

**AWM52**  
**2nd Australian Imperial Force and**  
**Commonwealth Military Forces unit war**  
**diaries, 1939-45 War**

Item number: 8/2/17

17 Infantry Brigade

October 1941



Official War Diary

NOV 23 1941

Oct 1941

17 Pde



20  
Oct MONTH

1941 YEAR

A.I.F. FORM C 2118A

# WAR DIARY

Official  
W.D.I.  
(RENDER UNDER SECRET COVER)

UNIT 17 Aust. Inf. Bde.

For material required, see F.S.R. Vol. 1, Sec. 174

PLACE	DATE	SUMMARY OF EVENTS Routine training details and information given in Casualty Returns are NOT required	REFERENCES TO APPENDICES	C.O.'s REPORT AND COMMENTS ON MONTH (On Operations, Equipment, Movement, Health, Administration, etc.)
KFAR AKKA SYRIA	1-OCT	<p>Captain Lowen returned after contacting Brig Savige in Palestine.</p> <p>"I" section track recce party reach El Yammoune ref baalbek 1/50000 17812432 after crossing range from Hasroun. Party cold, tired but very cheerful.</p> <p>Bde Comdr called at 16 Bde H.Q. after leaving 2/6 Bn where he spent the night. After a fast trip across the Sinai desert arrived in Cairo in the late afternoon.</p>		
"	2-Oct	<p>LT Col King Admin Comd visited 7 Aust Div to see Gen. Allen.</p> <p>G3 I Capt Issel called at Bde H.Q.</p> <p>B.M. Major Bishop returned to the fold looking very fit and well after his recent operation.</p> <p>Brig Savige made a round of visits in Cairo which included calls at A.I.F., H.Q., Heliopolis, Aust Trades Commis. in Egypt., M.E.F., H.Q., and H.Q., A.I.F. Details in Cairo.</p>		
"	3-Oct	<p>Lt Col King attended lecture by Col Baillon from G.H.Q., M.E. on "Direct Air Support" at Div H.Q. At last it appears that the army in the field will have aircraft under command.</p> <p>Capt Lowen left for Cairo. We are all sorry to see him go and hope that it will not be long before he is back with us again.</p> <p>Bde Comd called at H.Q., A.I.F. Details in Cairo and Aust Trade Commissioner in Egypt.</p>		

A150 Mob Print Sec AIF-25M-4/41-G.

Signature

*I. J. Schfeldt*



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KFAR AKKAB SYRIA	3-Oct	2/3 Bn reported the loss of 3500 rounds of Tommy gun amm. Prompt action with the assistance of our Bde Interpreter promised good results.		
		2/3 Bn reported conference held at H.Q., N.O. i/c Tripoli to discuss installations of A/A and A/Tk guns around harbour. Posns to be decided after recce.		
"	4-Oct	P.A.D., and Security Instruction No.1 Syria issued to units.  A.Q.Col.Secombe, Capt Duffy, and D.A.P.M., Capt Fawkiner called to discuss arrangements for visit of G.O.C. in C. M.E. Lieut General Auchinleck.		
"	5-Oct	Lt Col King and L.O.2 Lt Brown visited 2/5 Bn.  Int Section 2nd track recce party left to recce tracks in the left Bn sector from F.D.L.s to Ehdn.		
		Bde H.Q. cricket team with S.C. a member played an enjoyable but unsuccessful game against 8 Rec Sec.		
"	6-Oct	A quiet day with very little activity on the "paper war front"		
"	7-Oct	Lt Col Chad G.O. 7 Div Sigs and Capt Avery 7 Div Sigs lectured to Bde staff, CoO.s, Adjs, and Sig Offrs of Bns on the new signal procedure system which will come into operation in a few weeks. The new procedure appears to be more secure though it is doubtful if the new R/T code will be used during operations due to waste of time.		

A150 Mob Print Sec AIF-25M-4/41-G.

