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2/8 Infantry Battalion

April - June 1941, Regimental
Medical Officer's Diary

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE

2/8 BN

REPORT ON THE CRETE CAMPAIGN

METHOD OF ATTACK BY THE ENEMY

This can be divided under two headings of

- (i) Landing by parachutists
- (ii) Attack by formed bodies of parachutists and airborne troops.

As regards (i) above, observation of this by this unit was made on one occasion only and then at a distance of approximately 10 miles. On this occasion approximately 600 parachutists were dropped from a considerable height, the probable area being MALEME aerodrome. It was considered most of these parachutists were dropped from troop carrying planes.

As regards (ii) this type of attack is the only type experienced by this unit and the following points were noticed

- (a) Recce made in which they endeavoured to find our forward but without contacting it.
- (b) They then treated this line and the area immediately behind with harrassing fire by Mortars, HMGs and LMGs.
- (c) Contact by ground troops with our line would be made much later. On this contact being made he then looked for weak points where he could infiltrate. However any attempt at this infiltration was preceded and covered by mortar, HMG LMG and submachine gun fire. The fire of these submachine guns however very rarely appeared to be directed on any definite target i.e. the fire from these weapons was high and passed over head of forward troops and even BHQ sited in rear.

Deductions from these points are that by a great volume of fire the method of intimidation was employed. When these methods failed, as invariably they did, very little attempt during daytime was made to penetrate fronts of our positions, but it was apparent that energetic recce on his part was being carried out with a view to finding our flanks and a route around same by which he could come in behind us.

It is apparent that the German had picked troops highly trained in the use of ground and cover both by day and night, for this purpose. Also it was noticed that he did not confine himself only to movement by day.

In the various withdrawals that were fought his forward elements invariably contacted us generally by fire only early the next morning on the position we had withdrawn to.

The most effective answer to his method of infiltration on the immediate front was an immediate counter attack, this was borne out in SOUDA BAY. It is evident that he still has no great liking to face a determined body of men advancing with the bayonet.

It is to be particularly noted the skilful use made by the German of his mortars both as regards the siting of this weapon and the short time it took him to register and engage his target at which he was very accurate. As was proved in the area INVROS SPHAKIA a very effective counter to his motor cycle combinations was found in the use of a small body of light tanks and two Bren Carriers which delayed him seven hours from gaining contact with our forward elements astride the road at SPHAKIA ridge.

By the reports obtained from the carrier personnel engaged in this operation it is apparent that he still retains his system of advancing in mass to within a short distance of our FDLs as on several occasions German infantry marching in threes were encountered by these Bren Carriers.

TACTICS OF ENEMY AIRCRAFT IN CRETE.

The following points were noted of enemy aircraft tactics in CRETE

Low level flying was indulged in considerably, accompanied by bombing from such heights by Stuka dive bombers and machine as Messerschmidts

and Dorniers. It was very noticeable that a very considerable amount of machine gunning from the air was never directed at a target but appeared to be done as a method of intimidation, possibly to try and drive troops out into the open and thus disclose their position.

It was noticed that extensive use of recon planes was made, this plane flying at a very low level, but it is considered that very little information was gained as only on one occasion was such a recon followed by a deliberate attack. Numerous cases of spiteful bombing of towns and villages was observed and many cases occurred of enemy planes diving and flying around positions with sirens screaming but no actual bombing or machine gunning being indulged in.

TACTICS EMPLOYED BY THIS UNIT

Information.

Information prior to any operation or the taking up of a defensive line generally was rather vague or, as in the earlier stages, when in co-operation with ascertain Greek Unit, misleading and confirmation of these reports hard to obtain. Such confirmation in the earlier stages invariably proved that the information supplied was highly coloured and generally dependent on reports received from individual Greek soldiers coming back from the front areas with no attempt of some competent authority to check this before it was sent on. Example of this was information with regards Ruin and Castle noles, SOUDA BAY area MOURMIES.

Lack of information on other fronts was generally scarce although some information as regards location of units in the area was supplied. Operations orders for occupation of positions at KALIBEES were received two days after issue, although certain verbal orders were received at the time of action.

Intercommunication.

This was generally bad. Transport for means of contact was scarce, the most useful transport being the motor cycle, but this was rarely available. W/T and R/T NIL. Line was available on two occasions only. The use of LOs was very rare.

Q.

Under such conditions arrangements worked as reasonably as could be expected. It is pointed out that during the last two days that rations which were ledned by the navy did not always appear to be issued to troops most vitally in need of same. (2/7 Bn on SPHAKIA Ridge, the ration issued they received). Stragglers and deserters were first allowed to help themselves to these rations on the beach.

Water.

