

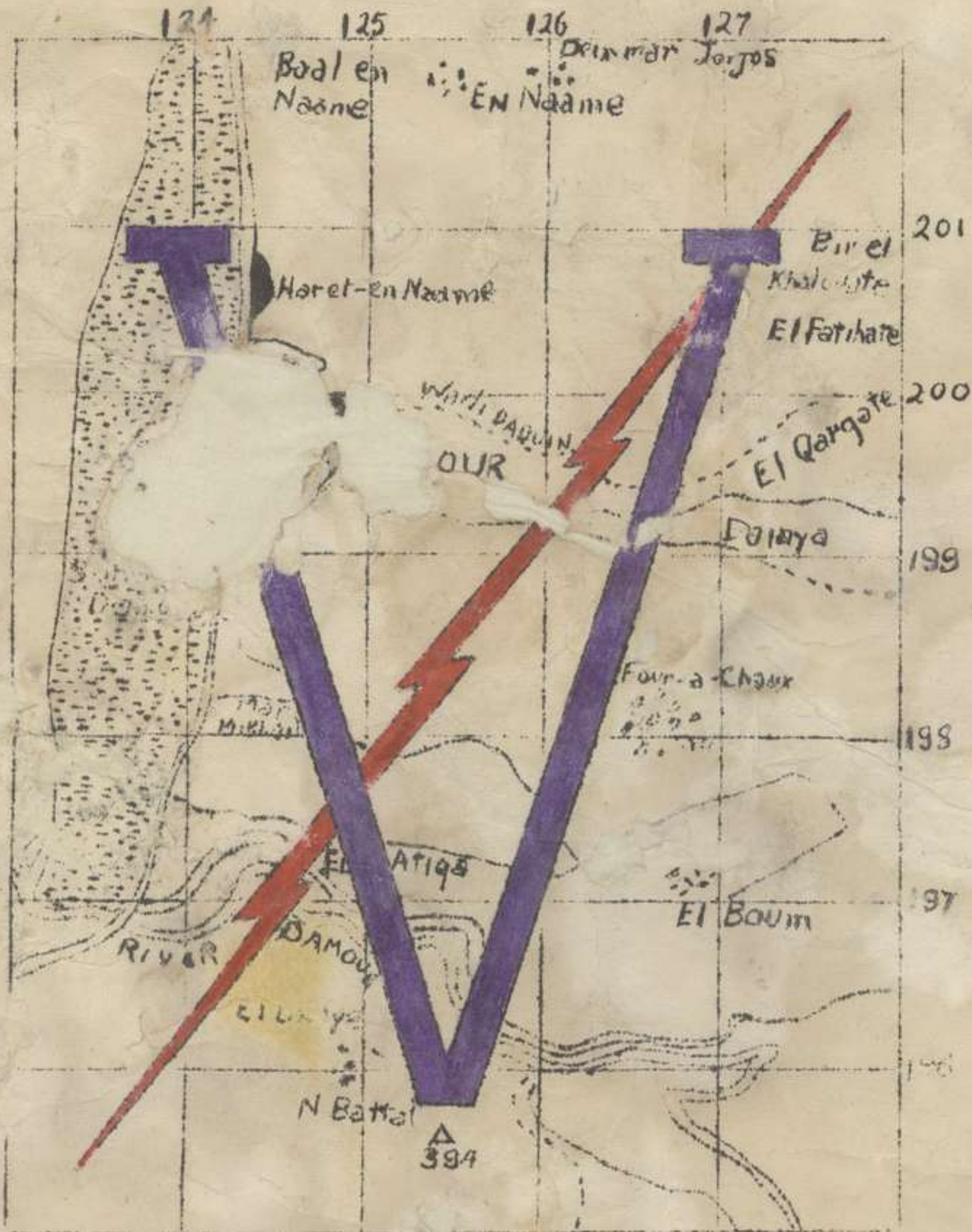
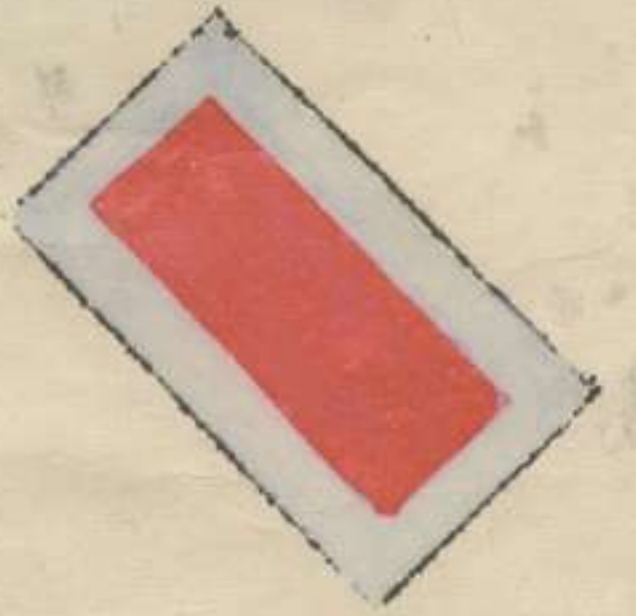
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17 Infantry Brigade
July 1941, Report on Operations

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NO. 21

REPORT ON OPERATIONS IN SYRIA. JULY 1941



17
AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY
BRIGADE



AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE

17 AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY BRIGADE

REPORT ON OPERATIONS IN SYRIA - JULY 1941

I GENERAL REPORT

PART II WARNING ORDERS AND INSTRUCTIONS
REFERRED TO IN PART I

PART III REPORTS OF OPERATIONS BY UNITS
WHILST IN CONTACT UNDER OTHER
COMMANDS

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PART I.

GENERAL REPORT.

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SECRET

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE

17 AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY BRIGADE

REPORT ON OPERATIONS 29 JUN - 14 JUL 1941

SYRIAN FRONT

I took command of 17 AUST INF BDE, which had been
under orders of Major-General A.S. ALLEN, who had been
JUNE, merged with 7 AUST DIV since 12
29 JUNE. of Camp HILL 69 at 0600 hrs

I moved ahead of the column with
my Brigadier Major and Staff Captain, and reported to
Major-General A.S. ALLEN, whose H Q were near TYRE,
at approx 1130 hrs. The Column arrived at
1320 hrs.

DIV orders placed me at HABBOUCHE
which would be the concentration area for my command,
consisting of 2/3 and 2/5 Bns, and 2/3 Pioneer Bn,
but the latter was subsequently moved by DIV to an
area on the coast.

2/3 and 2/5 Bns had been placed under
orders of 7 AUST DIV early in JUNE and one Coy each
had moved fwd on 9/10 JUNE; the remainder of each Bn
went fwd on 19 JUN; 2/3 Bn to DAMASCUS area and 2/5
Bn, less "C" Coy, DEBIA, TRANSJORDANIA; "C" Coy
operated in IERDJAYOUN Sector.

At 0830 hrs on 1 JUNE, I went fwd to
HQ 21 AUST INF BDE with my Brigadier Major where I ob-
tained guides to lead me to a point overlooking
enemy positions at DAMOUR. A good
general view was obtained but the morning light
denied a detailed view of the WADI country.

At 0030 hrs, 1 JUL, guides from
my Intelligence Section met 2/3 Bn and guided them
to their concentration area (ref map BEYROUTH)
124167.

"C" Coy, 2/4 Aust Fd Amb was placed
under my command during the day.

My Intelligence Officer obtained dispositions of 21 AUST INF BDE by direct contact, while I went to HQ 25 AUST INF BDE with my Brigade Major to obtain particulars of operations on the DJEZZINE sector, but I was unable to contact the Brigadier who was out on recce.

In order to get the benefit of the afternoon light, I again looked over the DAMOUR sector and resolved an outline plan which contemplated the movement of my BDE around the right flank of the FRENCH defences, and the blocking of the road NORTH of DAMOUR, which would be subject to DIV approval.

I issued orders that C.O's and Coy Comdrs 2/3 and 2/5 Bns were to look over the area with this plan in mind.

2 "C" Coy
Intell: At 0530 hrs, 2 JULY, 2/5 Bn less
guided into its bivouac area by BDE
personnel.

Arrangements were made to provide canteen goods at once to 2/3 and 2/5 Bns. Pay was distributed and personnel were sent to the beaches in small and regular parties. This had a beneficial result on the troops.

At the request of DIV HQ to ascertain attitude of inhabitants of NABATIYE, Lt WRAY and 6 men were ordered to live in the town. WRAY did an excellent job and the information collected was passed to Lt-Col FURLONG, Political Officer attached to 7 AUST DIV.

I attended a conference at DIV HQ, accompanied by my Brigade Major at 0900 hrs. I submitted my plan for the movement around the flank of the DAMOUR defences which was tentatively accepted in principle.

By mutual arrangements with Bde Comdr, 21 AUST INF BDE, I ordered 2/3 and 2/5 Bns to send fwd small parties of Officers and N.C.O's to live with front line Units in order to learn something of the difficult country leading to River DAMOUR. Some accompanied patrols of units 21 AUST INF BDE in seeking river crossings. This proved of the utmost benefit later.

Should my plan be accepted to carry out the outflanking movement, it was necessary to start the troops as fresh as possible. The

country was extremely rough and progress was reckoned to be NOT greater than 1 mile per hour. It was therefore essential that my force be placed on the high ground in the vicinity of EL HARAM - ER REZANIYE 36 hours before the battle. Although shown in distance from the road as 3 kilos to the former, the best part of two hours was required to cover the distance. With this accomplished, so much less fatigue would be borne by the troops.

I ordered Lt MENZIES to recon the area for Bn bivouac areas and a location for Bde HQ.

Arrangements were made to meet "C" Coy 2/5 Bn during the night of 2/3 JULY on their arrival from MERDJAYOUN area.

3 On 3 JUL, I obtained engineer personnel to instruct Tps 2/3 and 2/5 Bns in the use of "M" Bomb.

G.O.C. 7 AUST DIV called at 1100 hrs and discussed the general situation and plan for DAMOUR, in which it was indicated that our role would be as plan submitted. I called a conference of C.O's at 1500 hrs and outlined the general situation and my proposed plan. I had dictated a verbal appreciation (copy attached) which was the basis for discussion.

The DIV COMD called a conference at HQ, 21 AUST INF BDE, at 1700 hrs which was attended by Brigadier J. STEVENS and myself. The details for the general plan were gone into. I was ordered to elaborate my outline plan. DI was fixed for 6 JULY and the action of NAVY and R.A.F. was outlined.

4 I called a conference of C.O's at 0700 hrs 4 JULY when my Brigade Major issued a draft order in writing for the flank movement. It was issued under this heading for want of a better term as my plan had not yet been fully endorsed. This draft order enabled Bn Comds to work out necessary details.

I met Brigadier STEVENS at his HQ at 0900 hrs when the fire plan was worked out for his attack in collaboration with C.R.A. (Brigadier F. BERRYMAN).

My Brigade Major conferred with G.S.O.I at 0900 hrs on further details. Div

fixed area for "B" Echelon, while my Staff fixed that for "A" Echelon and MULE Park.

During the night 4/5 JULY, 2/3 and 2/5 Bns moved fwd to their assembly area. 2/3 Bn SOUTH of ER REZANIYE in sq 125193; 2/5 Bn in sq 124193; Bde HQ in sq 122193; "B" Echelon Jct Rds BEYROUTH - MERDJAYOUN; "A" Echelon in sq 124187.

Two Coys 2/ Pnr Bn came under command and, on the 21 AUST INF BDE moving fwd, covered COAST ROAD at SAADIYATE and 12194. 1 Sec 2/9 Fd Coy under command remained at 121185 (map ref BEYROUTH SHEET I/200,000).

Important operations were in progress on the right flank controlled by Brigadier S, so I remained for the night at his HQ with my Brigade Major and A/Intelligence Officer.

At 0800 hrs 5 JULY, I moved to my fwd HQ and ordered the establishment of an O.P. at Pt 394 (sq 125195). This was connected with Bde HQ by wireless (No II set) and line. This point overlooked the whole battlefield of DAMOUR and the O.P., controlled by Captain I. LOWEN, acting Intelligence Officer, provided information during the battle of the utmost importance. It was the only sure source of accurate information on the whole front.

In the light of further information concerning the front, and a knowledge of the number of mules available etc., my Brigade Major reduced the outline plan to the form of an Op. Instr. (Op. Instr. No 3 attached).

During the day, and at night, mules with rations, ammunition reserves, etc., moved fwd to Bn localities. Water was plentiful in each locality.

2/3 Bn carried out recce in the vicinity of Pt 459 (sq 126193) and Pt 432 (sq 126194) which would be held if the crossing of River DAMOUR was denied attacking troops.

I was ordered to take over vital areas from 21 AUST INF BDE when they moved to the attack. In order to conform to this instruction, and at the same time maintain concentration in some degree so as not to prejudice

our role, I ordered 2/5 Bn to dispose a Coy to relieve Tps in areas EL FASTEQANIYE, Pt 394 and ES SIYAR. They were ordered to recce Coy area vicinity 12251942 to place a Coy there if ordered to do so. The 2/3 Bn was ordered to be prepared to occupy Fts 459 and 432 and the dispositions of 2 Coys 2/2 Pnr Bn fulfilled all requirements. 2/5 Bn occupied positions above during the late afternoon of 5 JULY.

During the day our area was subjected to intermittent shelling.

In order to maintain security, I ordered 2/3 Bn to picquet ER REZANIYE to prevent movement of ARABS to or from the town.

The C.O's 2/3 and 2/5 Bns carried out personal recce of their areas and the tracks leading toward the river while their Intelligence sections carried out more detailed recces.

The attack by 21 AUST INF BDE started in accordance with plan on 6 JULY. Our O.P. was bombed and shelled while some enemy shelling was directed throughout our area.

Additional mules were sent to units to make up their establishment and wireless sets and balance of ammn was brought fwd to unit areas.

2/3 Bn suffered the loss of their adjutant, who was evacuated sick.

Our fwd O.P., despite heavy shelling and mortar fire, maintained a flow of useful information concerning the progress of the battle which was passed to 7 AUST DIV and 21 AUST INF BDE.

At 1450 hrs, 7 AUST DIV asked if I considered my units could move to the river crossing in daylight. Brigadier 21 AUST INF BDE considered this most inadvisable as the slow moving Tps on the face of the precipitous slopes, in single file, would be a vulnerable target. I advised GI of this view but we were prepared to move; but, if a halt at the river was proposed, it would be wiser to move fwd by moonlight. This was accepted. GI asked for a copy of our "draft order" for which an L.O. was sent from DIV.

At approx 1730 hrs I was ordered

to report to DIV HQ for orders. Some examination was given to the question of one of my Bns strengthening the attack on DAMOUR BANANA GROVE area. I supported the value of my outflanking plan which would probably give better results than a division of forces, part of which would be used to follow through difficulties already proved. G.O.C. and GI supported this view wholeheartedly.

The problem of supporting my attack by Arty resolved itself to concentrations on then unknown enemy locations as they were disclosed. This necessitated an Arty F.O.O. with each unit. Apparently none was available or, if so, experience had proved an inability to maintain lines. As the plan for my attack was based on the value of surprise, it was resolved to accept the support given by O.P.'s, distant though they might be, as the lesser risk.

I returned to my H.Q. at 1935 hrs and signalled a Warning Order to units. I found O's there who had been ordered to report to take orders fwd.

The general plan, now to be put into operation, necessitated a night march down precipitous slopes to River DAMOUR, and thence along a line of track and WADI leading to EL BOUM, which was the start line. The objective was :-

"WOOD PLATEAU" 12620M - DEIR MAR JIRJOS - highground N. of EN NAAME - Road block on COASTAL ROAD.

2/3 Bn were responsible for right flank protection from position held by 2/27 Bn which was hoped to be, and was in fact, WADI DAQOUN. Their objective included WOOD PLATEAU. 2/5 Bn were responsible for line DEIR MAR JIRJOS - Road Block and left flank protection against attack from DAMOUR. The essential consideration was to keep left flank of 2/5 GI clear of M.M.G. and Mortar fire from DAMOUR defences, while it was hoped the high ground on right would provide defilation for the 2/3 Bn advance against enemy action from ABEY area. An axis of advance was laid with left Bn directing. To ensure co-ordination, Lt Col KING was responsible. Bns advanced generally in diamond formation of Coys.

One mule per Coy carried Coy Ammn reserves and 6 mules Bn ammn reserves. Other mules were provided for M.M.G., Mortar, Mortar Ammn and tools. Men carried

48 hours rations, not less than 50 rds SAA, 2 Mills bombs and 1 "Sticky" bomb and water bottles were filled. A No II wireless set for each Bn was carried by mules and "K" Sec Sigs ran a line fwd with each Bn. Failing wireless and line communication, a visual station was established at Ft 394, and Lucas Lamps were used by fwd Bns, but Bde Sig Station was NOT to reply as it faced the enemy. All messages were repeated to ensure them being picked up.

On passing through the fwd positions of 21 AUST INF BDE "B" Sqn, 6 AUST DIV CAV, came under my command. I intended keeping the 2 Coys 2/2 Pnr Bn in their present position and, as there appeared to be little for my Sec of Engrs to do in the advance other than that which could be done by Pnr Pls, I kept them in reserve. On reaching the objective, set out for 2/3 and 2/5 Bns, and on the crumbling of the DAMOUR defences, my plan provided for the exploitation to the high ground at the wireless station KHALDI. I then hoped to obtain a Bty of Field Arty. My arrangements provided for this force to be used for that purpose and arrangements were in hand to lift the 2 Coys of Pnrs. On this Force reaching the line of exploitation, 2/5 Bn were ordered to advance their left flank to provide a firm line.

