1400	Train unloaded. Insufficient carriages to take all personnel some of whom had to enter into cattle trucks which were in a filthy condition and solid and liquid manure in the deep. These trucks were cleaned out as well as possible and strewn with sand. I consider the arrangement most and very dangerous.	
	1615	Train left SERAPEUM.	W. J. P. [Signature] 25.2.16
	1900	Arrived at TEL EL KEDIR. Here I saw the unit was not expected till some later date. Found	

10

Date.	Place and Time.	8 TH FIELD AMBULANCE	Remarks or References to Appendices, &c., attached.
25.2.16	TEL EL KEBIR	allotted site occupied by 3 rd T. AMB. as a temporary camp established. all baggage transferred to new site & men settled down at 2400. I reported to H.A. at 2100.	42.2.33
		March on State 9.0. 177 men. 4 horses.	
		O.C. C Section reports that he could draw no rations as we were not expected to arrive today.	
26.2.16	.. 0930	Reported to A/DMS. who referred me to Gen HOWSE whom I found in operating No 2 A.S.H. Introduced by Gen HOWSE (a) To open Dental Department (b) Appoint MAJOR WILKINSON as command of a section.	



Whip hand of Gen

Date.	Place and Time.	8 TH FIELD AMBULANCE	Remarks or References to Appendices, &c., attached.
26.2.16	TEL EL KEBIR.	MAJOR WILLIAMS appointed M/C B. section. Care of	
	1130	Reported HQ 8. Bde as S.M. O.B.	
	1600	Saw A/Dms. who informed me that we were not yet brigaded & would not open until settled on our ground. Also was informed that 3rd F. Amb would move at once & that we would take over transport of 4 L.H.F. Amb. on arrival.	<p><i>Whipshur</i> 8 F. Amb</p>
	1630	Obtained copies of all orders from HQ. Informed HQ 8 Bde that I was not S.M. O.B.	
27.2.16		Sunday Church parade.	
28.2.16		Informed that Care of S. Post in camp.	

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Date.	Place and Time.	Remarks or References to Appendices, &c., attached.
28.2.16	TEL. EL KEDIR	8TH FIELD AMBULANCE also had a number of cases of a TYPHOID type were being admitted to No 2 A.S.H. gave instructions for all drinking water to be boiled & warned the men to take necessary precautions re food and drink.
29.2.16	0730	Saw of this re various matters. continued training programme No 3 F.A.M.B. examining all patients today.
		W. H. Shepherd Col of 8 J. Amb




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Date.	Place and Time.	8 TH FIELD AMBULANCE AIF	Remarks or References to Appendices, &c., attached.
1.3.16	TEL EL KEBIR. 0900	Verbally instructed by ADMS. 5 TH Div that ground occupied by 3 RD F. Amb would be vacated almost immediately.	42.2.33 A.H.Q., 8th Corps.
2.3.16		Routine training proceeded with. absent in CAIRO on 1 days leave.	
3.3.16	" 0930	3 F. Amb still stationary. Informed ADMS that sanitary arrangements for my unit not satisfactory as no separate latrines, incinerators or showers were provided.	W. Shepherd Capt of 8 TH F. Amb
4.3.16		5 TH Pioneers using same latrines as my unit. Incinerators are in common with 14 F. Amb.	
	0600	Nature preserves allotted report L work. Tents struck & blankets used.	