Signature

*B. Schepel*



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KFAR AKKA	7-Oct	<p>The G.O.C. in C. Lieut Gen Auchinleck on tour of inspection 7 Aust Div area inspected parade of 2/3 Bn and then proceeded to Les Cedres where 2/5 Bn guard of honour was there to greet him. He spent the night at Mon Repos hotel and looked at 2/5 Bn dispositions on Col de Cedres wednesday morning. The programme went without a hitch in our area and the General seemed very satisfied with the turn out and bearing of the troops.</p>		
"	8-Oct	<p>Lieut menzies L.O.3 and Capt Lawrence sup Offr returned from leave.</p> <p>Just another quiet day. I section track recce party reached Ehdn. Lack of water for mules and cold made going most difficult.</p>		
"	9-Oct	<p>B.I.O. visited H.Q. 2/5 Bn and "C" Coy area 10000 ft up. Apparently he could not take it as he went to bed on his return and stayed there.</p> <p>Bde Comdr left Cairo for Palestine and spent the night at 2/7 Bn H.Q. at Hill 69.</p>		
"	10-Oct	<p>It appears that the "Tripoli Fortress scheme" will be radically changed as a result of the visit of the G.O.C. in C. 2/5 Bn will not be left to freeze on the heights.</p> <p>Bde Comdr with Lt Col <sup>Quinn</sup> Gwynne inspected 2/7 Bn troops and area. In the afternoon visited Jaffa rifle range where H.Q. Coy 2/7 Bn were firing. In the evening travelled to Jerusalem and later to Tel Aviv.</p>		

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Signature *R. Schofield Hunt*



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KFAR AKKA	11-Oct	<p>Lt Col King visited 2/5 Bn to give them details as known of change of defensive scheme and later had a look over some of the ground where proposed new line will be. ( Tourza 166260-serhel 167271 section where movement is confined to mule tracks.</p> <p>7 Aust Div draft O.O. No.6 arrived 1630 hrs giving details of proposed alterations to "Tripoli Fortress" defence. S.C. visited more villages in anticipation of billets being required by unit constructing proposed new line.</p> <p>Bde Comdr visited the Lord Melchett Jewish farm colony near Tel Aviv.</p>		
"	12-Oct	<p>Lt Col King and B.I.O. looked over new area included in new sector for which we are responsible. ( Area DEIRBILLA 159257 HARDINE 162255 AINSAAB 164256 )</p> <p>S.C., Sig O., and L.O.3 dined with the Muktar of Abi</p> <p>Bde Comdr attended Jewish recruiting rally and demonstration at football stadium Tel Aviv and in the evening travelled back to Jerusalem.</p>		
"	13-Oct	<p>Lt Col King and B.I.O. continued recce of left flank of new sector DOUMA 161251 BCHELE 159251 area. B.M. Major Bishop back on the job again.</p>		
"	14-Oct	<p>Lt Col King and B.M. with representatives from units attended demonstrations with flame throwing devices.</p>		

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Signature *V. J. Schepherd Hunt*



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KFAR AKKA	15-Oct	<p>Lt Col King, B.M., and B.I.O. left Bde H.Q. on recce of area on right flank of new bde sector, AAOURA 157255 ARSIA 155253 BECHTOUDAR 159253 to decide on position of F.D.L.s in this area.</p> <p>Heavy snow and hail caused "C" Coy 2/5 Bnto be withdrawn from their positions on the high peaks.</p> <p>"I" section personnel returned in an exhausted condition from a three day recce of mule tracks in the vicinity of Col de Cedres. They spent a very stormy night on the high peaks. Blinding blizzards and intense cold made the last day of their recce a severe test of endurance.</p>		
"	16-Oct	<p>Bde Int Section personnel continued with recce of mule tracks in the new defensive area.</p>		
"	17-Oct	<p>Lt Col King visited 2/5 Bn on the heights to see how they were after the blizzard. One man of the 2/5 Bn was reported to have been lost in the bivouac area for 17 hours during the blizzard. He was taken to hospital suffering severely from frost bite.</p> <p>Major Bishop made further recce of forward Bde right flank in Douma area and made recce for proposed Bde H.Q. on Chekka road area.</p>		
"	18-Oct	<p>Track recce were continued by Bde "I" Section.</p> <p>Various forms of sport were being organised by Major Palmer S.A. for Bde H.Q. personnel. A cricket match between Bde H.Q. and 2/2 A/Tk Regt was interrupted by heavy rain.</p>		