2/2 Pnr Bn and "F" Sqn 6 AUST DIV CAV became involved in the hard fighting around DAMOUR, consequently DIV ordered me to advance my line of exploitation to a parallel ridge fwd of my objectives and then only on a finite order from DIV.

Op Inst No 4 was drafted and issued. I sent fwd my Brigade Major to elucidate any points as required by Bn Comdrs and to co-ordinate and supervise the march to the river and its passage to the Start Line. Success in this phase was all important. Despite the short distance shown on the map, the roughness of the country would deny his return under 10 hours. From now on it was a case of waiting with complete faith that the plan would be successful, and in the ability of my C.O's and Tps, but no estimate as to when the actual Start Time would be could be made. This was a matter to be determined by the country and the passage to the F.U.F. Col KING, as co-ordinating officer, was empowered to decide this and only when a well organised start could be made.

At 0545 hrs O.F. reported that some of our Tps had crossed the river and others were moving down to the river. Visability was bad. At 0657 hrs another report stated a group of 30/40 men in WADI towards EL BOUM.

At approx 0700 hrs Major BISHOP reached O.P. and reported that 2/3 Bn had crossed the river and, with luck, should be on their F.U.F. at dawn. The head of 2/5 Bn was across the river but two Coys had been held up by mules and got off the track. They were now heading in the right direction. The journey down the slopes and along an ill-defined track in single file was painfully slow and difficult. Mules rolled down the slopes and they, together with Tps, became tangled in existing signal lines. The mules were difficult and their handling a new experience to our Tps, who were forced to attend to their loads frequently. Phone lines were being laid by the signallers but they would probably be an hour behind the Tps. It was then hoped that the advance would commence before 0800 hrs.

At 0735 hrs, G.P. reported Tps still moving fwd toward EL BOUM. Similar messages were repeated at 0826 and 0852 hrs. At 0955 hrs, Major Bishop reported that Tps appeared to move fwd but sat down again. At 1013 hrs fwd Bns were contacted by R/T and asked for Sitrer. At 1027 hrs I was able to contact Pl KING by R/T who reported they were now ready to move fwd. He reported the innumerable delays caused by the extremely rough country leading from the river to EL BOUM, the extreme difficulty in getting mules fwd and the very tired condition of the Tps. He had wisely halted on the F.U.F. to rest and collect Tps and mules before advancing. We were now assured of a well organised advance.

2/3 Bn, leading, made good progress to F.U.F., despite the country and tired troops, who had been in heavy actions around DAMASCUS. They were on their F.U.F. at 0730 hrs. 2/5 Bn was delayed by mules of 2/3 Bn and Tps who had fallen asleep on the track. Their place in the column also caused a considerable gap in time and space. C.O's 2/3 and 2/5 Bns conferred at 0950 hrs when Start Time was fixed for 1030 hrs.

At 1040 hrs Brigade Major reported advance progressing nicely towards WADI ZAOUDE. At 1055 hrs it appeared that the WADI could be crossed only at one Pt across which Tps were moving in single file.

At 1130 hrs Brigade Major reported advance was progressing and was moving E. of NORTH. Slight enemy opposition was noted but was not holding up our Tps. Exact location was difficult to pin down.

2/5 Bn encountered strong enemy opposition between Pts 218 - 212. They had swung left to take advantage of a Spur to

avoid enemy shelling from high ground to right. They reduced the opposition which appeared to be the left flank of fwd enemy defences covering DAMOUR. They then moved to Spur FOUR-a-CHAUX. On reaching the WADIS running N.W. from MAR MIKHAIL to DARAYA, they passed through heavy shell fire directed from OALA (sq 128198) and from the direction of ABEY. At 1730 hrs the last Coy of the Br had reached DARAYA.

2/3 Bn moved in diamond formation of Coys on time. Owing to difficulties with mules, C.O. ordered men to carry SAA up to 300 rds per man besides bombs. They moved fwd and found the high ground on their right provided perfect defilation. The ground to their immediate front and to the left was extremely rough and broken and contact with 2/5 Bn, who experienced the same difficulties, could not be maintained. 2/3 Bn, however, did not encounter enemy resistance up to DARAYA Spur which they reached at 1230 hrs. Here they halted until contact with 2/5 Bn was re-established. Heavy fire in the direction of Pt 560 indicated 2/27 Bn were engaging the enemy. Heavy M.M.G. fire was heard in WADI DAQOUN and, as it was thought that 2/5 Bn were facing enemy resistance, a 3" mortar was sent fwd to help. It was discovered that 2/14 Bn were in action and did not require assistance.

C.O. 2/3 Bn decided to push on and secure necessary Pts to fulfil his role of flank protection. The leading Coy occupied EL QARGATE feature while an advance was made on Pt 335, including KHEURBE el BIAR feature. This ground was occupied by 1500 rds.

When the last Coy 2/5 Bn arrived at DARAYA, C.O. conferred with his officers, when it was decided that the physical state of the Tps denied further advance that day. 2/14 Bn had been engaged in WADI DAQOUN and considerable fighting had taken place on the front across which 2/5 Bn were to advance. This factor also forced the decision.

Communications with BDE had been difficult as lines were continually cut, and wireless could only be used at halts. 2/3 Bn used visual effectively in all cases but one.

At 1745 hrs I gained contact with C.O. 2/5 Bn by phone. He outlined the situation and stated his intention to remain where he was for the night, supported by the strong factors forcing this decision.

He informed me that he had contacted an Arty F.O.O. with 2/27 Bn, who would give him supporting fire in the morning, but he was unable to do so then on account of a task in hand. Col KING sprained his ankle two days before the attack and by almost super-human efforts continued in the battle. I ordered the advance to continue to the objectives at once for the following reasons :-

- (a) Surprise was our chief weapon. It was necessary to press this advantage.
- (b) The factor which would achieve the greatest results in the battle was the seizing of our objectives and the establishment of a Road Block W. of EN MALE. This surrounded enemy forces in DAMOUR.
- (c) The enemy had no doubt discovered the meaning of our advance and would occupy positions during the night to counter our move.
- (d) It was better to be brutal and force Tps to endure further strain than that already endured. Tired men who had won through were better than dead men, killed in storming occupied positions.

Lt-Col King obeyed instantly. I held the move until I was able to verify the position of the Arty F.O.O. This was done through my Arty Liaison officer who arranged with C.R.A. that this officer would accompany 2/5 Bn; who handed over one mile of wire to assist him in his task of obtaining Arty support.

At 2005 hrs the NAVAL L.O. called and I suggested tasks :-

- (a) Watch and engage enemy movements in area KARACOL.
- (b) Engage known enemy Btys in ABEY area.

Arrangements were also made at about the same time with L.O., R.A.F., to beat up roads to the EAST.

C.O. 2/3 Bn carried out several minor operations in the vicinity of the area he now held, part of which was to assist 2/14 Bn in their

fight in WADI DAQOUN.

At 1745 hrs the enemy appeared to be preparing a counter attack on the area occupied by the left Coy. Heavy M.G. fire was directed on our troops but the attack was broken up by determined action.

At 1900 hrs a further attack appeared to be developing but vigorous action defeated this also.

2/5 Bn were later observed moving fwd in single file across WADI DAQOUN and, on darkness settling down, and in view of the obscure position, C.O. 2/3 Aust Inf Bn decided to halt for the night. He reported this by visual but it, unfortunately, did not get through.

C.O. 2/3 Aust Inf Bn, however, continued to cover right flank.

C.O. 2/5 Aust Inf Bn moved off to his objectives at 1930 hrs. The crossing of WADI DAQOUN was most difficult and was accomplished in single file, after which diamond formation was adopted. The movement was met by heavy enemy M.G. fire. Enemy Tps were attacked and the M.G. fire was silenced.

Tps were now traversing most difficult country and five ridges had to be crossed to reach objective. Difficulty was experienced in both progress, keeping troops awake. The white building of DEIR MAR JIRJOS stood out in the clear moonlight and was the point for the axis of advance.

On reaching the WADI immediately SOUTH of DEIR MAR JIRJOS our Tps came under heavy M.G. fire. This was quickly silenced by bold action. Another Coy moving across the WADI to the right met strong opposition and a "Dog Fight" ensued when the enemy were cleaned out, leaving 4 - 75 mm guns, 8 M.M.G's and 3 prisoners.

DEIR MAR JIRJOS was occupied at 0200 hrs on 8 JUL and "D" Coy moved out to secure the high ground fwd of EN NAAME. Some fighting occurred here and M.M.G. positions on the ridge were attacked on flank and in rear. A French Colonel and his Staff were captured. By dawn 8 JUL the high ground DEIR MAR JIRJOS - EN NAAME was in our hands together with the control of tracks and WADIS in that vicinity.

Bn HQ was in touch with BDE by phone and wireless. The left flank was guarded against attack from the direction of DAMOUR.

The night advance of 2/5 Aust Inf Bn was a mixture of scrambling over terrifically rough country and a series of "Dog Fights" with enemy elements up to what appeared to be Coy or 2 Coy strengths. At times sections and Pls appeared to be missing completely as they were lost sight of in folds and ravines. Some men did actually drop from sheer exhaustion, as was experienced also by 2/3 Aust Inf Bn. Others lost their way but found their units. The total fighting strength of both Bns combined barely exceeded 600 men, but the fire power was equivalent to two Bns. Sections consisted usually of 1 Bren gunner, 1 Tommy gunner and 1 spare. Some magnificent acts of gallantry and good soldiering were enacted by 2/5 Aust Inf Bn during the night and early morning. M.M.G. nests and individual guns were outflanked or attacked from the rear. Tanks were stalked and bombed and their crews driven off or killed.

When 2/3 Aust Inf Bn crossed WADI DAQC on the afternoon of 7 JUL, it was impossible to convey the guns of M.M.G. Pl (attached) together with 1 - 3" mortar. They were tactically deployed for defence until arrangements could be made to get them across. At 1800 hrs they opened fire on enemy in the vicinity of Pt 560. At 0600 hrs 8 JUL, a strong enemy attack on DARAYA developed from the direction of Pt 560. All M.M.G. and 3" mortar engaged the strong enemy attack which was driven back with heavy casualties.

At dawn C.O. 2/3 Aust Inf Bn utilised every means to contact 2/5 Aust Inf Bn which he accomplished.

At the same time the advance to fwd objectives was started. Two Coys moved to secure WOOD KNOLL and the front proper in that area. They continued the line occupied on the left by 2/5 Aust Inf Bn.

Another Coy pushed fwd to occupy Pt 569 and the Reserve Coy sent a Pl to BARE FEATURE immediately S. of Pt 569 (sq 128200).

On completion of these important tasks, C.O. 2/3 Aust Inf Bn conferred with C.O. 2/5 Aust Inf Bn when dispositions were exchanged.

The Pl sent to occupy BARE FEATURE encountered enemy resistance. O.C. "A"

Coy then attacked with the balance of his Coy. The Tps were now extremely fatigued and their advance up the bare slopes was met with enemy M.G. fire. The only cover was found among the rocky outcrop. Packs were dumped and the men rested prior to the attack which developed at 1430 hrs.

On reaching the summit of BARE FEATURE, an enemy battery was located 500 yds away near BAOUAROTHE. L.M.G's were trained on this Bty, which was able to engage our Tps over open sights, and all movements by our Tps discouraged until dark. Under cover of darkness, and supporting fire from L.M.G's "A" Coy attacked the Bty. The enemy endeavoured to extricate the guns but five were captured while 4 guns and most of the crew escaped. This was a brilliant piece of work.

During the late afternoon of 7 JUL and most of 8 JUL, 21 AUST INF BDE were engaged in heavy fighting in the EL BOUM area, particularly on feature 560. This created difficulties for 2/3 Aust Inf Bn in bringing fwd supplies, stores etc from their dump near EL BOUM. Some instances of super-human effort were noted in men manhandling SAA, bombs and the wireless set across this terrific country, rendered necessary by the inability to get mules fwd without heavy casualties.

At 1100 hrs 8 . . . contacted 2/5 Aust Inf Bn to assure the p . . . g of Rd Block NORTH of DAMOUR to prevent enemy escaping to the NORTH. In view of the pressure of 21 AUST INF BDE on the BANANA GROVE, the SOUTH of the TOWN and from WADI DAQOUN to the WEST, I ordered a patrol to move from the Rd Block SOUTH on to the TOWN.

At 1230 hrs "D" Coy moved to establish a strong block at approx 1242202L. Some enemy were observed under a bridge. O.C. Coy quickly decided to attack with a Pl while the other two would give covering fire and exploit the position gained. After a very sharp encounter the position was carried and a number of casualties inflicted on the enemy. The enemy gathered A.F.V's and Tps for a counter-attack which they launched with great determination. Our Tps fought back, but were forced to give some ground, but inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy who pressed fwd with great gallantry. The line was down to ARTY but eventually F.O.O. got through. Lt-Col KING was posted in a position to watch the progress of the engagement and, when the line was through to Arty, asked for a concentration from the Regt. This was quickly brought

down and destroyed the efforts of the enemy. It is thought that this action led to the collapse of DAMOUR. Our weakness in numbers, and the length of front and flank held, denied the covering of the beach which was fringed with trees and walls. A number of enemy Inf escaped along the sandy beach.

At 1155 hrs my fwd O.P. reported Tp movement from the direction of EN NAAME towards DAMOUR, supported by Mortar fire. At 1215 hrs it was reported that the mortar barrage had reached the N. end of the TOWN and had increased in intensity. It's movement was towards the centre of the TOWN. I reported this to DIV.

When passing general information to Brigadier STEVENS he informed me that his Tps would be withdrawn from the SOUTH of the TOWN and the BANANA GROVE, when both would be subjected to an intense Arty bombardment. At 1355 hrs I passed this to 2/5 Aust Inf Bn and called for report on any of their Tps near or in DAMOUR. The attack, it's starting point, and direction as noted by the O.P. indicated that it might be a Coy of 2/5 Aust Inf Bn. At 1510 hrs, L.O. with 2/5 Aust Inf Bn gave Coy location approx 12471998, which was interpreted to be Coy 2/5 Aust Inf Bn.

At 1525 hrs, I re C.R.A. and requested that NORTH end of T NOT bombarded as it appeared that or OUL, were then in that area. The ready co-operation of C.R.A. at this late hour (5 minutes before the bombardment) was appreciated very much.

At 1700 hrs DIV phoned and advised that an enemy force of 700 were advancing from direction of ABEY towards our NE sector and that they were 1 1/2 hours march from that locality when first reported.

From my first appreciation, I had viewed this area as tender and liable to an enemy counter attack. I ordered 2/5 Aust Inf Bn to place nearest Coy to 2/3 Aust Inf Bn under it's command.

When reporting the enemy attack on the Road Block at 2350 hrs, the message received from 2/5 Aust Inf Bn stated the position to be at NORTH end of DAMOUR. This left little doubt that a Coy of 2/5 Aust Inf Bn was in that area. Communications with fwd HQ, 2/5 Aust Inf Bn were difficult owing to cut lines and long spaces of "out of touch" with them was

experienced. DIV Arty were to bombard DAMOUR during the night. I again asked that the N. end of the TOWN be omitted as it appeared that our Tps were there and contact with them was unobtainable. C.R.A. again helpfully assisted and that area was omitted.

No Coy of ours was ever there, and these coincidences in messages, indicate the difficulties in passing and obtaining exact information in battle.

No further action of importance took place that day. C.O. 2/3 Aust Inf Bn acting in his vigorous way consolidated his area. Lt-Col King did likewise, particularly in strengthening his Road Block.

The fight continued for Pt 560 where 2/27 Aust Inf Bn had been heavily engaged most of the day. At 0025 hrs 9 JUL, 2/3 Aust Inf Bn reported enemy troops observed approaching his sector from the WEST.

At 0215 hrs I reported our dispositions in detail to 7 AUST DIV.

From early morning, 9 JUL, our O.P. reported less and less activity in the DAMOUR area and later the movement of our M.T. through the TOWN.

In the light of reports, I sent my Staff Captain on recon to the TOWN area in order to find suitable routes to deliver a hot meal to our troops. At 1000 hrs I ordered my I.O. to select a site for BDE HQ in a suitable area S. of EN NAAME. Instructions were given Units Comds to place wounded at convenient points for Fd Amb to pick up.

Our flank post covering Pt 569 obtained information from local quarters that enemy had abandoned ABEY. At 1307 hrs I passed this to DIV.

When G I 7 AUST DIV visited my HQ at 1700 hrs 8 JUL, he issued the following instructions :-

- (1) On the fall of DAMOUR, 17 and 21 Aust Inf Bdes would consolidate on the line of their objectives.
- (2) The area would be mopped up. 17 Aust Inf Bde responsible for area NORTH of WADI DAQOUN (incl); 21 Aust Inf Bde SOUTH of WADI DAQOUN (excl).

- (3) The proposed role for 17 Aust Inf Bde, starting 24 - 48 hrs after the fall of DAMOUR, would be to gain contact with the enemy along COAST ROAD. Role 21 Aust Inf Bde, commencing simultaneously, would be an advance NORTH via ABEY. 21 Aust Inf Bde to relieve our Tps on flank SOUTH of WADI DAQOUN.
- (4) No further movement without a direct order from 7 AUST DIV.