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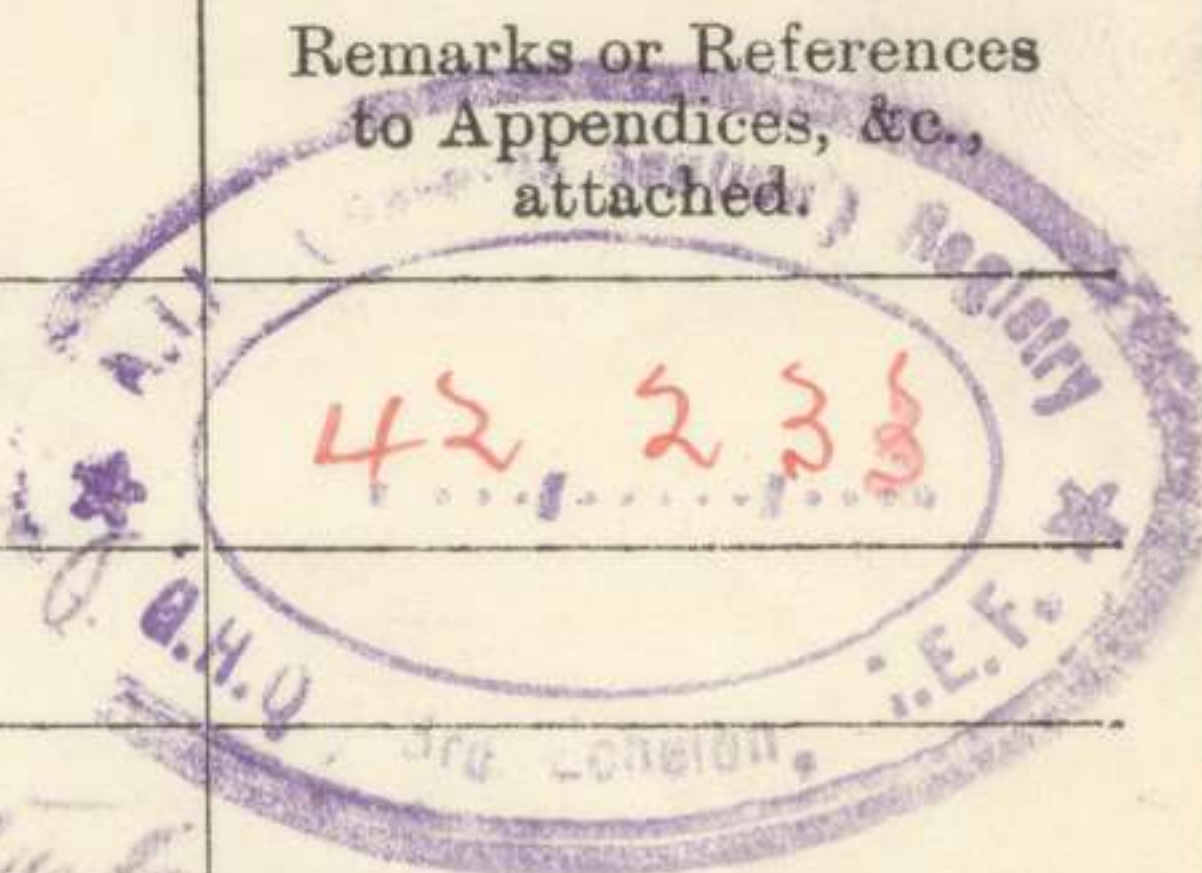
Date.	Place and Time.	8 FIELD AMBULANCE AIF.	Remarks or References to Appendices, &c., attached.
5.3.16	TEL EL KEBIR. 1000	informed by ADMS 5 DIV. that transport of 4 L.H.F. AMB would report to me on its arrival. NCO. sent to station to take show the way. Transport did not report so sent Q.M. to take it over.	
	1500	8 ambulance waggon. 2 Light Transport waggon 1 G.S. waggon handed over with 71 horses & harness.	
	1900	Instructed Q.M. to check & prepare a statement of items & condition on leave 3 days to Cairo.	<p>W. Shipman COL of 8 F. AMB</p>
6 to 8.3.16			
9.3.16	0900	Received instructions that D.D.M.S. would inspect unit 0700 on 10.3.16. This was cancelled later in day.	
	1000	Attended lecture on Sanitation by	

Date.	Place and Time.	8 TH FIELD AMBULANCE	Remarks or References to Appendices, &c., attached.
TEL 9.3.16	TELE KEBIR.	1000 LT COL GRAHAM when I met DDMS. CH. MANIFOLD. 3 rd F. AMB not yet moved. Forwarded memo to ADMS asking for a site to be allotted to the unit.	
		1200 Water details from all units 5 th Div reported without food & equipment. OAM ADMS who instructed me to attach them & make provision until further orders. 4 pan wheelers detailed for sanitary work under Major STURDEE & ENGINEERS each day at 0830. 10.3.16 GEN. HOWSE DMS arrived in Camp. 1100 Additional water details arrived & the whole were inspected by ADMS.	

