

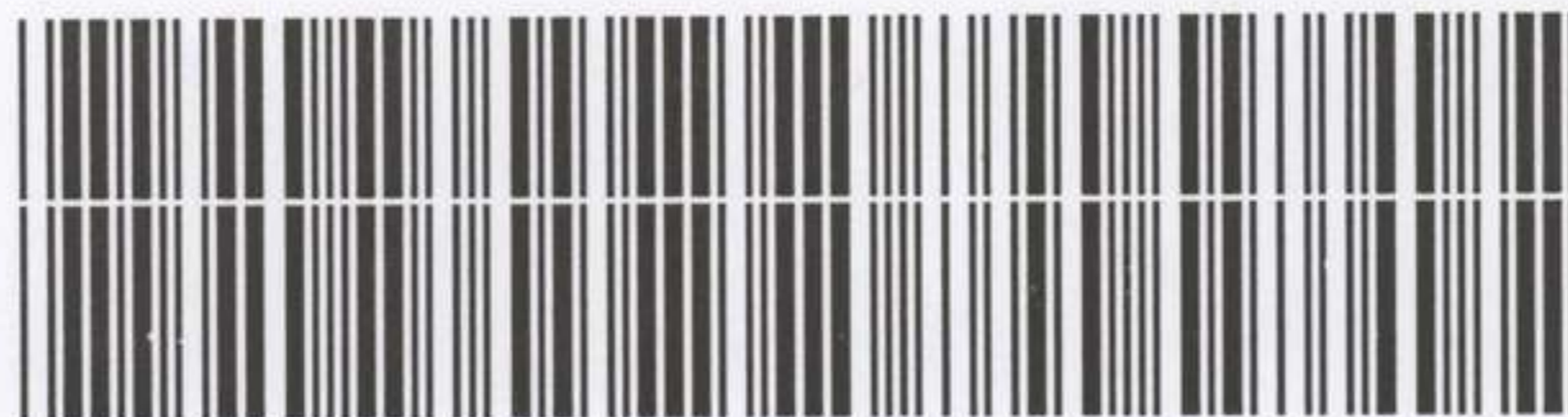
AWM4
Australian Imperial Force unit war diaries,
1914-18 War

Artillery

Item number: 13/54/6

Title: A Battery, Honourable Artillery
Company

July 1917



AWM4-13/54/6

WAR DIARY

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Erase heading not required.)

1/ "A" BATTERY
No. 1
Date 31/7/1917
HON. ART CO.

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.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
UM URGAN (Africa North H. 36 E. III RAFA)	July 1st 1917		- Major O.L. EUGSTER left this unit to command 20 th Bde. R.H.A.	<i>[Handwritten initials]</i>
	2		- Normal day - 1 Officer & 2 O.R.s to Signalling Course at ZEITOUN	<i>[Handwritten initials]</i>
	3		- do Saw Brig/Gen Meredith - 4 th A.L.H. Bde. & he gave me details of the reconnaissance on the 4 th	<i>[Handwritten initials]</i>
See Unit	4		- Moved off behind M.G. Sydn - 4 th Bde at 0200 - Reached the ABU SHAWISH - KHALASA road about 1 mile S. of the FARA BEERSHEBA road (Africa North H. 36 E-IV BEERSHEBA) at 0600 - Saw Major MACKENZIE (Bde/Brig) at Bde H.Q. and he informed me that the ground along the WADI EL ESANI was not suitable for Artillery - Confirmed this myself. Each side of the WADI the ground was extremely broken - and undulating. The surface was stony & many tributaries of the WADI were encountered - Received orders to move N at 0740 - going was good, but stony & extremely hard in places. Brigade halted about 1 1/2 miles S of the T of TAWEL EL HABARI at 0845 & Battery halted about 400' W of the Bde - Brig/Gen MEREDITH sent for me at 0920 from Point 840. He told me that the F.O.O. reported camps visible at 6200' - F.O.O. at the I of EL HATHIRA - Distance F.O.O. to Pt 840 about 2000' - Distance present position of Battery to enemy camps about 11000' -	<i>[Handwritten initials]</i>

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WAR DIARY

or

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1/ "A" BATTERY
No. 2
Date 31/7/1917
HON. ART. CO.

Army Form C. 2118

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
TAWAIL EL HABARI (alt 1 1/2 miles S. of I) Africa North H. 36 E. IV BEERSHEBA	July 4 1917		<p>Brig/Gen. Meredith asked me if it were possible or advisable to bring the Battery up and shell the camp. As this would have meant taking guns up to the point where the F.O.O. was stationed - over extremely rough ground - registered by the enemy, - with the ultimate object of taking on a target at extreme range (6200'), I gave it as my opinion that it was possible but very inadvisable - Returned to the Battery at 1000 - Shells - both H.E. & Shrapnel, - were falling at irregular intervals throughout the day - mostly about 1000' to 2000' NNE of us - Received orders from Bde H.Q. that we would probably be moving back about 1800 - Saw Lt. BROOME, (who had been at the F.O.O. with Col. GRANT) at 1630, - & he told me the Brig/Gen wished me to select positions in order to fire on any enemy troops that might threaten the withdrawal of the Brigade - Selected an O.P. & Bty. position & made ready to open fire - Selected an to retire at 1755 - Moved off W. at 1810 with the Brigade - Arrived WADI GHUZZE (FARA) (Full moon but totally eclipsed) Arrived Arrived in camp UM URGAN 2330 - Hot meal ready for men -</p>	

[Handwritten signature]
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WAR DIARY

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1/ "A" BATTERY
No. 3
Date 31/7/1917
HON. ART CO.

Army Form C. 2118.