This was confirmed by DIV O. Instr. No 20, and by telephone.

Our previous instructions were to exploit to parallel E.W. ridge, NORTH of ridge DEIR MAR JIRJOS, but not without further instructions. In order to securely occupy the former, Col King was obliged to cover the latter in his initial dispositions. Our gun positions were too far back to give adequate support so it was arranged with Lieut-Col O'BRIEN, 2/5 Aust Fd Regt, to move some of his guns fwd of DAMOUR River as soon as DAMOUR was clear.

At 1230 hrs 9 JUL I asked 7 AUST DIV for any information they might possess regarding enemy dispositions on COAST RD up to KARACOL.

At 1300 hrs 21 AUS DE advised that 2/2 Aust Pnr Bn was appr le ahead of our F.D.L's. I report to 7 AUST DIV at 1307 hrs. I again contacted 7 AUST DIV at 1326 hrs and suggested that I take over that area in accordance with my original plan. At 1334 hrs Lt-Col O'Brien reported he had guns at KHALDE. Things were now getting a bit mixed. At 1342 hrs I contacted G I by phone and advised him of the guns at KHALDE which were supporting 2/2 Aust Pnr Bn and Sqn 6 Aust Cav. I was informed of some misunderstanding which had caused this. I was instructed to take over the area and straighten the matter out.

1 Tp 6 A/T Bty 2/2 A/T Regt, 2 Tps Carriers "B" Sqn 6 Aust Cav, 1 Bty 2/5 Aust Fd Regt and 1 Sec 2/9 Fd Coy came under command. I was ordered to relieve 2/2 Aust Pnr Bn and place them in an area where they could obtain some rest.

At 1402 hrs I went fwd with an L.O. and D.R. and found the advanced section of our guns at KARACOL (not KHALDE), and there was advised of the location of HQ, 2/2 Aust Pnr Bn. C O. 2/2 Aust Pnr Bn informed me that he had

his Tps in position at 126204, and he understood a Coy of 2/5 Aust Inf Bn were being placed somewhere by Lt-Col R. King, who was on recce with C.R.A. I eventually found Lt-Col King, by L.O., at his HQ, DEIR MAR JIRJOS. He reported to me at Col MONAGHAN's H.Q. at 1605 hrs.

I ordered Lt-Col King :

- (1) To relieve 2/2 Aust Pnr Bn and placed supporting Tps, as above, under his command; Arty was excepted which was in support.
- (2) I left full discretionary powers to him to select ground as it appeared that area occupied by Pioneers was commanded by close higher ground.
- (3) Patrolling was to be active.
- (4) There would NOT be any move EAST of CHOUEFATE without DIV authority.
- (5) Coy placed under command 2/3 Aust Inf Bn to return to 2/5 Aust Inf Bn next morning.
- (6) Every advantage would be taken to use CAV to obtain and maintain contact with enemy.

At 1845 hrs I left DIV HQ to have position of command and role defined.

At 2215 hrs Col King reported the area occupied by 2/2 Aust Pnr Bn to be unsuitable. He had reced a line fwd of that area, which was not so far forward as reported, and asked for direction. I ordered him to occupy fwd area which line was taken up during the night. 2/3 Aust Inf Bn was advised of movement of 2/5 Aust Inf Bn on their left flank.

At 2310 hrs I worked out our requirements for R.A.F. support, by strafing roads fwd and to the EAST, which was passed to Air L.O.

At 0900 hrs on 10 JUL, I visited Col KING at his HQ. The tactical situation was discussed and I gave him the following instructions :-

- (1) To occupy "RUINS" feature 12762043 with his right flank Coy. Advance along COAST RD to block and then take up a line between these two points. "RUINS" feature appeared to be of value as an O.I. for our Arty.

- (2) On obtaining close contact with the enemy, patrols to be sent out to find enemy left flank and obtain an estimate of his strength. Additional Arty was placed in support of 2/5 Aust Inf Bn and now consisted of 2/5 Aust Fd Regt and 1 How Tp, 6-in How Bty. At 0700 hrs (approx) enemy tanks were engaged by our Arty in the vicinity of wireless mast.

I then ordered 2/3 Aust Inf Bn to retain garrison at Ft 569 and establish Coy localities at :-

- (1) 12762015 from which standing patrols would be thrown out to cover approaches at 12852022.
- (2) 12782032 with standing patrols at 12852026 and 12832030.

This gave complete cover to front and flank. One Coy was kept in reserve at DEIR MAR JIRJOS. All points SOUTH of Pt 569 were taken over by 21 AUST INF BDE.

C.O. 2/5 Aust Inf Bn worked out his plan and fixed ZERO for 1530 hrs, when he advanced astride the Rd under cover of an Arty barrage. The delay was necessary in order to permit Arty getting to position and working out their arrangement. At 1610 hrs our Tps came under heavy enemy arty and mortar fire, which, however, did not hold up their advance. All Coys were moving fwd in good order, with the leading Coy close to the Rd block, which was much nearer the wireless mast than reported. It's location was 12652061. At 1620 hrs "B" Coy reached buildings near Rd block and came under heavy M.M.G. fire from enemy pillboxes at 12652062. The Coy, less Pl, took shelter in the buildings, but the Pl on ridge 12662057 was pinned down by M.G. and Mortar fire for 2½ hrs.

An officer, with the troops in the building, discovered that the loophole in the Pillbox, from which enemy M.G. was pinning them down, could be engaged from a window on the left wall of one of the buildings. He obtained a left handed shot, who registered direct hits on the loophole, which forced the enemy to retire and thus relieve the situation. C.O. then ordered Tanks and Carriers fwd to give fire support to pull out Pl on ridge.

Positions as follows were taken up for the night :-

"A" Coy 12682053
"D" Coy 12662055
"B" Coy 12642058
"HQ" Coy 12652048
"C" Coy 12652043.

Lt-Col King had conducted this action most brilliantly.

A remarkable incident arose indicating the necessity to check information during battle. An Arty O.F., seeing the movement of other Tps, which he mistook for enemy, reported "B" Coy 2/5 Aust Inf Bn surrounded by enemy. This report reached me but I reported to DIV "One Coy 2/5 Aust Inf Bn has struck a sticky patch." The report of the Coy "surrounded by enemy, gallantly fighting their way out with the bayonet" reached DIV HQ. Gallantry of the highest order had been displayed by all Coys of not only 2/5 Aust Inf Bn but 2/3 Aust Inf Bn also, but we couldn't claim the reported distinction.

A special L.O. from DIV HQ arrived at 0130 hrs 11 JUL with orders based largely on this affair. I was ordered to secure Pt 13052043 with 2/3 Aust Inf Bn, but discretionary powers were given me as to the method. The country in this area, and leading to it, was frightfully rough and I knew that Tps sent on this move, even in daylight, would take 6/8 hours to reach the Pt, during which time they would not be available for any operation.

I ordered C.O. 2/3 Aust Inf Bn to conform to following dispositions :-

- (1) 1 Coy Pt 13052043
- (2) 1 Coy in area 12982029
- (3) Left Coy to remain on position at 12782032.

Move to commence at first light. In order to keep contact with Coy moving to Pt 13052043 I ordered my "K" Sec Sigs to establish a visual Stn at Pt 569, and Coy moving fwd to be equipped with Lucas Lamp and Sig personnel. A line connected Pt 569 with BDE HQ. Coy was ordered to report progress at every opportunity. This plan worked fairly well and kept me in some touch with the movements of the Coy. The move commenced at dawn 11 JUL.

I ordered 2/2 Aust Pnr Bn to be prepared to move at an hour's notice. My Staff Captain arranged for transport from our own resources to lift them if required.

During the night of 10/11 JUL the

enemy were very jumpy. They shelled and mortared our fwd positions. This continued throughout the morning of the 11 JUL. Added to this was the fire from heavier guns, which appeared to be from Coastal Btys at BEYROUTH.

At 0615 hrs 11 JUL, I visited Lt-Col King and discussed the general situation. I ordered him to continue his pressure on the enemy.

C.O. 2/5 Aust Inf Bn ordered patrols fwd from his right Coys, but all movement was met with M.G. and Rifle fire.

During the morning, several reports came from 2/3 Aust Inf Bn indicating a general enemy withdrawal in the EAST. It was evident that enemy troops had withdrawn from the area ALEY - KAFFA MATTA. These reports were regular and most valuable, all of which were passed to DIV.

At 1230 hrs 2/5 Aust Inf Bn reported that 2 French tanks operated by Cav Regt had been hit by shellfire.

From approx 1100 hrs, the sound of enemy shell and mortar fire had reduced, until, at approx 1215 hrs, the front was silent. This indicated a withdrawal. Contact was made with our L.O. with 2/5 Aust Inf Bn, who was instructed to pass order to press fwd boldly with patrols.

At 1250 hrs L.O. reported patrols from all Coys had gone out and had not encountered enemy opposition.

At 1350 hrs 2/5 Aust Inf Bn reported good progress by patrols and enemy had vacated his forward positions. The area along COAST ROAD, N of Rd Block, was heavily mined.

I then ordered Col King to organize fighting patrols to push forward along his whole front. As tactical features were secured by patrols, so Coys would move fwd to these localities. The object was CHOUAIFATE and, on it's occupation by our Tps, blocks would be established at Rd June N. of TOWN and on high ground on S.E. RD, SOUTH of TOWN.

At 1505 hrs I placed reserve Coy 2/3 Aust Inf Bn under command C.O. 2/5 Aust Inf Bn,

and at 1615 hrs, ordered 2/2 Aust Pnr Bn to be ready to embuss for fwd move. They moved to area 12422005.

At 1704 hrs enemy Arty opened fire on Rd Block area, At 1710 hrs 2/5 Aust Inf Bn reported strong enemy opposition. After a good deal of fighting between our patrols and the now strong enemy resistance, Col King decided to withdraw his patrols. I concurred with this decision and called off active operations for the night. The Tps, who had been engaged without rest since the night of 6 JUL were, in my opinion, not fit to push fwd against enemy defences so strongly held.

Little information had been received during the afternoon of the progress of the two Coys 2/3 Aust Inf Bn moving towards their advanced localities, on the right of 2/5 Aust Inf Bn. At 2010 hrs C.O. 2/3 Aust Inf Bn reported that the leading Coy had encountered strong enemy opposition about 12982031 and the other Coy had reached area approx 12982027, where they mutually supported one another.

It was evident that we were probably up against the outer defences of BEYROUTH which were held in strength.

It had been reported before the DAMOUR operations commenced that the plantation N. of Road Block consisted of pinetrees. I had then determined to burn it on reaching it's SOUTHERN edge and had then informed G I of my intentions. Patrols of 2/5 Aust Inf Bn, who had entered it's SOUTHERN and WESTERN outskirts, reported Pines and dry pine needles on the ground. This information led Col King to suggest firing it with incendiary bombs. I then arranged through L.O., R.A.F., to do so early next morning. The proposal was to fire it's SOUTHERN edge and, at the same time, a belt about the centre. This would, it was hoped, not only force the withdrawal of the enemy, but also prevent the use of his A.F.V's which had been seen by our Tps in this area. It was later disclosed that the outskirts only were Pines and most of the plantation consisted of Olive Trees.

At 1852 hrs I reported the general situation to G I, 7 AUST DIV. We discussed the possibility of an advance next morning under cover of an Arty barrage. The enemy front disclosed by the operations of 2/3 and 2/5 Aust Inf Bns, and the strength of it's defences, offered little hope of my slender forces succeeding under cover of an Arty barrage. The surprise caused by a bush fire was considered to be the only chance of success.

At 2025 hrs G I advised me that a communication was on it's way from DIV HQ. In the meantime further preparations for activities next morning were not required.

At approx 2230 hrs the letter from DIV arrived with details for the ARMISTICE which was expected to terminate hostilities at midnight. A further message would confirm this information.

At 2240 hrs L.O., 7 AUST DIV, arrived with message confirming the ARMISTICE and that hostilities would cease at 0001 hrs 12 JUL.

We regretted we missed the chance to try out the effect of a bush fire in war.

Desultory Artillery and Mortar fire from enemy positions continued until approx 0140 hrs. This was probably due to information not reaching French Tps. It is doubtful if my right Coys were informed before dawn. The difficulties of the country would cause this.

CASUALTIES

	<u>KILLED</u>		<u>WOUNDED</u>		<u>MISSING</u>	
	<u>OFFERS</u>	<u>ORS</u>	<u>OFFERS</u>	<u>ORS</u>	<u>OFFERS</u>	<u>ORS</u>
<u>Battle of DAMOUR</u> 6 - 9 JUL	2/3 Bn	- 1	- 3	-	-	-
	2/5 Bn	- 5	- 2	-	-	-
<u>Battle of KHALDE</u> 10 - 12 JUL	2/3 Bn	- -	- 4	-	-	-
	2/5 Bn	- 8	2 16	-	-	2
TOTAL		- 14	2 25	-	-	2

GRAND TOTAL KILLED 14
WOUNDED 27
MISSING 2 (Since returned)
43

COMMENTS AND LESSONS.

(1) NUMBERS AND FIRE POWER.

Circumstances forced me to fight with 2 Bns of very weak strength. This had been caused by losses in GREECE and the present campaign. Each Bn shed numbers to provide the cadre for building up a sister unit, lost in CRETE, which was ordered before leaving command 6 AUST DIV. The total fighting strength of both units combined hardly exceeded 600 all ranks who went into battle. This caused Bn Comdrs some concern until a careful examination revealed that there was little short in fire power for two Bns. The result was remarkable, i.e.

- (a) Small Coys and Pls were handled easier in the extremely rough country than had they been full strength. Command and control was better.
- (b) Not only were total casualties reduced but the percentage of casualties were minimised.
- (c) Fire power was not depleted and is all important in battle.

(2) BATTLE SENSE.

The personnel taking part in the battle consisted largely of well trained and battle experienced men. This resulted in :-

- (a) Cover was used to the greatest advantage.
- (b) Dash was exemplified, NOT by rushing fwd over exposed country, but by cunning and skill in outflanking and stalking the enemy.
- (c) A complete disregard for enemy numbers and an assured belief in their own capabilities.
- (d) An ability to rise above physical disability and fatigue particularly when the enemy was encountered.
- (e) An acquired military education among all ranks, which led to a clear understanding of objectives, axis of advance and the job required by their Bn.
- (f) A very high standard of training and experience on the part of the officers. Their quick appreciations, rapid decisions and dash in leading Tps was outstanding.

(3) FAITH.

I knew quite well the difficulties attending the execution of the task given my Tps. I was certain they could accomplish the task. I had complete faith in the ability of my Bn Comdrs. I set the task, apportioned supporting Tps, and carefully watched the progress of the battle. I accepted responsibility for decisions and orders of an almost callous nature but I never interfered with the Bn Commander. A maxim, if it be so, that should always be present in a Commander's mind is "I selected, or concurred with the selection of this Bn Comd. I did so because I had faith in his character and ability. If I interfere with the execution of the role I have given him, I demonstrate a hesitancy in that faith." The chief factor towards our success in these operations was that I had faith in them and clearly indicated it by action. They had faith in me, their leader, and we each knew this.

(4) COMMUNICATIONS.

The country denied progress by M.T. and movement by foot was painfully slow. The operation depended upon good communications and a rapid passing of events to the Comd. Failure to produce this would, in all probability, entail complete failure. The methods adopted were :-

- (a) WIRELESS. Each Bn carried fwd by mule a wireless set (No II). When installed, communication by speech could be maintained except during the middle of the night. R/T gave direct contact with Bn Comdr for both my Brigade Major and myself. This was used extensively.
- (b) LINE. A special contrivance was fixed to the mule pack saddle which aided the laying of a line behind each Bn Comdr. This lagged at times owing to the nature of the country to be traversed. The line was cut at times but it was used extensively and could be tapped into while on the move.
- (c) VISUAL. Each Bn carried a LUCAS LAMP and a central BDE Sig Centre was established, but only as a receiving centre, as it faced the enemy. The use of visual was highly successful and the only failures recorded were those when the sender selected a light background. It is essential that the background be dark or in a shadow.
- (d) LIGHT SIGNALS. Verrey lights were used to indicate the passage of defined pts or localities. All failed as no

background was procurable.

(5) BDE O.P.

A carefully chosen BDE O.P. is of the greatest possible value in keeping the Comdr informed of the progress of the battle. My O.P., although some distance from BDE HQ, commanded a complete view of the battlefield. During the early critical stage, my Brigade Major was stationed there and during the rest of the battle my A/I.O. was in control. The O.P. was connected by line to BDE HQ, and a wireless set was installed also. The line were hooked into fwd un. lines and gave connection with fwd un. when their line was cut between the O.P. and BDE HQ. The wireless set became a valuable link when conditions reduced volume of strength on fwd sets with Bn Comdrs. I was always kept informed of the progress of the battle both on my own front and that of 21 AUST INF BDE.

(6) AMMUNITION SUPPLY.

This presented great difficulties, particularly as the period of the battle could not be forecast and my Tps would soon be a considerable distance fwd. It is essential that adequate supplies be taken fwd in the initial advance. I had planned for greater quantities than were actually taken fwd, but this was regulated by mules available. The following outlines the scheme employed :-

- (a) Carried on the man :- SAA - 50 rds
(minimum)
HAND GRENADES - 2
WRIGLEY " - 1
- (b) 1 Mule per Coy carrying assorted loads.
- (c) 6 Mules per Bn " " "
- (d) 2" Mortars and Anti-Tank rifles with
ammn - 1 mule per Pl.
- (e) 3" Mortars and Ammn - 1 mule each mortar.
- (f) M.M.G. Pl for guns and ammn - 8 mules.