W. Shephard
Capt
of
8th F. AMB.

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Date.	Place and Time.		Remarks or References to Appendices, &c., attached.
			8 TH FIELD AMBULANCE
10.3.16	TEL EL KEBIR.	0930	Tents struck & blankets spread for an
11.3.16			Routine Training.
12.3.16			DDMS & ADMS 5 TH DIV inspected with details.
			O.C. SANITARY SECTION selected men for the
			SANITARY SQUAD. Passes & equipment checked.
			Saddles horse detailed for use of
			ADMS 5 TH DIV.
13.3.16			Routine Training. Instructed by ADMS
			to transfer 1 riding horse to O.C. 15 TH FAMB
14.3.16			most of the horses require shoeing &
			made application for this to be arranged
			as unit has no appliances. General
			Service wagon in bad repair. Put in
			urgent application for repair to be effected



W. Shepherd
Col
O.C. 8TH FAMB
AIF

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Date.	Place and Time.	Remarks or References to Appendices, &c., attached.
		8 TH FIELD AMBULANCE.
14 3 16	TEL EL KEBIR. 1100	ADAMS L. inspected water detail and instructed re allotment.
15 3 16	" 1000	B Section received 1 st inoculation.
16 3 16	"	1/2 on duty leave leave.
17 3 16	"	Requisition sent in for defences.
18 3 16	"	Advance & Medical & Surgical Equipment.
19 3 16	"	57 Batt. 2 nd inoculation by Capt. Wooster.
20 3 16	" 1000	A. Section Second inoculation.
22 3 16	" 1000	B Section Second inoculation.
		Reaction both Sections Reserve.
23 3 16		Capt. Irving & Lt Robinson 1 day leave.
		Instructions received that 13 & 15 Asc Baking. NZDT. A.O.C.
		1 st DIV ARTILLERY moved parade at ambulance for treatment.



Handwritten notes:
 13 & 15 Asc Baking
 NZDT. A.O.C.
 1st DIV ARTILLERY
 moved parade
 at ambulance
 for treatment.


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Date.	Place and Time.	Remarks or References to Appendices, &c., attached.
24 3.16	TEL EL KEBIR.	8 FIELD AMBULANCE Owing to constant demands for horses by other units the Transport subdivisions have not released the combined training requests. ADMS states that the HQ demands must be met.
25 3.16	"	Instruction received for 8 F. AND L move to Ismaïlia on Monday 27. With 1st Brigade. Issued detailed orders to be prepared to move.
"	0913	Under instructions from ADMS 1 MO. 2 Sph. 8 R. & 7 Tent soldiers B section proceeded by train to Ismaïlia en route for FERRY POST to attend to Sick of 8 TH BRIGADE. Necessary Equipment also sent



Applying to 8 F. AND L

PAGE 19

Date.	Place and Time.	8TH FIELD AMBULANCE AIF	Remarks or References to Appendices, &c., attached.
26 3 16	TEL. EV. KEBIR	All tents struck & equipment packed & loaded.	
27 3 16		Route march to Malsama	
28 3 16		" " to Moascar.	
29 3 16		" " to FERRY POST.	
30 3 16	FERRY POST	A. Section Tent Division opened & informed by ADMS that the unit would be sent to RAILHEAD probably on FRIDAY. Also instructed to be prepared to receive 150 patients from 4th Division at 1430 on 31st	attached ✓ W.P. 8/1
31 3 16	FERRY POST 1600	5th officer arrived and was temporarily attached. Major BLACK CAPT LIND CAPT MOLLISON BEARD. MAPLESTONE.	
		1430 158 patients taken over at ponton	

Appendix 1.

2.2.16



Arrived with Brigade St. Captain
supply of a working party
for following work.

1. Banking up Sweetwater Canal on
South Side to prevent overflows and
consequent stagnation of ponds.
 2. Construction of watering place
100 yards north of Canal for watering
horses to prevent pollution of current.
Size 50' x 50' by 2' with connecting
shrine.
 3. Erection of 3 additional incinerators
for disposal of horse manure.
 4. Sinking 2 new wells & completion
of 1 other well to provide water for
attention of troops & washing clothes.
 5. Clearing up horse left in unsatisfactory
condition by units at Striking Camp.
- 3.2.16. CAPT COATES with 1 Company
79 BATT. AIF arrived 0800 and
completed the work in 2 days to
my satisfaction.

Appendix II 2 2



1. Ascertained from D.W.M.S. (A.H.Q.) that 8th Ambulance would transfer patients to 1st A.C.C.S. at SERAPEUM. Arranged with D.A.D.M.S. 1st Division for patients to be received by 2nd Amb. and 1st A.C.C.S. on 3.2.16 at 1400.
2. Instructions given to strike all tents not absolutely necessary & pack equipment ready for transport. Heavy baggage was transported to rail siding on the afternoon of 3.2.16 for use of ward of Transport of our own. 4 waggon were borrowed from the 1st N.Z. Light Horse. Efficient guard placed on baggage at rail siding and arrangements made with Brigade H.Q. for an Armed guard.
3. At 1700 instructions received to send advance party on 4.2.16 to TEL EL KEBIR. This was countermanded at 2000.
4. All arrangements made to move off at 1 hours notice.