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
VM URGAN Africa North H. 36 E. III RAFA	July 5 th 1917	-	Normal day -	
BENI SELA (Same ref)	6	-	Battery left VM ^{UR} URGAN & marched to new camp about 1 1/2 miles E of BENI SELA	
	7	-	29 Other ranks arrived in camp (draft from U.K) - Interviewed each man - I found the whole (with say 3 exceptions) very poorly trained men - Wrote to C.R.A. asking what complaint be lodged in the right quarter - I took over 'A' Battery definitely on this date and posted Capt. C.L. HARRIS to the D.A.C. -	
	8	-	Sent wagons into RAFA to fetch all harness -	
	9	-	B.G.R.A. inspected the horses in the lines at 1100 - Expended approval	
	10	-	Drill order 0530. - C.R.A. came in afternoon and said he wanted to see 'A' Bty & B.A. Coln. in as complete a condition as possible on the reconstructed basis (Part II plus amendments) on the 12 th	
	11	-	Sent men, horses, & harness to Column - & reconstructed Bty. & Coln.	
	12	-	Battery & Column turned out at 1400 for inspection - Conference at Hdqrs 19 th RHA Bde on Aeroplane "shoot" on the 14 th	

Handwritten signatures and initials in the right margin, including several circular stamps.

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1/ "A" BATTERY
No. 4
Date 31/7/1917
HON. ART. CO.

Army Form C. 2118.

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
BENI SELA Africa North H-36 E. III RAFA.	July 13 1917		Drill order 0630 - Arranged details for Firing practice on 14 th -	
		14	- Moved off 0500 for firing practice (Co-operation with aeroplane) Arrived EL GHABI at 0900 - Opened fire at 1000 - Fired 3 Series (63 rounds) Battery returned to camp under B.S.M. - Officer's discussion with B.G.R.A. after the practice -	
		15	- Normal day - D.A.C. ceased to exist as from 1400 today -	
		16	- do - Camp inspection by O.C. 19 th Bde RHA. at 0800 -	
		17	- Drill order 0600 - Sent Lt. BROOME to KANTARA to dispose of old Bty papers & to bring up Ordnance stores that had not been required while on the Provisional Camel Establishment -	
		18	- Interviewed O.C. 19 th Bde RHA. in evening re. move of the R.A. Bde to the beach (MARAKEB)	
		19	- Normal training - gun drill & signalling - Received orders at 1045 to get ready for active operations immediately - Horses unfortunately once I moved off at 1315 - Orders were to go to EL MELEK	

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1/ "A" BATTERY
No. 5
Date 31/7/1917
HON. ART CO.

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
EL MELEK "Africa" North H. 36 E. III RAFA	JULY 19 1917		<p>Reported to O.C. 19th Bde RHA. at 1515 & he told me that the Bty was to follow the 4th Bde. Instructed Lt MACANDREW to bring the Bty on - giving him the direction - Went to the head of the 4th Bde (then moving at a trot) & reported personally to Brig Gen Meredith at 1535. He ordered me to bring the Battery on in the rear of the Bde. I prot. - Rejoined Battery - and crossed WADI GHUZZE at GOZ MABRUK (North H. 36) E. IV BEERSHEBA</p> <p>Found direction of Brigade through orderlies - extending 3 to 3 1/2 miles ahead. Reported personally to Bde Major at 1855 at Point 680 (just NNE of the T of GOZ LAKHLEILAT) Received order to move back to GAMLI for the night at 1930 - Followed Bde. M. G. Sqdn - Reached GAMLI & bivouaced just W of Wadi - Fed men - watered & fed horses.</p>	
	20		<p>Received order at 0245 to saddle up immediately and report to 4th Bde H.Q. when ready - Reported ready at 0320 - Moved off 0340 - Arrived at Pt. 680 (same as above) 0545 - Ground mist favoured the Brigade's advance - Disposed of Battery in a scattered formation - hidden from the N, NE - and E. Issued days rations & forage in order to relieve wagon for drawing further supplies from GAMLI. Fed horses. Sent B & M S back to GAMLI to draw rations &c. Went to Bde Hdqrs. Div. Hdqrs and 19th Bde RHA. Hdqrs - Apparently the enemy had retired.</p>	

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WAR DIARY

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1/ "A" BATTERY
No. 6
Date 31/7/1917
HON. ART. CO.

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Point 680 (refer previous sheet)	JULY 20 1917	1030	Received message from 4 th Bde Hdqrs to get ready to move back to GAMLI Moved off from Point 680 at 1055 - Originally I was given the option of stopping at GAMLI & returning to BENI SELA on the 21 st - but later in the day I was informed that my supplies had been cancelled at GAMLI - & this necessitated returning to my camp. - Horses were somewhat distressed on arrival at GAMLI - watered & fed - Arrived ABASSAN water troughs at 1815 - Reached BENI SELA camp at 1910 -	
	21		- Reveille 0545. Rested men & horses - The latter showed very distinct signs of the last 2 days' trekking -	
MARAKEB abt 1 mile WSW of the M. & on the trail Africa North H-36	22		- Battery & Column moved from BENI SELA to the Beach (MARAKEB) Left camp 0800. watered ABASSAN - Left guns and wagon & amm ^o at a point about 400' S.W. of BENI SELA village (under cover of trees) Marched over sand dunes & pitched camp on beach	
E. III RAFA	23 3d		- Rested horses & men - Both went in the sea daily - 1 Off. & 12 men were left as guard on the Bty guns & wagons at front referred to above - These were changed round every few days -	

J. Keimford Smith MAJOR
COMDG, 1/ "A" BATTERY H. A. G.