The problem of ammunition supply in battle presents all sorts of difficulties. The normal procedure is excellent provided enemy action allows it to function. I have always kept an additional quantity in reserve on wheels to send fwd if Units are unable to come back and pick up as is normal procedure. This scheme never altered normal procedure, if workable, but was an additional reserve and another means to ensure supply. BARDIA forced its practice at a critical stage and it materially effected the battle in our interests.

(7) RATIONS.

Each man carried 48 hours rations. As old soldiers there were probably cases of a little more being carried. Again, the experienced soldier conserves his rations, and with 48 hours rations, it can be assumed that they will NOT be short for 3 days. A hot meal was delivered before the advance and again as soon as the Road was open. Hot food is an essential requirement for the maintenance of morale.

In conclusion, I desire to add my keen appreciation of the many considerations extended by Major General A.S. ALLEN and G I (Colonel J. CHAPMAN). I was given freedom of decision to a remarkable degree. I felt that I was trusted to do a good job and my superiors had faith in both my very good Staff and myself.

Stanley S. ...
Brigadier

Cond 17 AUST INF BDE

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PART II.

WARNING ORDERS AND INSTRUCTIONS
REFERRED TO IN PART I.

ooOoo

SECRET
2 JUL 41

NOTES ON PREPARATION

APPRECIATION DICTATED AS NOTES BY
BRIGADIER S.G. SAVIGE

OBJECT.

To exploit through 2. Aust Inf Bde
objective to a point to be named.

FACTORS.

CROSSINGS AND RIVERS.

Enemy troops appear to occupy DAMOUR
area with force of at least BDE.

Strongly defended localities are
immediately NORTH of River and from discovery
of post at 12641958 would appear to extend EAST
to at least SOUTH of Pt 567.

The dispositions of his defences in
depth are not known completely. See enemy
disposition map.

GROUND. Our Sector.

Within the bend of the River to EL
FATIHATE, the high ground forms a triangle to
EL BATTAL - EL HARAM with very steep slopes
leading to the river. The distance from
F.D.L's to the river is not less than 600 yds.
The ground NORTH of the River rises from the sea
to a sharp ridge EL BOUM - QARGATE northwards.
It then rises sharply to the EAST with high pt
at KAHR MATTA - ABEY. The ground between
coast road and 1st ridge is intersected with
WADIS, and the one due EAST of P.O. Sign appears
to be deep and difficult.

DEDUCTIONS.

The NORTH - SOUTH Ridge from EL BOUM
should defilade right flank and ground to the
WEST appears to give cover to advancing troops.

ROADS.

A 1st class road system from BEYROUTH
runs through the mountain country in a line rough-
ly parallel to main Coast Road. They enter
the DAMOUR area at DAMOUR and from KAHR MATTA -
ABEY area, QARGATE and EL FATIHATE. These
roads appear to be from 1st class to those

capable of carrying M.T. with ease. Numerous tracks run parallel with EAST - WEST roads and in a number of cases provide lateral communication. Num-

DEDUCTIONS.

It is imperative that these entries into the DAMOUR area be blocked.

GENERAL.

1. If our line of exploitation reaches or goes beyond EN NAAIE line, strength of our force is insufficient to provide flank protection. It is certain that there will be concentrations of troops around the guns in the ABEY area.

DECISION.

- (a) Request exploitation 21 Aust Inf Bde to main WADI.
- (b) Failing this request flank protection be provided 21 Aust Inf Bde.

2. Difficulties of country though providing A.T. localities presents difficulties in communication and supply.

DECISION.

- (a) Wireless on packs.
- (b) Run line from attachment to pack saddles.

3. The country also provides difficulties for assembly areas and approach march.

DECISION.

Assembly areas could be found in MacDONALD WADI; the RIGHT being in the vicinity of BAAQOUN - ER REZANIYE with the LEFT for a possible role of covering the Coast Road in WADI approx due SOUTH of EL HARAM. The axis for approach march is unknown and depends upon chosen points for crossing river.

4. A route leads from ER REZANIYE via Pt 394 to EL BATTAL and another from AAQLIYA NORTH to the RIVER.

DECISION.

Special recce of assembly areas and tracks leading therefrom to suggested axis of advance. It is essential that tps be placed in assembly areas 36 hrs before ZERO to carry out necessary recce of lines of approach.

NOTE. (1) Arrange for parties 2/3 and 2/5 Aust Inf Bns to live with fwd Bn for 24 hrs to participate in patrolling and gather information regarding fwd area and ground over which we will attack.

(2) Arrange with 21 AUST INF BDE for assembly area for 6 AUST CAV.

OUTLINE PLAN.

17 Aust Inf Bde will exploit through 21 Aust Inf Bde and secure high ground EN NAAME - DEIR MAR JIRJOS and cover right flank fwd of 21 Aust Inf Bde.

ASSEMBLY.

Units will assemble up to DI - 36 hours as follows :-

- (a) 2/3 and 2/5 Aust Inf Bns area ER REZANIYE.

NOTE. Units to be placed to facilitate 2/3 Aust Inf Bn leading in approach march.

- (b) 2 Coys 2/2 Aust Pnr Bn relieve 2 Coys 2/16 Bn covering MAIN RD.

NOTE. Ask for H.Q.
BDE HQ 12251937.
"B" Echelon and Rear HQ
as placed by 7 AUST DIV.

FORWARD MOVE OF BNS.

1. 2/3 Aust Inf Bn leading will cross river at Pt to be named followed by 2/5 Aust Inf Bn.

2. Bns will move to a start line to be determined.

3. Axis of advance - 2/3 Aust Inf Bn
Right Pts 250 - 218 - 355 WADI near D in DAQOUN.
Formation diamond in Coys.

OBJECTIVES.

1. Right Bn 2/3 Aust Inf Bn. High ground vicinity WOOD PLATEAU - cover Rd approaches from EAST from F.S.L's 21 Aust Inf Bde fwd to right flank of fwd localities 17 Aust Inf Bde group.

Left Bn 2/5 Aust Inf Bn. High ground vicinity DEIR MAR JIRJOS.

2. High ground fwd EN NAAME to cover DAMOUR - BEYROUTH Road.

3. Area to cover roads and wadis vicinity square house.

NOTE. (1) Bns will keep 1 Coy reserve if practicable.

(2) Coys areas will be selected in A/T localities.

NOTE. 2/2 Aust Pnr Bn, Sqn 6 Aust Cav and Tp 25 pdrs to be ready to move fwd under command C.O. 2/2 Aust Pnr Bn - tentative objective - capture of BEYROUTH Wireless Station and high ground on which it is situated.

NOTE. Vehicles with cover removed in fwd posns suggested.

In the event of this exploitation being carried out, 2/5 Aust Inf Bn will move fwd to fill gap between 2/3 Aust Inf Bn and 2/2 Aust Pnr Bn.

SUPPORT.

ARTY.

1. 17 Aust Inf Bde will have support of DIV Arty.

2. Arrangements will be made with CRA for F.O.O. with each Bn Comdr.

ENGINEER.

2/3 and 2/5 Aust Inf Bns will each have 1 Section under command.

NOTE.

In event of 2/2 Aust Pnr Bn exploiting to Wireless Station area, Sec with 2/5 Aust Inf Bn will be at their call.

NOTE.

What about M.G. support?

COMMUNICATION.

1. "K" Sec Sigs will arrange to lay line from ADV BDE HQ to each Bn HQ during the attack to enable C.O's to tap in.

2. "K" Sec Sigs will arrange for wireless set on mule and personnel to accompany each Bn Comdr.

AMMUNITION.

Complete first line will be carried on mules and will move with units during advance.

Mortars and A/T Rifles will be carried on mules.

NOTE. C.O's will requisition for mules to cover task.

CARRIED ON MAN.

(a) 50 Rds S.A.A. - 1 Sticker Bomb -
2 Grenades.

CARRIED ON MULES.

(b) COY AMMN RESERVE. 2 mules per
Coy - assorted
loads.

(c) BN AMMN RESERVE 8 mules -
assorted loads.

RATIONS.

48 hrs rations carried on man - all
water bottles filled.

TOOLS.

2 animals to carry - assorted tools.

MEDICAL.

Aim is 2 mules per Bn moving
with them, each with 2 stretchers.

NOTE.

C.O's responsible to establish
relay posts to carry cases to A.D.S.

LIGHT SIGNALS.

Pass MAIN WADI.

NORTHERN ROAD at EL FATIGHA.

SUCCESS Signals.

(Signed) STAN G. SAVIGE,
Brigadier

Comd 17 AUST INF BDE

17 AUST INF BDE DRAFT OF ORDER

(ISSUED AS WARNING ORDER)

Ref Maps : SAIDA - BEYROUTH - DJEZZINE 1/50,000.
DAMOUR 1/25,000.
BEYROUTH 1/200,000.

INFORMATION.

Enemy is holding the ground line of the DAMOUR RIVER from the coast to EL BOUM.

21 Aust Inf Bde will penetrate defences and make a bridge head over river at on D I day.

The following Tps come under command 17 Aust Inf Bde :-

1 Pl 2/3 Aust MG Bn - 1200 hrs D 2 day.

"A" Sqn 6 Aust Cav Regt - after 17 Aust Inf Bde passes F.D.L's of 21 Aust Inf Bde.

INTENTION.

17 Aust Inf Bde will exploit through 21 Aust Inf Bde and secure high ground DEIR MAR JIRJOS 12632017, EN NAAME 12542017 and cover right flank fwd of 21 Aust Inf Bde.

METHOD.

FWD BNS.

Right - 2/3 Aust Inf Bn with under command 1 Pl 2/3 Aust MG Bn.

Objective.- High ground vicinity WOODED PLATEAU at 12702017.

Cover road approaches from EAST fwd of FDLS 21 Aust Inf Bde.

Left.- 2/5 Aust Inf Bn.

Objective - High ground -

DEIR MAR JIRJOS 12632017

EN NAAME 12542017

Area to cover roads and wadis vicinity
SQUARE HOUSE 12551997.

Bn Bdy - All inc 2/3 Aust Inf Bn -
line from Pt 355 (12681991) to DEIR MAR JIRJOS
12632017.

NOTE. Bns will keep one Coy in reserve
if practicable and will select Coy
areas in Tank proof localities.

RESERVE.

2 Coys 2/2 Aust Pnr Bn with under
command "A" Sqn 6 Aust Cav Regt.

2 Coys 2/2 Aust Pnr Bn will relieve
2 Coys 2/16 Aust Inf Bn at during night
D I D I day and will remain in position covering
COAST ROAD until fwd Bns gain objectives.

Probable role exploitation to high
ground .

NOTE. In event of this exploitation being
carried out 2/5 Aust Inf Bn will move
fwd to cover gap between 2/3 Aust Inf
Bn and 2/2 Aust Pnr Bn.

ASSEMBLY POSITIONS.

2/3 Aust Inf Bn - WADI at 12541939.

2/5 Aust Inf Bn - AREA at 12381937.

Units will move from present locations
on night D 2 D I under orders issued separately
by 7 AUST DIV, 2/3 Aust Inf Bn leading.

Unit guides will report to B/I.O.
at 0900 hrs D 2 day.

FORWARD MOVE.

Bns, 2/3 Aust Inf Bn leading will
cross river at 12591964 and will form up :-

2/3 Aust Inf Bn under cover of HILL 281

vicinity "D" in DAMOUR 12651964.

2/5 Aust Inf Bn in WADI vicinity
under "M" in AIN MIKHAEL 12601968.

AXIS OF ADVANCE.

Pts (12591973), 218 (12621980), 355
(12681991), WADI near "D" in DAQOUN (12661994).

Formation - Diamond in Coys.

STARTING TIME.

To be notified when determined.

SUPPORT.

Royal Navy will shell ABEY, KA
FR MATTA and BANANA GROVES WEST of DAMOUR and NORTH
of GRID 198.

R.A.F. will provide fighter protection
and bomb targets to be indicated and ground strafe
roads.

ADMINISTRATION.

Dress - Battle Order with one blanket
tied over haversack.

Rations - 48 hours carried on the man,

Water - All Water bottles filled.

Ammn - Carried on man - 50 Rds SAA

2 Hand Grens.

1 Wrigley
Gren.

Coy Ammn Res - 2 mules per Coy -
assorted loads.

Bn Ammn Res - 8 mules per Bn -
assorted loads.

Mortars and A/T Rifles carried on mules.

Tools - Carried on 2 mules per Bn -
assorted loads.

Medical - 2 mules per Bn each carrying
2 stretchers under control of
Fd Amb Personnel.

Bns responsible for establishing relay posts for onward carry to A.D.S.

A.D.S. at

P.O.W.

Will be sent by Bns to ADV BDE HQ.

INTER-COMMUNICATION.

ADV BDE HQ Vicinity WADI 12241938.

"K" Sec Sigs will provide a wireless set carried on a mule to each Bn and a line Sec to follow advance and reel out from reel carried on a mule.

LIGHT SIGNALS.

	<u>2/3 BN</u>	<u>2/5 BN</u>
Passing WADI DAQOUN	Two Green.	Two Red.
Passing ROAD EL FATIQA - BIR EL KHALOUATE	RED- GREEN.	GREEN- RED.
SUCCESS	GREEN RED GREEN.	RED RED GREEN

SYNCHRONISATION OF WATCHES.

(Signed) J.A. BISHOP, Major
B.M. 17 AUST INF BDE

SECRET
COPY NO
6 JUL 41

17 AUST INF BDE OP. INSTR. NO 4.

(COPIED FROM MAJOR J.A. BISHOP'S NOTEBOOK.
ONLY 3 COPIES PENCIL WRITTEN ISSUED).

Ref Map BEYROUTH 1/50,000.

DAMOUR 1/25,000.

INFORMATION.

Enemy as per marked map. 21
Aust Inf Bde attacked enemy positions this morning and occupy Spur EL MOUGHIRE with Road Block at WADI on intersection of GRIDS 128,195. EL BOUM is occupied and Tps in this sector have taken their three objectives and are continuing the attack to capture WADI DAQOUN which is the point which we required them to cover in our draft order.

2/16 Aust Inf Bn has not met with similar success and occupies a line from the river at 12521968 NORTH to E. in EL HAMRA thence due WEST to a point approx 200 yds short of the COAST ROAD.

2 Coys 2/14 Aust Inf Bn have moved to the river crossing and will form up along the line of Road EL BOUM to exploit the success of 2/27 Aust Inf Bn to WADI DAQOUN.

INTENTION.

2/3 and 2/5 Aust Inf Bns will capture objectives as named in draft order on 7 JUL 41.

METHOD.

2/3 Aust Inf Bn Right; under command
1 Pl 2/3 Aust M.G. Bn.

2/5 Aust Inf Bn Left.

2/3 Aust Inf Bn are responsible for right flank protection and 2/5 Aust Inf Bn for left flank protection.

2/3 Aust Inf Bn will so dispose it's M.M.G. Pl to give cover by fire to left flank 2/5 Aust Inf Bn should the occasion arise during the advance.

Axis of advance as laid down in draft order with 2/5 Aust Inf Bn directing.

Forming up positions line of track from river crossing to Pt 498 (12741975).

Inter Bn Bdy inc 2/5 Aust Inf Bn track junc 12651969 DEIR MAR JIRJOS.

Start Line - the line of foremost Tps 2/14 Aust Inf Bn which is anticipated to be line of WADI DAQOUN.

ZERO - units will move from F.U.P. at first light and cross START LINE on signal to be given by Lt-Col KING.

Rate of advance as set by directing Bn which is anticipated 100 yds in 4 minutes.

2/5 Aust Inf Bn will be responsible for contact with 2/3 Aust Inf Bn during move from present areas to F.U.P.

Units will leave assembly areas not later than 2400 hrs 6 JUL by mutual arrangements by C.O.'s.

ARTY SUPPORT.

R.A.A. 7 AUST DIV will support by observed fire from O.P.'s.

NOTE. Neither F.O.O.'s nor wireless sets from Arty are available to move fwd with units.

An L.O. from R.A.A. and ROYAL NAVY will be at BDE HQ.

C.O.'s will pass demand for Arty support on targets unseen by O.P.'s to BDE HQ by wireless, line or visual.

ADMINISTRATION.

As per draft order issued separately on 4 JUL.

NOTE. It is absolutely essential that C.O.'s get mortars forward in the event of mule casualties in order to maintain close support.

INTER-COMMUNICATION.

C.O's will ensure the wireless sets, line reels and Lucas Lamps move with their units.

Bde HQ has been ordered to remain in present location.

Visual signalling Stn will be established at Pt 394 in Sq 125195.

If visual signals are used, unit sigs will repeat message slowly and BDE Stn will NOT answer as it is facing enemy.

ACKNOWLEDGE.

SIGNED AT 2135 hrs.

(Signed) J.A. BISHOP
Major

DISTRIBUTION.

B.M. 17 AUST INF

Copy No 1 2/3 Aust Inf Bn
Copy No 2 2/5 Aust Inf Bn
Copy No 3 WAR DIARY.

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PART III.

REPORTS OF OPERATIONS BY UNITS
WHILST DETACHED UNDER OTHER
COMMANDS.