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Signature *H. Schepfer*



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KFAR AKKA	19-Oct	Track and road reces in the Douma - Jebail area were continued by Bde Int Section.		
"	20-Oct	<p>Bde. left for Palestine to contact Brigadier</p> <p>6 Div Op Instr No.1 arrived.</p> <p>Lt Col King, B.M., and L.O. left Bde H.Q. for Baalbek area on recce of positions covered by 6 Div Op Instr No.1</p> <p>Major McGregor 2/3 Bn took over the administration of Bde H.Q. during the temporary absence of the Brigadier and Lt Col King.</p> <p>At At 1200 hrs recce party consisting of Bde H.Q. party.- Lt Col King, Major Bishop, Lieut Menzies --2/3 Bn party, Lt Col Stevenson and Lieut Hunter--2/5 Bn party, Major Starr, Capt W. Mayberry, Adj, and Lieut Strom I.O. left for 6 Aust Div, Wavell Barracks, Baalbek. The party reported to 6 Aust Div at 1700 hrs were instructed to proceed to and stay with --Bde H.Q. party to H.Q. 19 Aust Inf Bde, 2/3 Bn party to 2/8 Bn, and <del>2/5</del> 2/11 Bn party to 2/11 Bn.</p>		
"	21-Oct	<p>6 Div boundaries for Suez Canal defence scheme were marked on maps by Bde Int Section.</p> <p>Bde party and Lt Col Wrigley 2/6 Bn made a general recce of Div defensive position across valley of River Orontes. G.O.C. explained scheme and allotted Bde areas. Lt Col Stevenson to make recce of 16 Bde area and Lt Col King to recce 17 Bde area. 17 Bde area from Orontes River to feature " Kosciusko " 199261. Areas to be marked ready for preparation by 19 Bde.</p>		

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Signature *V. Schepfield*



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KFAR AKKA SYRIA	22-Oct	<p>Lt Col King and Major Bishop made preliminary recce of left Bn area, Lt Col Wrigley and Lieut Menzies preliminary recce of centre Bn area and 2/5 Bn party recced right Bn area. A conference was held at 1000 hrs.</p> <p>Lt Col Wrigley was joined by Capt K. Picken, Capt I. Kerr, Lt D.O. Hay I.O. and arrangements were made for one officer from 5,6, and 7 Bns to become familiar with areas and later to supervise work by 19 Bde.</p> <p>2/5, and 2/6 parties continued with recces of areas definitely allotted this morning. Lt Col King and Major Bishop assisted 2/5 Bn party.</p> <p>A soccer match was played against 2/3 Bn resulting in a decisive win for 2/3. Bde H.Q. team led by Lieut Simpson H.Q. Gd Bn were no match for the young and very fit members of the 2/3 Bn team.</p>		
"	23-Oct	<p>Bde party continued recce of left Bn area and 2/5 and 2/6 Bns in their own areas. Lt Col King and Lt Col Wrigley met at 1700 hrs and decided on a change of plan :-- two Bns to occupy line with one Coy each under command from third Bn. Third Bn less two Coys to form Bde reserve.</p> <p>Capt I. MacCallum arrived as representative from 2/7 Bn.</p>		

A159 Mob Print Sec AIF-25M-1/41-G.

Signature

*V. J. Schofield*



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KFAR AKKA	24-Oct	<p>At 1000 hrs a conference was held at Wadi Fara. The plan was explained to Lt Col Wrigley and Major Starr. Right Bn and one Coy to occupy river excl to spur excl. Left Bn and one Coy to occupy Fara Ridge, Macedon and Kosciusko. Carriers probably brigaded with reserve Bn less two Coys. Routes and tracks to be reced. Arrangements were made for Capt Picken to move quarters up to hills and camp while making detailed recce. Order of work:-- pill boxes, section posns dug, wiring, communication between sections and platoons where possible, dams for water catchment. Bde party made preliminary recce for reserve Bn and Bde H.Q. areas. Bde H.Q. at Halbata. 2/5 and 2/6 parties carried on with reces of their areas. 2/5 Bn pointed out to Bde Comd positions of reserve Coys.</p>		
..	25-Oct	<p>Lt Col King inspected 2/6 positions while Major Bishop, Capt MacCallum and Lieut Menzies reced and marked Coy areas on left flank for possible Coy from reserve. 2/5 Bn party continued in their own area.</p> <p>Traces arrived from 2/5 Bn for Tripoli Fortress scheme.</p> <p>Major McGregor, Admin Comd 17 Bde visited 2/5 Bn area.</p>		
"	26-Oct	<p>Lt Col King and Major Bishop fixed positions for reserve Coys and Bde H.Q. and a conference was held with G.O.C. and G.I.</p> <p>Bde I.O. arrived back from Palestine.</p> <p>A cricket match, Bde H.Q. v 7 Div H.Q. ended in a decisive win by 7 Div H.Q.</p> <p>Lt Col Wrigley C.O. 2/6 Bn called and stayed the night at Bde H.Q. Kafar Akka.</p>		

A150 Mob Print Sec AIF-25M-441-G.