APPENDIX

III



Ferry Post, 31st March 1916.

On 26/3/1916 I attended meeting of C.Os., 14th Brigade. The route was explained, and G.O.C. stated the route decided on. It was stated that to Mahsama the going was good over the desert, but from there on was bad nearer the canal road, but good desert track by making north east.

Routine Orders - Assembly 0700 a.m. All arrangements made for Unit to march from camp at 0630.

Instructions were received to hand over 10 riding horses to H.Q., 14th brigade. As the Unit had only 10 riding horses, I saw A/D.M.S., to whom I explained the position. We saw G.S.O. 1, 5th Division, who said that I was to dismount W.O. and Sergeants, and officers if possible. I handed over 5 horses to 14th brigade. At 1700 the brigade Major (Baker) and A.D.M.S. came to my lines, and I was instructed to hand over another 5 horses. I pointed out that I had no spare transport horses at all, and that 14 horses were being taken from sick lines for wagon team. Under instructions I handed over 1 Ambulance Wagon team, and left wagon behind.

I wrote to A.D.M.S., stating that the shortage of horses would diminish the efficiency of the unit, and disclaiming responsibility regarding deficient attendance on casualties en route through lack of horses. A reply was received just prior to start on 27th March to the effect that my reference to shortages was not understood.

27/3/1916. 0650 marched to Assembly ground through dense fog, which had delayed the start. Assembly ground reached at 0715; column started immediately. A number

A.I.T. (Honor as awarded)
 42.2.33
 Q.H. (Honor as awarded)
 42.2.33

of infantrymen fell out in the first mile, and in the first 2 hours a large number of men had fallen out. I saw Brigade Major, and decided to form a depot for these cases, and send them back to Tel el Kebir. 98 men were passed through the Ambulance to the first Depot, but it is considered that 150 were collected at this Depot.

It was then arranged with the Brigade Major to form a second depot at Quassasin, which was reached at 1130. 120 men were left at the Station with an Infantry Officer. Here Major Baker sustained injury to his leg-through horse falling, - which was attended by me.

1345. March resumed, and men still dropped out, and were sent back to Quassasin, to the number of probably 50.

Mahsama was reached about 1530 by Infantry - 8th Field Ambulance about 1600. Here it was found that the camp site for the 8th Field Ambulance had been altered, with the result that the camel baggage was unloaded at wrong place, and had to be re-loaded, which occasioned great delay in making camp. I saw Brigade Major regarding advisability of continuing next day's march, and was told that R.M.Os. had instructions to medically examine their Battalions and weed out all men unfit to continue the march. This was placed in Orders at Mahsama.

With the exception of 8th Field Ambulance lines, as mentioned above, the camp arrangements were excellent, and the men got settled down without delay.

28/3/1916. March resumed at 0700 in good order. On inquiry from Brigade Major I was told that 60 men had been weeded out by R.M.Os. and left at ~~Quassasin~~ ^{Mahsama}. During the morning up to 1030 probably 40 men dropped out, but from this time on till mid-day halt at 1145 they dropped out by scores, so that the Ambulances could not deal with them. Men were taken on wagon with their pack, and had to be turned out without packs to make room for fresh cases. The result was that the wagons became loaded up with kits. A halt was called, and all kits unloaded and placed in charge



of an infantry Sergeant. At the mid-day halt Taufig, I went to G.O.C. and told him the position. He detailed camel transport for the abandoned kits, and 5 camels were handed over. At this point a long line of sandhills were ahead, and I was informed that the column would march straight ahead, and transport take the road to the right. Not being satisfied, I sent a W.O. to get information, and he reported that the O/C. Transport stated road to right passable for vehicles, and that sand did not extend far, and road curved to the left onto hard gravel. With this I had to be content in the absence of sufficient mounted men, but desired strongly to recommend the left front where there seemed to be a break in the line of sand-hills.