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REPORTS OF OPERATIONS BY UNITS
WHILST DETACHED UNDER OTHER
COMMANDS.

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The Bn remained in position on the high ground WEST of MEZZE until 24 JUN, when they were ordered to advance along the Road DAMASCUS - BEYROUTH and came under orders of 16 INF BDE who had passed through previously.

The action of the 2/3 Aust Inf Bn on 20 and 21 JUN in clearing the high ground WEST of MEZZE and capturing the WEYGAND forts in face of strong opposition had a very decisive effect on the enemy's resistance and final withdrawal from DAMASCUS.

The Bn acted with the greatest gallantry and dash throughout, the initiative and keenness of the junior leaders being marked. The success of the Bn in spite of very reduced numbers and fatigue against an enemy in masonry forts, and on grounds well known to him was remarkable and worthy of the highest praise.

(Signed) W.L. LLOYD,
Brigadier

6.7.41.

Comd 5 IND INF BDE

ooo000ooo

ATTACK ON JEBEL MAZAR BY 2/3 AUST INF BN

Ref MAP 1/200,000 DAMAS

-:-:-

On 24 JUN 2/3 Aust Inf Bn were ordered by HQ 16 Inf Bde to occupy the feature JEBEL MAZAR with one Coy. In order to bring this Coy up to strength 2/3 Aust Inf Bn had to form a composite Coy with "B" and "D" Coys to be called "D" Coy. This Coy was to RV at track junc 183170 at 2100 hrs on 24 JUN with an OP Party from 4 FD REGT. The latter party was delayed and the column did not move fwd from the RV until approx 2215 hrs led fwd by selected local guides. Communications were to be by OP Wireless.

Nothing further was heard from the Coy until 1645 hrs on 25 JUN when 2 QUEENS' informed BDE HQ that they had made contact and that the Coy was unable to gain objective owing to exhaustion and lack of water. The Coy also reported that they were under heavy MG and Mortar fire. Later OC 2/3 Aust Inf Bn reported that "D" Coy were unable to take objective and asked permission to withdraw. He asked BDE for permission to relieve with a fresh Coy and this was agreed to. "C" Coy were sent in relief and left QATANA together with another OP Party from 4 Fd Regt at 2215 hrs on 25 JUN. "D" Coy did not withdraw during the night but remained to assist "C" Coy in the capture of the objective which the enemy were later found to have reinforced.

At 1230 hrs 26 JUN reports indicated that these Coys would not be able to take the objective and BDE HQ therefore ordered them to remain in their present positions until after dark when it would be possible for them to withdraw to QATANA.

Later at 1805 hrs 2 QUEENS' reported that the Coys were now confident of success. BDE HQ therefore ordered them to try again and ordered OC 2/3 Aust Inf Bn to ensure their maintenance; pack animals having been provided for this purpose.

At 0630 hrs 27 JUN 2 QUEENS' reported the objective partially taken but that enemy were still holding the summit of the feature in strength and 2 QUEENS' asked for reinforcements for Coys 2/3 Aust Inf Bn and BDE HQ then issued orders for 2/3 Aust Inf Bn to take over the complete feature occupied by their two Coys. All approaches to the feature were being heavily shelled by the enemy and at 0900 hrs 27 JUN, OC 2/3 Aust Inf Bn asked permission to delay the move until after

dark. This was agreed to by BDE HQ. Soon after news was received that the objective had been taken and the following message was sent by BDE Comd. "Well done hang on all costs."

The attack had been a complete surprise to the enemy and the first enemy Tps encountered had been quickly disposed of but the feature was a large one and the summit strongly held. By first light on 27 JUN the objective was not entirely captured but was finally occupied at about 0800 hrs. By this time the attacking Tps were exhausted and short of ammunition and the request for reinforcements was despatched by OC 2 QUEENS' who meanwhile sent up ammunition and rations by pack animal and ordered "B" Coy 2 QUEENS' to reinforce "C" Coy 2/3 Aust Inf Bn.

By 1400 hrs it was apparent that the enemy was counter attacking and reports indicated that fresh ^{enemy} reinforcements were being rushed up and were attacking on both flanks with an estimated strength of two Bns. Unfortunately essential parts of the OP Wireless Set had been lost on the way up and the OP was unable to make contact with the Bty. Had this support been available there is little doubt that the objective would have been held.

By 1500 hrs the situation was becoming desperate; "C" Coy on the objective was being surrounded and "D" Coy on a lower feature was being forced to withdraw. At this point the enemy Comd called on our troops to "surrender or be slaughtered." This demand was refused.

About this time OC 2/3 Aust Inf Bn arrived at 2 QUEENS' HQ together with the remainder of the Bn numbering some 60 men. At 1700 hrs it was decided to order a withdrawal from the feature owing to difficulties of supply and the exhausted condition of the Tps and owing to the impossibility, due to lack of fresh Tps, of reinforcing the original attackers. Orders were accordingly issued for Tps to remain in their present positions until after dark and then withdraw to positions already indicated by Bde Comd. This withdrawal was carried out under cover of darkness "C" Coy succeeding in fighting their way out.

The JEBEL MAZAR feature, the summit of which is nearly 5000 ft high constitutes a position of great natural strength capable of being successfully held by a comparatively

small number of men. All advantages rest with the defence - the original enemy garrison was small but in view of the obvious importance of the observation obtainable from the summit - the enemy was quick to reinforce as soon as an attack was appreciated. The success of the operations depended on an ability to reach and hold the summit before enemy reinforcements could arrive. 2/3 Aust Inf Bn came within an ace of success. Luck was certainly against them in their most formidable task.

Throughout the operation all ranks 2/3 Aust Inf Bn displayed the very highest courage and determination and their dogged endeavour has very justly called forth the unstinted praise and admiration of all ranks of 16 INF BDE.

ACTION OF 2/5 AUST INF BN AT DERRA

-:-:-:-

Ref Map SOUEIDA 1/200,000

Battalion, less "C" Coy who were detached, arrived at DERRA (18030708) from HAIFA by train at approx 1700 hrs on 20 JUN 41 and bivouaced on NORTHERN side of railway line, approx $\frac{1}{2}$ mile N.W. of town and came under order Col WRIGHT Comd 85 L of C sub area.

At 2100 hrs on 21 JUN "B" and "D" Coys were ordered to move to SHEIKH MESKINE (18080909) and take up perimeter defence around the town. Remainder of Bn consisting of "A" and "HQ" Coys and Bn HQ moved into DERRA and took up defensive position on NW outskirts with Bn HQ at 18030706. Our task was to protect L of C against possible attacks from Vichy Druze troops reported to be at SOUEIDA.

From reports received it was found that approx 150 enemy Jebel Druze had taken possession of the village of OUMM OUALAD, (21050709) and Col Wright decided to attack and drive them out. Report of O.C., "B" Coy attached.

Operations being successfully completed, "B" Coy returned to SHEIKH MESKINE arriving there at 1230 hrs 22 JUN 41. At 1600 hrs "B" and "D" Coys were ordered from SHEIKH MESKINE to EZRAA to take up perimeter defence round railway station (19061001). Remainder of Bn occupied perimeter defence of DERRA as follows :- "HQ" Coy, western perimeter their task being the defence of the fort and bridge leading to the old village. "A" Coy E. and N. perimeter; task of "A" Coy was road to SOUEIDA, defence of railway station and yards, DAMASCUS Road and the outpost position 1000 yds forward and W. of DAMASCUS Road. Enemy force reported varying from one to three battalions reported some 25 miles W. of DERRA. Information seemed doubtful.

23 JUN all Coys improved defences generally. Signallers of "B" and "D" Coys with T.J.F.F. signallers repaired telephone lines EZRAA - SHEIKH MESKINE -DERRA.

24 JUN "D" Coy acted as protective force to Col WILSON T.J.F.F. on a political mission to EL DOUR (21020905).

"B" Coy come under comd
Lt-Col MONTGOMERY, Comd T.J.F.F. Cav Regt
and "D" Coy under comd of Lt-Col KILKENNY,
Comd T.J.F.F. Mech Regt.

25 JUN "D" Coy were ordered to
RHABARHEB (DAMAS 1/200,000) but on arriving
there received orders to return to EZRAA;
reason for return being that RHABARHEB was
found to be outside responsibility of Lt-Col
Montgomery.

Routine work and training was
carried on by all companies until 30 JUN
when orders were received that 17 AUST INF BDE
was to be concentrated at HABBOUCHE.

(Signed) G.F. STROW
Intelligence
Officer.

for Comd KING GROUP.

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REPORT BY LIEUT W.M. MAYBERRY ON ACTIVITIES
OF "C" COY 2/5 BN FROM 11 JUN 41 to 2 JUL 41
(INCL)

--:--:--:--:--

Ref Map : BEYROUTH 1/200,000

"C" Coy 2/5 Aust Inf Bn entrained at EL MAJDAL at 2230 hrs 11 JUN 41, arriving at HAIFA at 1200 hrs 12 JUN 41. The Coy was lifted by R.A.S.C. transport via SAFAD to MERDJAYOUN (13601590) arriving 1730 hrs. O.C. reported to 25 Aust Inf Bde HQ and on orders moved to Fort.

Friday 13 JUN 41. Orders received to provide town picquet and fort garrison. Coy responsibility - internal security of district.

Saturday 14 JUN 41. Lt-Col TODD took over responsibility of internal security and "C" Coy was attached to TODD FORCE for two days to carry on with the job, while TODD FORCE was attempting to advance in two columns up "A" and "B" routes. (TODD FORCE comprised - H.Q. Sqn ROYAL SCOTS GREYS and one Sqn ROYAL SCOTS GREYS, and one STAFFORDSHIRE YEOMANRY; also some attached troops.)

(Route "A" ran from Road Junc 13701590 EAST of MERDJAYOUN via HASBAYA to KARR ZEIT. Route "B" ran from same Rd junc through QUELLIYE and YOUHMOUR to QARAOUN).

During the afternoon enemy shelled the fort for half an hour causing two casualties.

Sunday 15 JUN 41. Heavy shelling of fort and town for one hour, 1430 to 1530 hrs (one casualty). At 1530 hrs orders received from 25 Aust Inf Bde to send one Pl as garrison to NABATIYE et TAHTA (12601620). Pl moved 1600 hrs. At 1630 hrs orders were received from Lt-Col Todd to move Coy fwd and take up defensive position on high ridge EAST of DEBBINE (13751625). (At this time heavy firing was taking place to the NORTH of the TOWN.) The remaining two Pls less two secs on picquet in district left the fort at 1715 hrs and moved to NORTH edge of TOWN. Here 2 i/c TODD FORCE intercepted Coy and informed O.C. Sqn of STAFFS already in occupation of high ridge (13551625) and ordered Coy to proceed through DEBBINE and occupy feature

(13601620) relieving 1 Tp AUST CAV. This Tp was met withdrawing before Coy reached DEBBINE. Position was reached and defence positions taken up by 1830 hrs. Coy was divided into two platoons of 2 secs each. During the move forward, one casualty had been suffered by enemy shelling.

At 1915 hrs MMG fire and shelling on feature EAST of DEBBINE together with enemy advance, estimated 2 Coys, forced Sqn on feature who had one troop cut off to withdraw to MERDJAYOUN. Having received no further orders and position on right being obscure, O.C. had at 1900 hrs sent runner for information from O.C. STAFF Sqn. Runner returned at 1930 hrs with news that sqn had been forced to withdraw on town. By this time enemy had pushed up on our right flank and were within a few hundred yards of Town some seven hundred yards to our rear.

At 1935 hrs two Pls were ordered to thin out and fall back on line drawn EAST WEST through Fort, making RV 13551585. At 2000 hrs Coy HQ withdrew to market place MERDJAYOUN where two picquetting sections had assembled. Standing patrol was formed to cover withdrawal and at 2115 hrs Coy rendezvoused as ordered. The two forward platoons having withdrawn to fort through upper part of town along little used track.

At Coy R.V. one Tp GREYS was found holding road block. "C" Coy was ordered to remain as rear guard with one Tp TODD FORCE and two A/Tk guns until 0245 hrs and cover occupation of defensive position at QLEAA (13401550) by TODD FORCE.

Monday 16 JUN 41 at 0230 hrs listening post fwd withdrew reporting enemy patrol advancing; defensive fire was opened and patrol withdrew. Patrol from "C" Coy was sent fwd 500 yds but was unable to discover any sign of movement and at 0245 hrs rear guard withdrew by M/T to QLEAA leaving one sec "C" Coy to cover withdrawal, who followed without making further contact at 0255 hrs.

"C" Coy took up defensive position astride road QLEAA - MERDJAYOUN on the fwd slopes of QLEAA feature (13451550). SQN STAFFS on "B" flank SQN GREYS on left, perimeter defence of QLEAA being made.

At 0900 hrs "C" Coy sent out recce patrol fwd and to R Flank. Patrol returned at 1015 hrs reporting fwd movements of 2 enemy tanks and few tps. Enemy made recce with two 10,000 kilo tanks at 1030 hrs. One tank was destroyed and the other forced to withdraw by the A/Tk guns. At 1900 hrs "C" Coy came under comd Lt-Col WELLINGTON, 2/2 Aust Pnr Bn and its front was lengthened on the R flank, Pioneers coming into defensive line and perimeter being extended to include KHIRBE (13015545) At 2100 hrs garrison platoon NABATIYE returned to Coy on General LAVERACK's instructions.

Tuesday 17 JUN 41. Two Coys 2/2 Aust Pnr Bn attacked fort unsuccessfully. "C" Coy remained in occupation of same position.

Wednesday 18 JUN 41. All quiet - intervals of shelling by both sides. At 2100 hrs "C" Coy sent out recce patrol to point 350 yds S.E. of fort which returned 2330 hrs reporting only slight enemy movement.

Thursday 19 JUN 41. At 0230 hrs O.C. "C" Coy was sent for by B.H.Q. and at 0310 hrs received orders to send fighting patrol to occupy church on high rocky crag 700 yds N.W. of fort (13571582). No previous recce had been made; distance to be covered going direct 3000 yds and patrol was ordered to be in occupation of crag by 0430 hrs and make contact with 2/25 Aust Inf Bn who were attacking from the N.W. of Town.

Patrol occupied feature by 0430 hrs and by 0730 hrs contact had been made with 2/25 Bn and later in day with 2/2 Aust Pnr Bn whose second attack on the fort had been unsuccessful. During the morning, patrol killed 8 and captured 40 snipers and mortar men who were defending ridge between crag and fort and who had caused heavy casualties on Pioneers during their attack. Patrol also covered withdrawal into crag of one Pl 25 Bn who had become isolated. At 1530 hrs patrol joined forces with Pioneers who had gained ridge previously occupied by snipers and mortarmen, and an attempt was made to attack the fort from the north. This attempt was frustrated by enemy tanks and MMG's, Major LANG 2 i/c Pioneers who was in command of operations being wounded. Patrol was forced to withdraw to crag. POWs carrying enemy and own wounded were sent back under Pioneer escort to Pioneer RAP. O.C. of attacking Pioneer ordered withdrawal of patrol from crag at 2030 hrs. Patrol returned to Coy at 2230 hrs having suffered only one casualty.

Friday 20 JUN 41. Pioneers pushed one Coy 500 yds fwd of "C" Coy astride QLEAA-MERDJAYOUN Rd and "C" Coy being in reserve did only normal patrolling. This period from Thursday night to Sunday night was uneventful except for two bombing raids and intermittent shelling.

Sunday 22 JUN 41. TODD FORCE was ordered to take up position covering left flank of composite gp in following area :-

DEMICHKIYE	13251605
- MAHMOUDIYE	13251605
- JERME	13201640
and EL AICHIYE	13351640

and "C" Coy relieved TODD FORCE taking up perimeter defence position from N.E. QLEAA 13451560 S to S.E. KHIRBE 13451535 astride road SOUTH of KHIRBE to KHIRBE - QLEAA boundary on the WEST 13401545. One Tp MMGs GREYS' and one PL Pioneers came under comd. Approx length of line 2500 yds. Relief of TODD FORCE was completed by 2300 hrs Sunday 22 JUN 41.

Monday 23 JUN 41. NIL to report.

Tuesday 24 JUN 41. At 1030 hrs patrols Pioneers under cover smoke screen advanced into fort and town to find it evacuated. "C" Coy was ordered fwd into position astride fort road and main rd 500 yds N. of fort 13651585. Coy was in position by 1430 hrs. During this period the town and fort were heavily shelled. At 1600 hrs orders were received to occupy high ground N. of MERDJAYOUN and E. of DEBBINE 13751625. At this stage, Pl of Pioneers were detached, MMGs still under comd. During move fwd enemy shelled N. of town heavily and 2 casualties suffered. Coy pushed fwd along ridge until held up by heavy enemy mortar fire and took up position covering "B" route and BALATE 13701625 N.E. of and E. DEBBINE 13751630. Later in night, contact was made with Coy of Pioneers on Right. Our Left flank was in the air.

Wednesday 25 JUN 41. Patrol was pushed fwd 2000 yds and reported enemy on ridge between "A" and "B" routes from 13901630 to 13981600; also fighting patrol pushed through BALATE and reported village clear of FRENCH since dawn. During the day our position was shelled and bombed by enemy aircraft. At 1900 hrs Coy moved 2000 yds fwd and occupied position running S. from a point 800 yds N.W. enemy F.D.Ls 13801640.