Signature *Schfeldt*



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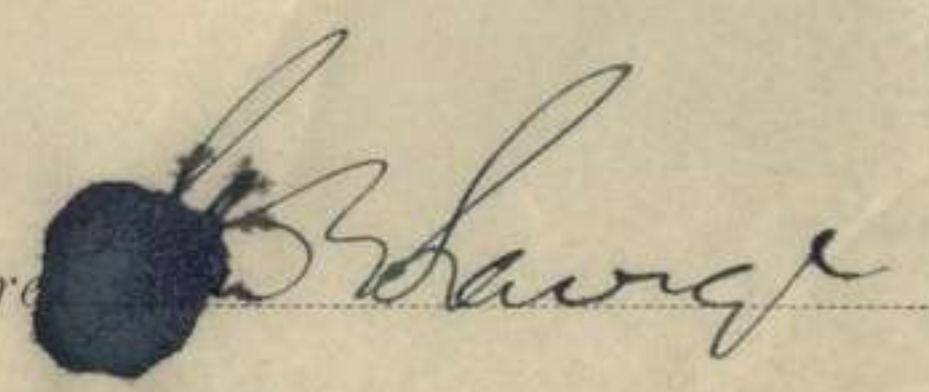
UNIT 17 Aust. Inf. Bde

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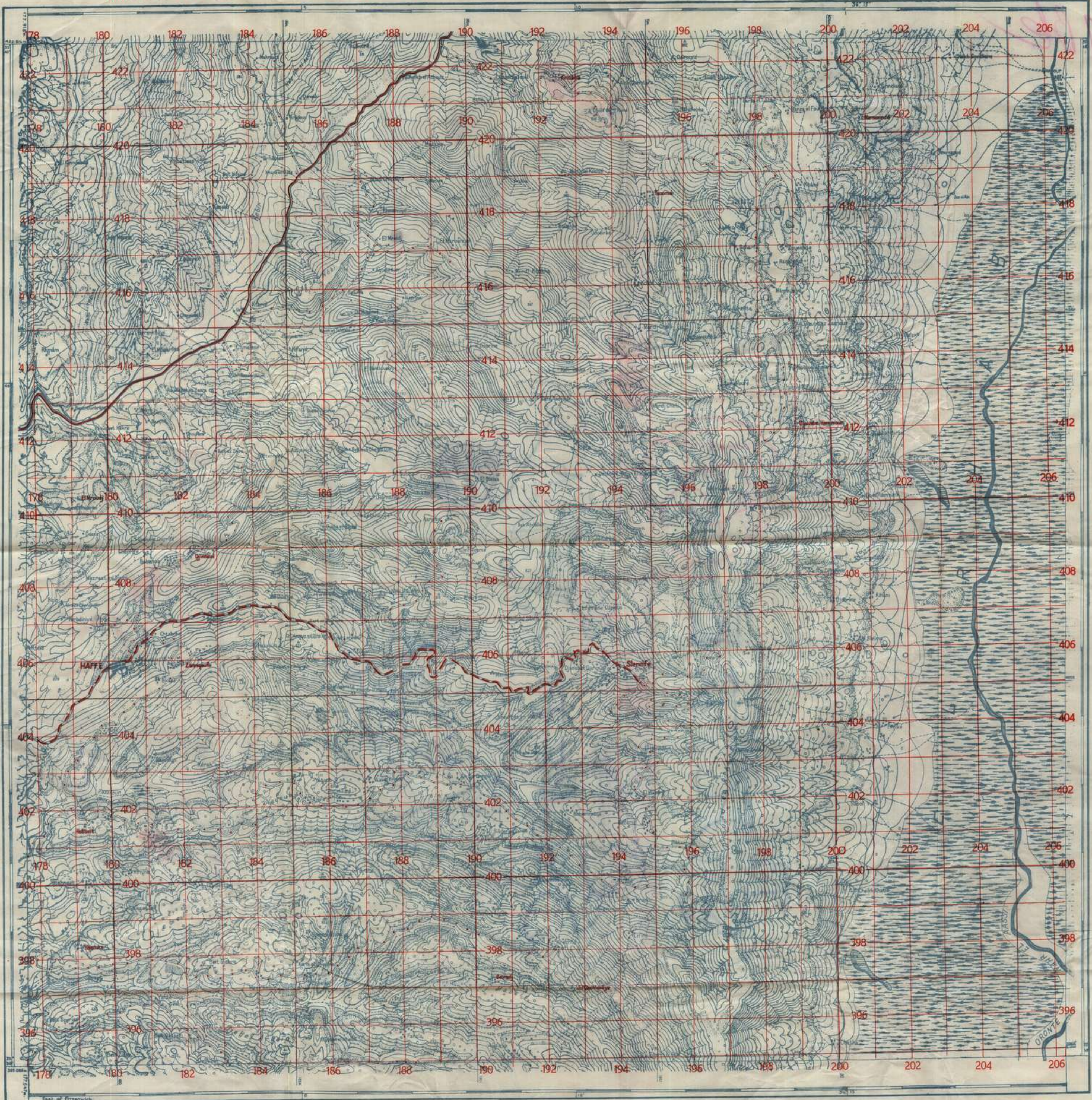
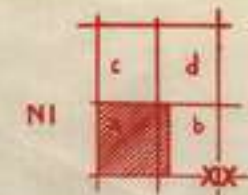
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KFAR AKKA	27-Oct	Lt Col King showed staff officer from 6 Aust Div over Bde area. G.O.C. accepted plan.  A detachment from "B" Coy 2/3 Bn took over guard duties R.E. dump at Chekka at 0900 hrs 27 Oct.		
"	28-Oct	Bde Comdr arrived back from Palestine looking very fit and well after a restful holiday.  "C" Coy 2/3 Bn reported that at 2300 hrs an unauthorised sailing vessel attempted to enter Tripoli port. A warning shot was fired and vessel moored at mole.		
"	29-Oct	Lt Col King and Major Bishop arrived back from the preliminary recces in the Baalbek area.  Major Bamford ex 2/7 Bn called at Bde H.Q.		
"	30-Oct	Bde Comdr visited 2/5 Bn while Bde "I" section party recced area for three Coys ( A,B,C. ) 2/5 Bn near Kfar Akka-AMiouné.		
"The Ba"	31-Oct	The Bde Comdr and party consisting of B.M., B.I.O. and S.C. (I) with representatives from 2/5, 2/7, and 2/3 Bns left on reccé for camp sites near the work to be carried out on behalf of 10 Corps covering Damascus - Beirut road. The opportunity was taken to send a reccé party from 2/3 Bn to the 2/7 Bn area N.W. of Qatana to enable them to relieve that Bn on the issue of subsequent orders.  An air raid warning was sounded at approx 2040 hrs. The all clear was given at 2130 hrs. No incident occurred.		