The march was resumed at 1400. Being much concerned about the ambulance wagons I accompanied these, expecting to bring them round behind the troops later on. Difficulties were at once experienced, on account of the lack of spare draught horses, but I picked a better track on the edge of marshes for a few miles, and then saw that it was hopeless to get the transport back to the troops, but concluded that the transport would get through. It transpired that there was no hard track at all until within 1 mile of Moascar. I therefore left the transport and struck across the sand hills north, and picked up what represented the right flank of the column. I found that the Brigade practically did not exist, but was represented by a host of stragglers and recumbent men. As it was impossible to do anything without wagons or equipment I endeavoured to find Headquarters, without success, so made for Moascar. Here I found Headquarters represented by a few Clerks, who stated that the G.O.C. and Staff had gone back along the track. My Medical Officers reported that the condition of most of the troops was very serious on account of lack of water, so I made arrangements with Engineers to supply a water cart to each Battalion, O.S.C.

to send out to troops, but found that it was impossible to get the carts through the camp, as the men rushed them. I then went to the New Zealand Field Ambulance, and asked for horses for water carts, but they could not supply, so I interviewed Colonel Hamilton of N.Z. A.S.C., who promised to send out water carts and transport wagons at once. I saw them ~~matter~~ matter put in training, and again reported to Headquarters, where I found Mr. Ramsay the sole representative. We went through the camp and commandeered some water carts and sent them to be refilled. A water cart passed me, and was immediately rushed by the men. Mr. Hamilton and myself fought the men off it, and despatched it through the lines at a gallop, and it got off. The men in camp were out of hand altogether, and took notice of neither commands nor entreaties on behalf of their Commander.

As nothing further could be done at Moascar, I rode back along the line of march for about 5 miles, and found that the N.Zealanders had turned out with wagon, water-carts and men along the track. I rode along the south side, assisting and directing men to the main track. It was then reported that no more men were being found and that N.Z. mounted men and water carts were well on ahead, so I turned and rode back on the other march flank, but found no men. Many of the men found were in a bad way, but revived greatly after a drink. I reached Moascar at 2100, and reported to Brigade Major. I then inspected Sanitary arrangements of the Camp, which were of a very primitive nature, but sufficient.

WORK OF AMBULANCE - As long as the road was passable, the Ambulance Wagons kept in rear of right flank. Bearer squads were distributed in rear of whole line, and N.Os. (3) in rear of Bearers. Patients were attended to and directed or assisted to the wagon line, where stretcher cases were carried on wagon, or the kit of those who could walk, until able to take packs again. Throughout the whole



two days' trek I have nothing but praise for my men. Although the bearers covered a much greater distance than the Infantry, they finished in good condition, and every man was accounted for. The Transport Subdivision also did splendid work under great difficulties.

MARCH OUT STATE FROM TEL EL KEBIR (Men and Officers)-

On 27th inst. one bearer was sent back to exchange with a wagon Orderly on account of worn boots. Apparently this man was sent back by a combatant Officer to the 1st Depot. This was an error.

MARCHING IN STATE AT MOASCAR. 4 Officers, 143 other ranks. Every man was accounted for. Three men were admitted to N.Z. Field Ambulance, and thence evacuated to No. 4 Field Ambulance. Two have reported to-day.

8th FIELD AMBULANCE. The O.C. and 2 Section O/Cs. (Majors) were the only Medical Officers with the Ambulance, and were kept busy continuously to see that no serious cases were overlooked.

The shortage of riding and draught horses was fatal as far as efficiency of the Unit was concerned. Insufficient mounted men were available for orderly work, not a single draught horse was available, and the teams had to be double banked.

In my opinion it is absolutely necessary for ambulances to be kept at full strength in Officers, men and transport, at all times.

EXPLANATION OF THE MARCH BREAKDOWN.-

1. Troops were not fit, as apparently there were a number of B class men. Amongst others were 2 men just recovered from enteric, and a number just discharged from Hospital. A large number had hammer toe, overlapping toes, bunions, large corns, blistered feet from former march; a percentage of men were too young, and not well developed.
2. Many boots were worn out.
3. There did not seem to be any water discipline, as most of the water bottles were empty early in the day.



4. A large number of men seen could have well continued the march in my opinion, but would not go on.
5. It would have been better to have marched in early morning and late afternoon and evening only.

ROADS AND WEATHER. -

27/3/16. The weather was foggy for 2 hours after the start, then it cleared and became hot, midday and afternoon. The day was certainly trying. Road was undulating, but offered no difficulties.

28/3/16. Very hot day; very trying for any troops. Road to El Tanfig was simply perfect. From El Tanfig route was through very heavy sand hills, practically impassable for wheeled transport.

CONCLUSION -

The march would not have been a very great undertaking for seasoned troops, if carried on mainly during early morning, and late afternoon and evening.

I have never seen men sweat to such an extent as these troops. Many of the packs picked up were almost wet through.

.....Colonel,
O.C., 8th Austn. Field Ambulance A.I.F.