Thursday 26 JUN 41. Enemy shelled and mortared Coy position. No casualties except Col WELLINGTON. At 1700 hrs Lt-Col MONAGHAN took comd of force. During night 26/27 further recce patrols were made establishing enemy position and Coy defensive disposition altered to give more cover.

Friday 27 JUN 41. "D" Coy Pioneer Bn attacked enemy feature from W. through "C" Coy FDLs. Attack was unsuccessful. At 1600 hrs "D" Coy Pioneers came under comd "C" Coy. also whole responsibility for Left flank of force. Night 27/28 dispositions were again altered placing "C" Coy further fwd and bringing in "D" Coy in reserve.

Saturday 28 JUN 41. During the day fairly quiet. Enemy only appeared to mortar position and shell when given definite target. During night 28/29 recce were sent out to establish whether enemy had vacated position. Strict orders from B.H.Q. not to fight. "C" Coy patrols went to enemy wire and over his centre and right features. MMGs positions which were vacated by night were noted and patrols only withdrew after establishing definite presence of enemy when the enemy threatened their line of withdrawal.

Sunday 29 JUN 41. No enemy activity by day. During the night 29/30 similar patrols to previous night.

Monday 30 JUN 41. Only slight enemy shelling and mortar fire. ADV Party relieving unit arrived. Night 30/1 no patrols but listening posts established 150 yds from enemy FDLs. During Monday daylight recce patrol pushed fwd to 1500 yds S.W. BOURQOUZ 13801649. This O.P. covered the rear of the enemy ridge. An Arty O.F. was established, and from then onwards was able greatly to harass enemy's rear during daylight. Hourly report of all enemy movement were submitted by "C" Coy patrol to B.H.Q.

Tuesday 1 JUL 41. Recce patrol as on previous day. Enemy Arty and mortars more lively; no casualties. Night 1/2 relieved by D.L.I. Relief completed by 2215 hrs, "C" Coy moving to lying up area at DEIR MIMESS 13301530.

Wednesday 2 JUL 41. Contact was made with own unit and Coy rejoined unit at HABBOUCHE 12651645 at 2300 hrs.

REPORT ON ACTIVITIES OF "B" COMPANY AT
OUM OULAD ON 22 JUN 41

The Coy was camped at SHEIKH MLSKINE when I received orders to report at 0400 hrs next morning to B.HQ. I met Col KING who told me that T.J.F.F. Cav Regt and "B" Coy 2/5 Aust Inf Bn and one section of guns R.A. (18 pdrs) was to attack and capture about 160 DRUZE Cavalry that had taken possession of the village OUM OULAD. Col King instructed me to report to Col MONTGOMERY, C.O. T.J.F.F. Cav Regt at 0500 hrs. I met Col Montgomery and we proceeded to a knoll approx 3000 yds NORTH of OUM OULAD from where he made his recce overlooking the village. He decided to encircle the village by one cavalry sqn on each side (E. and W.)

He instructed me to place one platoon to protect sec of guns which were 1000 yds rear of the knoll. The other two platoons were to take up positions on the knoll awaiting his orders.

"B" Coy arrived from SHEIKH MESKINE at assembly point some 4000 yds in rear of OUM OULAD at approx 0800 hrs. The cavalry advance was timed to take place at 0815 hrs.

The Coy went fwd in battle order and No 11 PL was left as protection for guns. No 10 and No 12 Pls were taken fwd under cover and took up position on the knoll. The 18 pdrs opened fire at 0810 hrs, firing two rounds which fell short of the village. Cav Sqns had not succeeded in completely encircling the village by this time. The DRUZE CAV in OUM OULAD left the village and galloped towards the DRUZE foothills.

CAV Sqn on WEST side succeeded in cutting small numbers off and killed seven and wounded four. Col MONTGOMERY instructed me at this stage to send one PL to village to take charge of any prisoners that had been captured and bring them back in our trucks. At this stage the R.A.P. truck also went fwd. When No 10 PL were some 300 yds from the village, a few shots were fired. They dispersed their vehicles E. in a grove and went forward on foot in battle positions. They arrived at the EAST end of the village, found four DRUZE prisoners and returned them in a truck to the knoll. At this time approx 1100 hrs the skirmish was completed and cavalry marched back to the knoll. At 1130 hrs I withdrew No 10 PL, formed up my column and returned to SHEIKH MESKINE.

Captain SMITH
O.C. "B" Coy,
2/5 Aust Inf Bn.

REPORT ON ACTIVITIES OF "B" COY

AT EZRAA ON 22 JUNE 41.

On returning to SHEIKH MESKINE from OUM OULAD I received orders from Col WILSON to proceed to EZRAA at 1400 hrs and make recce preparatory to moving "B" Coy to EZRAA. I arrived at EZRAA at 1430 hrs, in company with Captain ROWELL, O.C. "D" Coy. We met Col KILKENNY, C.O. Mechanised Regt, T.J.F.F. under whose command we came. He outlined his plan of defence for EZRAA and we recced perimeter area. "B" Coy took up position on perimeter. I sent my D/R back to "B" Coy, the Coy arriving at 1630 hrs. Pl areas were allotted and Coy went into position.

About six days after taking position in EZRAA, I took a patrol down EZRAA - SHEIKH MESKINE Rd, to look for disaffected people that were cutting TRANSJORDANIA line. This patrol took up position with orders to shoot on sight. No one was sighted and patrol returned next morning. On Sunday preceding "B" Coy being withdrawn from EZRAA to rejoin battalion, I took a patrol along SOUEIDA Rd to look for Road Blocks and observe SOUEIDA from high ground. Two DRUZE Cavalry were found in a position overlooking the road towards EZRAA. These men were taken prisoner. In this position, we found a telephone line that went back to SOUEIDA. The patrol observed movement in SOUEIDA and returned to HQ at approx 1700 hrs.

Captain SMITH,

O.C. "B" Coy

2/5 Aust Inf Bn

July 1941

15th
Comd's Reports

Official War Diary No 1

APPENDIX No. 3.

To/17 Aust. Inf. Bde.

L.O. Official War Diary

For record SECRET

23 Jul. 1941.

231
REPORT ON OPERATIONS 2/5 BN

1 July to 11 July 1941.

On the morning of 1 July 41 2/5 Bn whose H.Q. were situated at DERAA were ordered to move to HABBOUCH area where 17 Aust. Inf. Bde. were to be concentrated and at 2000 hrs Bn left DERAA travelling via SHEIKH MESKINE - QOUNEITRA - MASSADE - BANIAS - TEL HAI - METULLA - HABBOUCH.

Owing to particularly rough roads and the fact that headlights were not permitted after reaching METULLA the convoy was delayed considerably and did not reach HABBOUCH area until 0530 hrs 2 Jul. 41. On arrival Bn dispersed in area 127164 (Beyrouth 1:200,000) and at 2330 C. Coy who had been away in Central Sector for three weeks, returned under command of Bn. On Jul 3 C.O. and Coy Comdrs carried out recce of area 12391942 (Damour 1:25,000) and next morning instructions were received that Bn. was to take up positions in rear of 2/27 Bn in vicinity 12361942 (Damour 1:25,000).

At 0040 hrs Bn embussed and left HABBOUCH area travelling along main coastal road as far as 12131935 (Damour 1:25,000) where it debussed and moved up slopes of hill close to EL HAREM with Bn. H.Q. situated at 12341938. Intermittent enemy Arty fire from direction EL BOUM continued throughout the day. Late in the afternoon of 5 Jul D. Coy relieved portions of 2/27 and 2/16 Bns at EL FESTEQANIYE and ES SIYAR respectively.

At 2000 hrs 6 Jul called conference and informed Coy Comdrs. that Bn. would move forward at 2330 hrs on first stage of an advance which had as its objectives DIER MA JORJOS on the right and EN NAAME on the left. In anticipation of this move C.O. had sent forward two members of the Int. Section to recce routes over DAMOUR River and from information received from this recce party the route chosen was to be along track from EL HAREM to 12561946 thence down Wadi past point 257, EL BATTAL, EL LABIYE to river at 12591964.

2/5 Bn were to follow 2/3 along this route the head of our column passing 12561946 at 2400 hrs but owing to the fact that 2/3 Bn were late in moving off the Bn did not pass this point until 0135hrs. The track was very narrow and necessitated moving in single file and this coupled with the fact that Cyprots in charge of 2/3 Bn Mules on many occasions stopped for no reason at all made the trip a long and tedious one with many unnecessary halts.

The descent from EL LABIYE to the River was a very steep and dangerous one even in the hours of daylight, but in the dark and with Mules dispersed through the column almost continuously tangling both themselves and the Troops amongst the Signal wires it was an impossible trip and because of this the C.O. ordered all Mules off the track so that the Troops could proceed more quickly. After crossing River, Bn proceeded in single file from track at 12551966 towards EL BOUM but at 12601966 found that 2/3 Bn had gone to sleep on the track and this caused considerable delay.

(2)

The C.O. at this stage went forward to contact Major Stevenson
C.O. 2/3 Bn at EL BOUM and the Troops now very tired reached
there between 0745 and 0845 hrs.

The C.O. having made a recce of area decided that the start line
which was to have been 12621967-12681970 was unsuitable and this
was changed to a line running East West through EL BOUM 2/3 on
right and 2/5 on the left. Word was received at this stage that the
Mule Train which was delayed would not reach EL BOUM for some
considerable time. The Wireless which was being transported by
Mule arrived at 1000 hrs and within a very short time contact
was made with 17 Aust Inf Bde and C.O. held short conversation
with Brigadier Savige. Blankets and other unnecessary gear was
at this stage placed in a central dump.

Advance continued at 1030 hrs, arrowhead formation being adopted,
A. Coy on right, B. Coy in Centre and directing and D. Coy on the
left. C. Coy following B. Coy 500 yds and H.Q. Coy 500 yds in
rear C. Coy. Bn. H.Q. preceded C. Coy. The advance continued
without incident until Bn. had reached a general position south of
grid 198 when left Coy (D) came under M.G. fire from point 212
at 12551980. D. Coy attacked with L.M.G and Mortars which brought
heavy shelling by enemy 75 mms from the direction N E. of DARAYA
12701991.

The C.O. deciding that D. Coy were being diverted from the task
in hand and seeing that some confusion had arisen in regard to
Coy dispositions ordered the Bn to move to DARAYA which move was
completed by 1730 hrs after a very long climb. The C.O. seeing
that the Troops were completely knocked up decided that the Bn
would rest at DARAYA that night and continue the advance the
following morning. Enemy Mortars, M.Gs and Snipers were very
active in this area. At this stage the Sigs who had been
wasting no time tapping various wires eventually contacted
17 Aust Inf Bde and Brigadier Savige ordered C.O. to continue
advance on DIER MA JORJOS that evening.

C.O. immediately called Coy. Comdrs to conference and issued
his orders. Advance to continue at 1930 hrs with 3 Coys (A, B & D)
in line followed by C. Coy, followed by H.Q. Coy. Bn. H.Q. as
before preceded C. Coy. Where necessary, as was the case in
crossing Wadi DAQOUN, Coys were to move in single file but
adopting normal formation immediately Wadis were crossed. Bn
formed up at 1915 hrs under enemy M.G. fire and moved off at
1930 hrs across Wadi DAQOUN, a particularly precipitous descent
and climb in the fading light but as darkness fell progress
became slower and slower. At the various halts, the Troops, being
very tired fell asleep, and great difficulty was experienced and
much time lost in ensuring that they were all awakened and
continued the advance which was without opposition now that
darkness had fallen, until the Bn reached Wadi immediately
south of DIER MA JORJOS where B. & D. Coys were engaged by M.G.
and Rifle fire, This however was quickly silenced. A Coy moving
across the Wadi from the right also encountered enemy opposition
but succeeded in capturing 3 P.O.W. 4 Field Pieces (75 mm) and

8 M.M.Gs. Coys reached objective of DIER MA JORJOS by 0200 hrs 8 July and at 0300 D. Coy moved down Wadi towards EN NAAME, a fighting patrol entering the village and capturing a French Colonel and his staff. Coy now moved into position under cover of trees and buildings being in position by dawn.

Dispositions were A & B Coys in defensive position around DIER MA JORJOS, D. Coy EN NAAME and C. & H.Q. Coys dispersed on feature at 12662013 (Saida 1:50,000) thus Bn was in possession of high ground around DIER MA JORJOS and EN NAAME and controlling Wadis and tracks in that area.

Owing to shortage of wire Sigs were unable to bring line forward but Capt Sampson 2/5 Fd. Regt had managed to get his line through and we were thus able to contact Bde.

Shortly after dawn D. Coy were subjected to Martar fire from the ridge North of DIER MA JORJOS where the enemy were still in possession.

At 1230 hrs H.Q. Coy relieved D. Coy in the village, the latter being ordered to establish Road Block at Bridge 12422018 (Saida 1:50;000) north of DAMOUR to prevent the enemy's escape to the North. D. Coy moving down the Wadi reached a point 75 yds from the Bridge when Enemy were observed under the Bridge. After a quick recce Capt Rowell decided that one Pl would storm the bridge whilst the other two Pls would give covering support and exploit the positions gained. After a very sharp encounter the enemy were forced to withdraw after D. Coy had inflicted a number of casualties. The C.O. from O.P. on DIER MA JORJOS hill could see that the enemy were gathering to counter attack and ordered the Arty to put down a concentration in their area. This concentration had the desired effect and they enemy broke and fled. The action of D. Coy indicated to the enemy that we were in some strength in his rear and it is thought that this action led to the collapse of DAMOUR.

At 1930 hrs 8 Jul report of enemy movement from N.E. was received and it was thought an attack was to be made on Bn area and Coys were disposed taking up defensive positions as follows, A, Coy around DIER MA JORJOS B. Coy 12572014, C. Coy came under command 2/3 Bn and moved to 12722003 and D. Coy were withdrawn from Road Block and put into position at 12662013. H.Q. Coy remained in village of EN NAAME.

This attack however did not eventuate and on the following morning B. & D. Coys were ordered to occupy Road block at 12422018 (Saida 1:50,000) and await orders from C.O. who had gone forward along Beyrouth Road to recce position held by 2/2 Pnr Bn and which these Coys were to join. At 1730 Bn. H.Q. moved to main Damour Road at 12432018 (Saida 1:50,000) and shortly afterwards B. Coy moved forward and relieved 2/2 Pnr Bn. ~~EXX~~.12582034 (Beyrouth 1:50,000). It was found that Troops in this position could not protect the Arty and it was decided that a night advance was necessary to take up position forming a line 12682023 - 12622038 - 12582048

This move was completed by 0420 hrs and line laid forward to D. Coy with a Branch line to B. Coy on the left. Owing to the shortage of wire A. Coy could not be connected by and means of communication was by runner but this was found to be very unsatisfactory.

0600
Tanks
Ems
Coy
7/3

Later in the morning Brigadier Savige called on C.O. and instructed that advance was to be continued that day but Bn was not to proceed past Road block at 12642058. Arty under Command consisted of 2/5 Fd. Regt. Howitzer Tp and 6 in How Bty. Arty plan as follows was decided on :- Z - 10 to Z a heavy concentration on Wireless Mast at Khalde and at Z a barrage to be laid down 500 yds in front of B. Coy lifting to Wireless mast at the rate of 100 yds every two mins. To enable Arty to finalise arrangements Zero was decided on as 1530 hrs and during this time C. Coy who had returned under Command of Bn were moved into a position of readinedd behind B. Coy and H.Q. Coy in rear C. Coy.

Attack commenced at 1530 hrs and by 1548 B. Coy although being heavily Mortared from Ridge on Right were going well, having advanced 500 yds. D. Coy at this stage were moving in the right rear of B. Coy and in close contact with that Coy but A Coy although moving forward had not yet contacted D. Coy. C. Coy and H. Q. Coy were moving forward in correct position. At 1610 enemy shelling and Mortar fire was very severe but advance continued. At this stage Arty had no definite task and were ordered to concentrate on Wireless mast where enemy guns were suspected to be.. At 1615 reports showed that all Coys were moving forward very well, B. Coy getting close to Road Block and although still being subjected to heavy shelling mortar fire slackened. At 1620 B. Coy reached Road Block and at this stage came under severe M.G. fire from Blockhouse at 12652062 (Beyrouth 1:50,000) One Pl on Ridge 12662067 being held up bu M.G. and Mortar fire for 2 1/2 hours. Tanks and Carriers moved forward at this stage and by 1830 had cleared the road for some 400 yds forward of Road Block. Coys were heavily shelled and mortared throughout the night and positions now occupied are:- A Coy 12682053 D. Coy 12662055 B. Coy 12642058. H.Q. Coy had moved through C. Coy and were now at 12652048 C. Coy at 12652043.

100 yds

The road

CAPT. ADJT.

From vacated
from
C. Coy
Fire

At 1300 hrs 11 Jul C.O. went forward to B. Coy and ordered a patrol from B. Coy forward for approx 1000 yds. If little enemy action was encountered the C.O.'s intention was to make a forward move with A. Coy directed on 12882080, D. Coy on 12812079 and B. Coy on 12742072. This patrol returned without encountering any enemy action but C.O. was not satisfied and ordered a further patrol from B. Coy also Patrols from D. and A. Coys. All patrols encountered enemy to their immediate front the one from B. Coy advancing to within 200 yds of Wireless mast when they met heavy M.G. fire and fire from an enemy tank. The C.O. decided that any attack other than a properly organised attack would be of no use ordered all Patrols to withdraw and Coys to remain in position for the night. The attack was to commence early the following morning. That night instructions were received that all firing was to cease at 2400 hrs pending Armistice terms.