A150 Mob Print Sec AIF-25M-1/41-G.

Signature







MAGNETIC DECLINATION



Magnetic North 1° 58' East of True north in the centre of this sheet.  
Annual change 0 3' towards the East.

EL	EL	EL
EL	EL	EL
EL	EL	EL
EL	EL	EL

D.R. 444  
Ground surveyed in 1937  
Drawn, lithographed and published by  
Service Géographique de l'Armée.

Scale 1:50,000

Reproduced under the direction of the Survey Directorate  
G.H.Q.M.E. June 1941 (From a French map Dated 1936)

- Conventional Signs
- 1st Class Road
  - 2nd
  - 3rd
  - Motorable Track
  - Track
  - Footpath
  - Difficult path
  - Railways, Standard gauge
  - Narrow

TO GIVE A GRID REFERENCE ON THIS SHEET  
This sheet is on French (Levant) Grid.  
Note: Only even grid lines are numbered.

POINT KHANE ED DJOZ	
EAST	NORTH
Take west edge of square in which point lies and read the figures printed opposite this line (on north or south margin) or on the line itself (on the face of the map). Estimate tenths westward.	Take south edge of square in which point lies and read the figures printed opposite this line (on east or west margin) or on the line itself (on the face of the map). Estimate tenths northward.
1633	4391
REFERENCE 1633.4391 TO NEAREST 100 METRES	

Contours at 50 M. Vertical Interval  
10 M.

CONVERGENCE

At West Sheet Edge Grid North is 0° 46' 03" West of True North	At longitude 36° 15' Grid North is 0° 37' 32" West of True North
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- Conventional Signs
- Water mill, well, spring, reservoir
  - Telegraph office, Telephone post office
  - Wireless Telegraph station
  - Landing ground, Factory
  - Church, chapel, calvary, cemetery
  - Mosque, Khoubba, Tomb
  - Ruins
  - Trig. point spot height
  - Edge of Wood, Cultivation, Fence
  - Isolated Trees, (Deciduous, Coniferous, Palm)
  - Wood
  - Scrub
  - Orchard
  - Gardens
  - Vineyards
  - Olive Groves