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23 July, 1941.

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CAPT. ADJUT.

Official War Diary

REPORT OF OPERATIONS BY 2/3 BN FROM 1 JUL/12 JUL 41.

On the night 30 Jun/1 Jul the unit moved from QATANI to DEIR EZ ZAHIRANI coming under command of 17 Aust Inf Bde at midnight. The head of the column arrived at its destination at 0430 hrs but all vehicles did not report in until 1100 hrs.

The unit bivouaced in the area for three days, during which time certain shortages in clothing and equipment, including one ton trucks, were made up.

A draft of 36 ORs from "X" List and Lieut Turner from MEWTS reported in on 2 Jul making the Bn strength 24 Offrs 402 ORs.

The Bn Comd carried out a recce of the DAMOUR area from the vicinity of ES SAYAR, identifying certain points, including a concrete building referred to as POST OFFICE.

At 2000 hrs. 3 Jul the unit embussed and moved to an area NORTH of BAAQOUN. "A" Echelon proceeded to SABLINA and "B" Echelon remained at SAHRANI. One platoon of "B" Coy 2/3 MG Bn reported in at 2000 hrs under Lieut A. Clarke.

Leaving the main coast road $\frac{1}{2}$ kilo NORTH of QASSOUBA the men marched over a stony mountain track, arriving in the area at 0300 hrs after a two hours march.

"C" Coy picqueted the village of BAAQOUN, and a water point was established in ER REZANIYE.

Coy Comds carried out a recce of defensive positions to be taken up if necessary on features 432 and 459. Recce parties came under shellfire and the slightest movement on either feature caused the enemy to shell them.

On the night 4/5 Jul "C" Coy were shelled heavily on two occasions by the enemy; casualties were 1 Offr, 2 ORs.

A draft of 2 Offrs 18 ORs "X" List marched in on 5 Jul.

C.O. carried out a recce of EL BATTAL and the "I" Section recced track ER REZANIYE, EL LABIYE to the river DAMOUR.

The medical arrangements in the Bn area were not satisfactory. Although the location of the R.A.P. had been sent on, the Field Ambulance failed to evacuate any men sick or wounded by shell fire and the unit was thrown on its own resources.

It took eight men to carry one case to the main road approximately three and one half hours. With three cases, one day, twenty four men were required - practically half the strength of one rifle coy.

On 6 Jul, T/Capt E. S. Walker, Adjutant, was evacuated, and Capt J. A. Y. Denniston, O.C. "B" Coy, transferred to 6 Aust Div. Capt Gibson, 2 i/c "A" Coy was posted to command "B" Coy.

A number of mules were allotted the Bn for carrying equipment and supplies. As the country was very rough, it was found that the mules were soon "knocked up" and as there were not any mules in reserve, supplies were restricted. A number of fresh mules arrived on the night 6 Jul, but were late and the unit moved without its reserve S.A.A.

At 2330 hrs the B.M. arrived in area and delivered the Bde Operation Order, implementing the warning order for an advance of the Bde across the DAMOUR River and a flanking movement through the hills to the EAST of DAMOUR and the cutting of the main coastal road NORTH of the town.

The objective of the 21 Bde on the previous day had been given on

as the WADI DAQOUN and it was hoped to use this line as the S.L. The plan provided for an immediate move of the Bn during the night 6/7 Jul from ER REZANIYE through EL LABIYE across the DAMOUR River to a F.U.P. on track leading from EL BOUM to point 495. The 2/5 Bn was on the left, and 2/3 Bn on the right.

It was decided to move the Bn forward from EL BOUM in diamond formation with "C" Coy leading, "D" on the right, "A" on the left and "B" in rear as the reserve. One section of MG were put under comd of "A" Coy and one section in reserve with "B" Coy. A detachment of Mortar was allotted to each "C" and "D" Coys, owing to the broken nature of the ground on the right flank.

Due to the formation to be adopted, the Bn left EL REZANIYE in the following order of march - C.O. and A/Adjt with B.M., "C" Coy, "D" Coy, "A" Coy, Bn. H.Q., "B" Coy., H.Q. details (to form a rear echelon at EL BOUM). All mules except Mortar and MG were placed at the rear of the column so that they would not impede progress. The Bn moved off at 0010 hrs in single file with a guide from 21 Bde - guide knew the route as far as LABIYE and not to the river. The estimated time to the river was $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours.

After passing LABIYE the track became precipitous, men frequently using the seat of their trousers to make any progress, and a light shower of rain fell to add further to their difficulties.

Approximately halfway down, the track entirely disappeared in shale from shelling and mortar bombs. Some equipment lay strewn round marking the route of the 27 Bn on the previous night. Fifteen minutes were spent endeavouring to locate the track. The mules were ordered to be left at this point, if they managed to reach it, and the gear manhandled.

The Bn moved downwards and eventually located the track. On arrival on the river road, "D" Coy 27 Bn was found to be in a banana grove and the O.C. pointed out the river crossing, advising that the signal wire led to Bn HQ at EL BOUM.

The B.M. remained at this point and requested C.O. to move to the left flank of the unit at the F.U.P. to liaise with Lt.Col. King, C.O. of 2/5 Bn., who would give any orders on policy affecting both units.

The head of the unit reached the NORTH side of the river at 0300 hrs. A diligent search failed to locate the signal wire after it passed under a pile of loose earth dislodged by recent shelling.

After fifteen minutes rest the men were then led by the C.O. straight up the hillside; a more difficult climb it would be hard to experience.

Towards the summit the track was located in the half light and progress was easier. The leading coy reached ELBOUM at 0530 hrs but it took until 0730 to collect stragglers and it was found that eight men were missing, as was the Intelligence Officer who had been injured in the descent to the river.

The Mortar Officer, on instructions that one Mortar at least must be brought forward, even if it meant manhandling, managed to bring one up by 1000 hrs.

After breakfast and one hours rest the Bn was ready to move at approximately 0845 hrs (less Mortars and SA/AYRES)

C.O. endeavoured to locate C.O. 2/5 Bn with Liaison Officers and guides. Saw Liaison Officer of 2/5 Bn who was also looking for C.O. Eventually a message arrived and Conference held at 0950 hrs.

HQ 27 Bn was located and C.O. advised any undue movement at EL BAUM led to enemy shelling from a new arty posn to the Eastward. C.O. 27 Bn stated two coys 14 Bn had passed through and should at that time be on DARAYA feature. The unit had patrols on feature 560.

C.O. 2/5 Bn desired advance to commence at 1015 hrs, by O.Cs. coys 2/5 Bn stated that they were not ready, so start time was set at 1030 hrs.

The Bn moved off at 1030 hrs with 500 yds between Coys. Communication with Bde was not altogether satisfactory messages being sent by the only Lucas lamp in the unit to Bde O.P. on point 394, The line of advance being due NORTH.

"C" Coy set a stiff pace and the other coys were hard pressed, as owing to their small numbers each man was carrying on an average of 300 rds of ammunition besides ~~and~~ equipment and bombs.

The DARAYA feature was reached at 1230 hrs, where a halt was made and men rested.

O.C. Coy 27 Bn - Capt Nicholls - stated he had patrols on feature 560; despite the enemy MG fire from that point. He stated 14 Bn had moved a coy across WADI DAQOUN and had now swung in the direction of DAMOUR. It was found later that the Coy had moved across on the WEST end of the feature KHEURBET EL BIAR. Intermittent MG fire came from KHEURBET EL BIAR feature particularly from positions in vicinity of EL 1267 1999.

Heavy MG fire was heard from WADI in direction of DAMOUR and 3" Mortar was detached from "D" Coy and sent over, as it was thought 2/5 Bn were meeting opposition on their front, but returned advising it was a coy of 14 Bn, and the assistance was not required.

All contact with 2/5 Bn had been lost after leaving the F.U.P. owing to the nature of the terrain. The map failed to reveal the true nature and steepness of the wadis.

It was decided to push on. "D" Coy moved on according to previous plan, infiltrating into the wadi and occupying the EL GARGATE feature.

The remaining Coys were then ordered to attack the KHEURBET EL BIAR feature. "C" Coy on the right - objective 'the HUMP' - actually pt. 335. "B" Coy centre - objective STONE HOUSE - with "A" Coy covering the left flank across the WADI.

The approach to the WADI commenced at 1330 hrs. Capt Bennett, 2/5 Bn, arrived with his coy, coming up in rear of 2/3 Bn HQ. He pointed out our attack was over the Bn Boundary. It was pointed out the whole feature had to be taken and decided that Capt Bennett's coy would take over "A" Coy's role on the left flank. "A" Coy were ordered to remain in the Wadi bed.

C.O. 2/5 Bn then arrived and stopped Capt Bennett's coy from moving and held 2/5 Bn on DARAYA feature.

Owing to heavy MG fire breaking out at certain intervals from different points CO 2/5 Bn decided to remain in his position and ask for artillery support in continuance of the advance the following morning.

The coys were on their objectives by 1500 hrs, although a number of sniper's posts remained to be cleaned up.

Bn HQ on being acquainted with the decision of CO 2/5 Bn moved forward at 1600 hrs to Pt 335.

OC MG Pl and 3" Mortar being ordered to remain at DARAYA until a

Salable crossing over the WADI DAQOUN could be found for mules, but to move forward as soon as possible the following day.

"A" Coy were sent up the Western end of WADI DAQOUN and moved into position on forward slopes of Pt 335.

"B" Coy earlier cleaned up two MG posts holding up advance of a coy 14 Bn towards DAMOUR, but a sniper on an Hotchkiss in between Bn HQ and "B" Coy continued to give trouble.

The Liaison Officer with a Thompson Gun and a section from "C" Coy endeavoured to locate him in the failing light.

At 1745 hrs the enemy appeared to be preparing a counter attack against "B" Coy from a ridge on the WEST of their position. Heavy MG fire opened up but the attack was broken up.

A patrol was seen again at 1900 hrs and another attack appeared to be developing. A platoon from "C" Coy was moved round to assist but finally routed out the snipers - about ten in number who escaped in the half light. At 1830 hrs the 2/5 Bn were observed moving in single file down the SOUTH bank of the WADI, the HQ Coy passing through "B" Coy area at 2200 hrs that night and advising they were going on to the forward ridge.

The Liaison Sgt arrived from 2/5 Bn at 2015 hrs and advised the unit was moving forward to its objective.

"A" Coy sent patrols along enemy 'phone wire to feature SOUTH of Pt 569 but failed to locate any enemy or O.P.

Not knowing the exact positions of 2/5 Bn it was decided to remain in the existing positions until daylight.

MG Platoon opened fire at DARAYA at 1800 hrs. Target appeared to be feature 560. At 0600 hrs heavy fire was heard to come from DARAYA and feature 560, and the enemy appeared to be attacking. The 3" mortar was heard firing.

Whilst on KHEURBET EL BIAR feature the enemy gun positions could be seen through the EASTERN end of WADI DAQOUN and a request was made for an F.O.O. to be sent forward as our guns were shelling the wrong area (and at 1500 hrs shelled "C" and "D" Coys as they reached their objectives).

The enemy heavily shelled EL BOUM during the day, disorganizing the Unit supply line. The R.A.P. Sgt was killed and one stretcher bearer was wounded. Two mules were killed.

The Bn immediately moved on with "B" Coy on the right, "C" on the left, and "A" in rear. "D" Coy remained covering the right flank in rear astride the WADI and GARGATE feature.

The Bde Liaison Officer moved off to try and locate 2/5 Bn HQ.

"C" Coy arrived on their objective and dispersed the Platoons with two forward and one in reserve, which in effect lined a deep wadi NORTH of EN NAAME and hospital.

"B" Coy endeavoured to hold their front but as it had a number of ridges and was approx 1000 yds the mortar on moving up was attached to that coy.

"B" Coy were ordered to send a section patrol to "BARE FEATURE", actually Pt 569. Whilst "A" Coy were ordered to send a standing patrol on the "WOODED PIMPLE" to the SOUTH of it.

CO then on advice of Liaison Sgt 2/3 Bn found CO 2/5 Bn and Bde

at 0600 hrs 4 No Coy reported that snipers could be seen in the hospital area

at 1145 hrs on 3 July liaison Sgt of 2/5 Bn was sent off to locate 2/5 Bn HQ but found to return by 0745 hrs with 2/3 Bn liaison Sgt was sent off

Liaison Officer. The dispositions of 2/5 Bn were obtained.

Heavy MG fire then opened up from BARE FEATURE and "B" Coy was held up, one man being wounded.

"A" Coy was then ordered to attack BARE FEATURE with a line of approach back to KHEURBET EL BIAR and under cover of timber to "WOODED PIMPLE".

Owing to fatigue of the men, which was increased due to necessity of using rocks for movement to avoid MG fire, the OC rested the men halfway up the feature and dumped their packs, then moved to the summit where they rested again; the actual attack did not develop until 1430 hrs.

A signal to Bde was sent giving the exact position of the 105 mm Bty at BAOUROCHE but requesting it should not be shelled until after our attack.

The attack was successful but once again a sniper remained carefully concealed until dark and continued to annoy the personnel in vicinity of Pt. 353 - although "A" Coy dislodged one sniper from a tree.

"A" Coy was placed in a difficult position; the enemy Bty was only 500 yds distant and was in a position to use open sights, but the LMGs were laid on the Bty and any movement before dark towards the guns discouraged. Fifteen men from "B" Coy were placed under command of "A" Coy to assist in consolidation and to repel any counter attack.

Owing to the enemy re-occupying feature 560, supply trains were disorganised before arriving at DARAYA, but the wireless and one mule with ammunition managed to reach that point.

"D" Coy by superhuman efforts manhandled some S.A.A. forward and two boxes reached "A" Coy just prior to the attack. As the wireless was ordered forward, two men of the pioneer platoon strapped it on their shoulders, and struggled over the Wadi DAQOUN without damaging it, giving a wonderful demonstration of physical endurance.

"D" Coy captured six prisoners and a water party took another twelve artillerymen into custody who were wandering in from the hills.

During the night "A" Coy attacked the arty position at BAROUAROCHE after some preparation from the LMGs, but found the crews were withdrawing and had had time to run four of the guns back. Five guns were captured.

During the day L/Cpl Hickson of "I" Section endeavoured to locate 14 Bn area in vicinity of DAMOUR, as it was thought protection would be required on EL BATADIYE feature should the enemy withdraw in force from DAMOUR. Hickson reported one man of 14 Bn lying dead in vicinity of 1255 1955; the enemy still occupied DAMOUR, and a patrol tried to capture him but he escaped, a platoon of 14 Bn covering him with LMG fire.

A platoon of "D" Coy was then moved to Pt. 335. Later Bde put "C" Coy of 2/5 Bn under command to be disposed in that area. The coy moved in at 2000 hrs.

Permission was asked to move "D" Coy up to occupy "WOODED PIMPLE" in order to support "A" Coy and allow the fifteen men to return to "B" Coy as the latter Coy was holding its front with only eighteen men.

At midday on 9 Jul "D" Coy was relieved by 14 Bn and moved to "WOODED PIMPLE". "A" Coy sent in three prisoners.

The MGs were ordered forward and found a route through DAMOUR, arriving at 1800 hrs.

One Section was sent to "A" Coy and one to "B" Coy, but as the mules were unable to continue due to lameness a slight delay occurred.

It is considered that the MGs were responsible for holding the rear line at DARAYA and smashing the enemy attack. The prisoners of war spoke in awe of the effective fire on their unit, 1/6 Regt. Foreign Legion.

The enemy ranged on WESTERN end of BATADIYE and EL FATIHA with air-burst shrapnel.

The men had been without rations all day as a mule train which left EL BOUM at 2200 hrs on 8 Jul failed to appear, but M.T. brought up dry rations and a hot meal at 1700 hrs. Owing to the mules being exhausted and lame only three coys and MG Platoon received the benefit of the hot meal.

At 1400 hrs Bde issued a warning order for "B" Coy to move to area 1282 2032, to cover the right flank of 2/5 Bn, who were moving forward. The O.C. left on his recce at 1530 hrs but owing to nature of country did not return until 2200 hrs.

Patrols were sent out to cover position during the night and the coy moved out at daylight on 10 Jul, the MG section being withdrawn and placed under command of "C" Coy. Another 3" mortar arrived and was placed under command of "D" Coy.

"B" Coy came under heavy shelling and Mortar fire that evening but suffered only two casualties. The 3" Mortar knocked out two enemy MG posts with direct hits.

"C" Coy 2/5 Bn rejoined its own unit and FOO from 10 Arty reported to point 569. On morning of 11 Jul Bde ordered "D" Coy to objective 1305 2045 and "A" Coy to 1298 2029.

During the afternoon six figures were seen to move on the feature 130203. After the Coys passed AIN DRAFFIL they were not seen again until "D" Coy Lucas Lamp opened up at 1800 hrs from 1297 2034.

MG fire had been heard in the WADIS during the afternoon. "D" Coy reported "A" Coy on objective and enemy approximately one Bn with heavy MG 600 yds to their right front and on feature 130203. "D" Coy had contacted "B" Coy and were remaining in existing position.

The light was failing quickly due mainly to mountain mist but 10 Bty registered immediately on enemy feature and laid out on a D.F. task, to be fired on a white Verrey light from either "A" or "D" Coy.

During the night the enemy shelled "A" and "D" Coy areas very heavily but the men obtained cover on the reverse slopes of their features. At 2200 hrs a message was flashed forward to Coys ordering them to cease fire at 0001 hrs 12 Jul 41.

It took until 2345 hrs to repeat to "D" Coy and "B" Coy did not receive it until 0030 hrs. If sent by runner it would have taken at least four hours.

Upon review it is considered the small number of casualties is due to a number of factors:-

- (i) The personnel taking part in the battle are all trained men and make the best possible use of cover;
- (ii) The French MG were sited in high positions in the hills and they failed to appreciate the full effect of plunging fire;

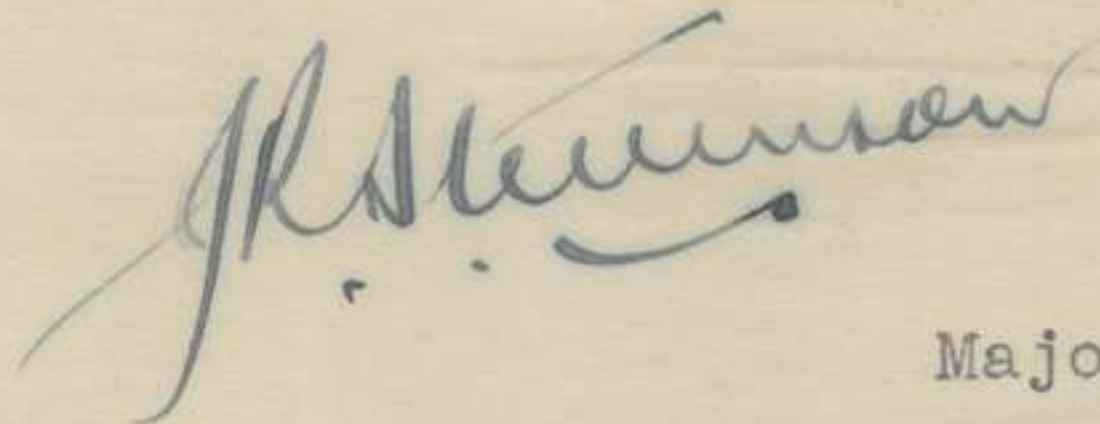
(iii) Although the French MG withheld their fire until sufficient men were concentrated in the area to present a good target, their opening fire went high and our troops immediately advanced towards the MG so that the French rarely dropped quickly enough to catch them.

The campaign has brought out some amazing feats of endurance and determination in the men. Two men, although exhausted, were seen to struggle on until they collapsed and then did not have the strength to rise for over half an hour.

Water presented a problem but the unit was fortunate in that every waterhole shown on the map except Pt.569 contained drinkable water a pipe line carrying water to DAMOUR which was found broken in WADI DAQOUN provided the necessary water in the WADI area.

The remaining men are hard and fit for any man who was at all soft dropped out early in the advance. The men themselves say they found it more strenuous than either Libya or Greece.

The Unit appreciates the assistance of 17 Aust Inf Bde HQ and the information which was pushed forward despite the difficulties of communication and the nature of the country.



Major.

Admin Comd 2/3 Aust Inf Bn.

July 1941

17 Aust. Inf. Bde. Int. Sumo.

Official War Diary No 1

APPENDIX NO A

17 AUST INF BDE INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY No.1.

Based on information up to 1500 hours.

OWN OPS. 17 Bde, consisting of 2/3 and 2/5 Bns, reached R. DAMOUR at 12551956 after a difficult night march over extremely rough country and along tracks permitting single file only.

Tps formed up on S.T. 12631967 - 12661970 according to plan but later than anticipated. The left flank was shelled during this period.

The axis of advance gave defiladed protection to right Bn but left Bn was subjected to shell fire on F.U.P. during the advance to WADI NAHR DEQUON.

Left Bn encountered strongly held enemy defended localities between Pts 212-218 and a less strongly held locality on Spur FOUR-A-CHAUX. Both were engaged with slight casualties to us. Right Bn escaped enemy opposition.

Sub-units of 2/14 and 2/27 Bns were engaging the enemy in WADI NAHR DEQUON which held our advance until the situation was cleared.

At approx 1900 hrs the advance continued. 2/3 Bn occupied Pts 442 and 569 and, at this stage, were counter-attacked which held up their advance until counter-attack was defeated. 2/5 Bn moved to their objectives and, after crossing the WADI, encountered M.M.G. localities which were mopped up quickly. The left Coy encountered strong resistance which was contested most vigorously by both sides. A strong fighting detachment were sent to their aid. The ground was held and it is believed that 4 enemy guns and 3 gunners were captured. 2/5 Bn gained their objectives by 2400 hrs and established control of the Coast Road on their left. Their line included BEIN MAR JARJOS - EN NAMME - RD Block.

2/3 Bn continued its advance after daylight 8 JUL.

At 1130 hrs 1 Coy 2/5 Bn attacked N. edge of DAMOUR from direction of EN NAMME under cover of mortar fire. They occupied NORTHERN portion with Coy H.Q. at 12451999.

Great difficulties were experienced with communications which were maintained by the use of wireless, cable or visual. A Bde O.P. was established on Pt. 394 in sq. 125195, which gave a complete view of fwd areas, and was the means of a regular flow of accurate information.

ENEMY AIR ACTIVITY. At 1400 hrs, 2 twin engined bombers with fighter escort flew over area 122193 and at 1416 hrs bombed area 12671974.

ENEMY SHELLING. During 7/8 JUL, most shelling came from Areas ABEY, OALE and KAFR MATTA.

Enemy 81 mm mortar was very effective, particularly with it's long range.

Distribution.

2/5 Bn	Copy No.1.
2/3 Bn	2
H.Q. 7 AUST DIV	3
FILE	4,
War Diary	5,6,9
H.Q. 6 AUST DIV	7
Bde Comd	8

[Signature]
 Major
 B/M 17 AUST INF BDE

GROUND OPS. At about 1830 hrs on the 7 JUL, 2/3 Bn continued its advance across WADI DAQOUN. They were unable to get the guns of M.M.G. Pl across. C.O. 2/3 Bn ordered them to take up defensive positions, on DARAYA Ridge. At about 2000 hrs they were attacked by strong enemy forces advancing from the direction of KAPR MATTA. The enemy force was destroyed by M.G. fire, supported by 1 3" mortar which could not be got across Wadi as Tps advanced. The C.O. 2/3 Bn describes this action as most vigorous and determined on the part of our MG's.

In order to protect the fwd advance of 2/3 Bn from WADI DAQOUN to their objective, the C.O. detached a Coy to hold 569 on the right flank. While taking up position the Tps located an enemy 105 mm bty near BAOUAROCHE. A raiding party was organised to capture the guns which moved fwd under cover of darkness. The position was surrounded and five guns were captured. The country over which the party proceeded is extremely rough and precipitous. Able leadership and daring action produced one of the brightest episodes in the battle. C.O. 2/5 Pd Regt provided gun crews to man the guns next morning.

The Coy of 2/5 Bn which was blocking main DAMOUR-BEYRUTH Rd in area approx 12432017 were attacked at approx 1500 hrs 8 JUL by A.F.V's. strongly supported by inf and M.G's. This force greatly outnumbered the Coy 2/5 Bn. At one stage 1743 hrs, the coy was ordered to withdraw to a more secure posn from which they could still engage enemy and control the wadi.

The attack was finally broken when our Tps contacted our artillery who put down excellent concentrations. It is believed that neither A.F.V's. nor M.T. were able to escape Northwards, but some tps made their escape along the beach which the Coy was unable to control.

The town of DAMOUR fell before noon 9 JUL and 2 Coys of 2/2 Pioneer Bn, Arty & Cav moved forward towards KARACOL-KALDE. 2/5 Bn relieved 2/2 Pioneer Bn during the night 9/10 JUL and moved fwd of 2/2 Pioneer Bn posn to stronger posns nearer reported enemy locality, and at dawn occupied general line with Coys in areas 12592048 - 12602041; 12622040 - 12632033; 12692081 - 12632018. Approx 100 shells fell in area 124202 throughout the night 9/10 JUL. "B" Coy area was subjected to intermittent shelling from 0500 hrs 10 JUL and bombs were dropped in area at 1115 hrs.

At 1530 hrs 10 JUL 2/5 Bn continued advance which was temporarily checked after being subjected to heavy mortar fire by and M.M.G's in vicinity of grid 205. This was overcome ^{with} the assistance of carrier "B" Sqn 6 Aust Cav. "A" Coy 2/5 Bn occupied spur 12762036 to protect right flank and were engaged by enemy M.G.'s. "B" and "D" Coys continued along line of Rd to rd block at 12672065, "C" Coy following in reserve in rear.

The Tp of "B" Sqn 6 Aust Cav leading advance was heavily shelled from direction of BEYRUTH. There were some casualties and another Tp was sent in support.

After reaching rd block "B" Coy was heavily engaged; "D" Coy closing to left to assist and H.Q. Coy 2/5 Bn - 2 Tps of French tanks and 4 Vickers carriers sent to reinforce. 2/3 Bn moving on right to protect flank.

An enemy pill box covered the block with M.G. fire. "B" Coy were established in some houses and the only position from which the loophole could be engaged was one requiring a left handed rifleman who placed 4 shots at a range of 400 yds through the loophole. This caused garrison to flee and the position was eased.

A line was established running from Rd block 12662063 to 12802030, thence to Hospital.

From this point 2/3 Bn cover right flank down to Hill 569.

DISTRIBUTION.

2/3 Bn	Copy No. 1.
2/5 Bn	Copy No. 2.
H.Q. # 7 AUST DIV	3.
War Diary	4, 5.
File	6.

[Signature]
Lieutenant
Brigade Intelligence Office,
17 AUST INF BDE.

O.W.D. 1

SECRET
COPY NO. 7
11 JUL 41

17 AUST INF BDE INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY NO. 1. at 2100 hrs

GROUND OPS. During night 10/11 JUL, 2/3 Bn carried out active patrolling on right flank 2/5 Bn. Today 2/3 Bn moved fwd over extremely rough and difficult country to take up positions to protect the right flank. Coy areas :

A - 12982031 B - 12792031
C - 12642018 D - 12652063

Further valuable patrol work carried out by 2/3 contacting 2/5 Bn and in area of detached Coy covering extreme right flank.

C Coy 2/3 Bn was detached and came under command 2/5 Bn moving to position astride road 12482032. 2010 hrs A Coy 2/3 being heavily shelled from battery well north their position. D Coy 2/3 only reached 12982031 as enemy opposition encountered 600 yds to their right and front in fair strength with mortars and MG's. 2/5 Bn consolidated its positions taken up when B Coy held up at 12652063 road block. This area and the road for 2000 yards south was heavily mortared and intermittently shelled by the enemy from 2300 hrs until 1200 hrs this morning, 11 JUL.

The shelling appeared to be by 75 mm guns and 2 larger type about 6" calibre.

The enemy were in occupation of H.O. Mill Box 400 yds North of block up till dark. Three other blockhouses were located north of road block. At approx 0615 hrs 11 JUL a few tanks came over rise North of Road Block - approx 12 tanks North of Wireless Mast - 12722074 - 5 or 6 in houses around mast. They dispersed when shelled by 2/5 Pd Regt. General shelling took place over area throughout the morning. Bombs were dropped on the high ground rear of the road block 127205 at 1333 hrs.

During the lull in shelling patrols were ordered fwd from all fwd Coys to make contact with enemy. "A" Coy patrol contacted 3 H.O's and one mortar at 12852047. "D" Coy fired on by 3 or 4 H.O's at 12762062. A strong patrol from "B" Coy reached the area of the wireless mast 12722074 and was heavily fired upon by mortar and 2 H.O. posts, one North, the other West of mast, and sniped from ridge East of mast and fired on by 2 pounder gun. The patrol withdrew to 12702070 and our artillery shelled area. Enemy replied in kind, heavily shelling area wireless mast - south to road block.

At approx 1715 hrs C O 2/5 Bn ordered patrols and Coys who were following up to withdraw and hold the line as occupied last night, and not to attempt to take enemy positions through the pine wood until further plan worked out. Close contact and pressure is constantly maintained by patrols. At 1900 hrs heavy H.O. and mortar fire on fwd positions 2/5 Bn.


BRIGADIER
Comd 17 AUST INF BDE.

DISTRIBUTION.
As for No. 2.

17 AUST INF BDE INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY NO.4. 1200 hrs

GROUND OPS.

On 2/5 Bn front heavy intermittent enemy shelling and mortar fire continued throughout the night 11/12 JUL until 0150 hrs. The fwd tps reported no M.G. fire or ground movement by enemy tps after dark.

On the right flank the enemy were very active on "A" Coy 2/3 Bn front (12982029), the enemy being located on high ground 13032033. Heavy intermittent shelling and M.G. fire in fwd Coy areas 2/3 Bn from 2200 hrs 11 JUL until 0145 hrs 12 JUL. However, there were only 2 casualties.

DISPOSITIONS OF H.Q. 17 AUST INF BDE OP AT 0001 hrs 12 JUL 41.

H.Q. 17 Aust Inf Bde	12501998
2/3 Bn	12832008
"A" Coy	12982029
"B" Coy	12822032
"C" Coy (under command)	
2/5 Bn	12442020
"D" Coy	12982035
1 "B" Coy 2/3 Aust	
M.G. Bn (with 2/3 Bn)	
2/5 Bn	12432018
"A" Coy	12742057
"B" Coy	12682066
"C" Coy	12692048
"D" Coy	12742061
Tp 6 Aust A/T Bty	with 2/5 Bn
"B" Sqn 6 Aust Cav	12371975
2/2 Pioneer Bn	12451996
"B" Coy	12412020
"D" Coy	12412015

V. Ashfield Lieutenant
B/I.C. 17 AUST INF BDE

DISTRIBUTION.

2/3 Bn	Copy No.1
2/5 Bn	Copy No.2
HQ. 6 AUST DIV	3
HQ. 7 AUST DIV	4
FILE	5
WAR DIARY	6,7

17 AUST INF BDE INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY NO.5.

Based on information up to 1200 hours 14 JUL.

GROUND OPS.

Our Tps have stood fast on positions occupied as at 0001 hrs 12 JUL with small patrols in front of F.D.L's.

ENEMY ACTIVITY.

DIV arranged that the enemy envoys were to be met at our F.D.L's blindfolded and brought through our lines by us. Col KING 2/5 Bn was to meet them at block, carry out these arrangements and bring envoys back, meet Brigade Commander and proceed to 7 Aust Div H.Q. Unfortunately another plan was conceived, not conveyed to us, and envoys came through Rd block at 0820 hrs 12 JUL at great speed and could not be stopped by us.

They returned through block at 0130 hrs 13 JUL with British Officer.

2/3 Bn reported (T.O.O. 1930 hrs 12 JUL) considerable enemy activity fwd "D" AND "A" Coys. "A" Coy estimated strength of enemy as one battalion strongly supported by HOTCHKISS M.G.'s. The civilian Mayor of A RAMON stated that there were 300 enemy tps in this area. At 2020 hrs 12 JUL 2/5 Bn reported that French Officer came fwd to road block under flag of truce and requested permission to lay line to our outpost to link up with a line on our side so that General DENTZ could keep in touch with his envoys.

As the officer had no papers and no notification of this had been received by us, permission was refused. At 1250 hrs 1 Aust Corps Sig Officer was reported by 2/5 Bn to have laid a line up to road block and had linked up with French line. Brigade Commander ordered lines to be unlinked and not to be linked until orders were received through us to do so. H.Q. 7 Aust Div knew nothing of the proposal and when 1 Aust Corps were contacted, we were informed that a misunderstanding had occurred and that we were to give every assistance but lines were NOT to be linked until we received the order to do so from them.

At 1044 hrs 13 JUL 2/5 reported much movement by French tps in front of "B" Coy. At 1200 hrs 13 JUL 2/3 Bn reported that a mule train of approx 60 mules commenced to move with enemy tps N.E. from hill 13052035. The movement of much M.T. could be heard in the hills during the morning. 2/3 Bn reported (T.O.O. 1653 13 JUL) that approx 400 enemy tps and 50 mules evacuated posn 12842045 moving in the direction wireless station 12712075. There appeared to be 15 covered trucks like tp carriers around the wireless station. At approx 1800 hrs 13 JUL a French major accompanied by two adjutants approached our outpost posn near the ~~xxxx~~ road block and requested permission to remove and disarm their mines in the vicinity to prevent them being a danger to us. The necessary permission was given and the mines were removed, disarmed and stacked about 250 yds from our outpost.

This morning 14 JUL at 0650 hrs a French naval petty officer and a civilian approached our outpost near the Rd block expressing the desire to join the Free French forces. The P.O. was taken into protective custody and the civilian returned to whence he came. At 0905 hrs French envoy party conducted by Lt-Col ONSLOW passed through rd block moving South. They reported that natives were wrecking plant at wireless mast. A patrol from 2/5 Bn was sent out at 0925 hrs under flag of truce to protect the wireless installations and the area in its near vicinity.

P.O.W's. 13 JUL. A C.S.M. from 2/3 Bn returned after being P.O.W. in TRIPOLI and brought news of three other P.O.W's still in French hand. SUTHERLAND and RITCHIE from FUGIT and one gunner from the crew of a crashed BLENHEIM bomber.

DISTRIBUTION. As per list.

V. G. Shepherd
Lieut, B.I.O.