Although anticipated that water would be scarce over the last three or four days very little trouble was experienced by this unit in obtaining water. A scarcity of water bottle and containers presented a minor problem but this was easily overcome. It is pointed out here that in the SPHAKIA area the salt content of water was very low which was evidently recognized by the Germans as most prisoners taken carried a small tube of powder for increasing the salt content of any water they drank.

General.

It is necessary before commenting on the tactics employed by this unit to give the organisation of this unit in CRETE.

The approximate numbers landed on CRETE, including personnel evacuated from Hospital in GREECE was 390 all told. This included two rifle coys B and C practically complete in numbers that left GREECE. A small proportion of personnel from A & D coy and HQ Coy, the latter having a strength of approximately 80.

When this unit was informed that it would become portion of the CREFORCE it was then organised on the following basis: Two rifle Coys B & C at approximately full strength. To organise these two Coys on an efficient fighting basis, any personnel of the above not likely through either physical condition or lack of training (reinforcements) were withdrawn from these Coys. These vacancies were then filled by the transfer of personnel of HQ Coy

and details of A and D Coys. Such people transferred out of B and C Coys were then taken on strength of HQ Coy. The remaining personnel of HQ Coy proficient to take their place in the field comprised no more than the strength of two rifle plns. Personnel transferred from B & C Coy plus additional personnel already in HQ Coy were then organised to be used as

- (i) Details for No. 6 Pl. as carrying parties ammunition etc.
 - (ii) As Stretcher bearers
 - (iii) For various orderly duties between B HQ and Coys.
- This left a total fighting strength in the unit of approximately 350 all ranks.

Tactical dispositions of this unit.

During the initial phases of the campaign in CRETE this unit had to adopt a defensive position in three areas, namely KALIBRES, MOURNIERS, PYGROS-GALARIA, these positions covered a frontage varying from 2000' to 700'. The disposition of the unit under these circumstances involved the siting of two Coys forward leaving a very small inadequate Bn. reserve with no depth whatever to the area held. These positions and the holding of them was therefore dependent on the following factors.

- (i) Close liaison with flank units.
- (ii) Constant patrolling well forward of our positions in order to ascertain probable strength of enemy forces and his probable line of advance.

It is emphasised here again that in the areas MOURNIERS-PYGROS-GALARIA there was never close co-operation with the units responsible for the area on our left flank. That information as obtained from this area was very misleading and considerably difficult to confirm. The whereabouts of troops on this flank could never be determined accurately although several endeavours were made by this unit to liaise with troops on our left. Assurances were given that the co-operation required would be carried out. However, subsequent events proved such was not to be the case.

Turning to the second phase of this unit's operations in CRETE namely the withdrawals from MOURNIERS-SOUDA BAY-NEON KHORION-ESTARTZ-EABLI INN-IMVROS and SPHAKIA the following points are here recorded. MOURNIERS. A straightout approach march from MOURNIERS to SOUDA BAY. SOUDA BAY. Contact with the enemy was obtained at approximately 1030 hours and broken off at 2200 hours that same night when the withdrawal of the second position commenced.

This action is probably the best action fought by this unit in CRETE, the following reasons for this are as follows:

The forces concerned in this action comprised a WZ Bde, 2/7 Bn, AIF and this unit. Perfect co-operation and understanding between unit commanders throughout this action. The effective use of the immediate counter attack was clearly brought out during the operations in this area. Information was more extensive and accurate, and communication was good under the circumstances. Liaison between units as regards security of flanks was particularly good.

Counter MG and LMG fire proved effective in stopping and breaking up several organised attacks which developed during the day. As this unit was small in numbers it was necessary during the day to strengthen the right flank with the addition of the Bn reserve, slightly less than two platoons had to be used for this purpose, thus leaving only two carriers that were not committed on the Bn's immediate front. The function of the MG Pl under command of this Bn; was that of a supporting fire role, its primary task being to watch right flank with its area of fire concentrated on likely enemy assembly positions. The function of the carriers in this engagement was to hold the CANEA-SOUDA BAY Road against any AFV or motor cycle combination attack.

It is to be noted here that such attack was threatened during the day but the employment of anti-tank rifles which were pushed well forward and which were evidently observed by the enemy stopped such movement.

Earlier in the day these carriers also co-operated on the left flank of the 2/7 Bn; when an attempt was made by the enemy to break through at that point.

NEON KHORION - This was the area to which the unit withdrew from SOUDA BAY. Whilst a tactical role was allotted to this and Coys were disposed for such no actual contact was made with the enemy, although the 2/7 Bn on our left earlier that morning was subjected to long range MG fire.

This unit received orders to withdraw from its position during the morning and proceed to ESTARTZ and come under the command of "D" Bn of the Commandos, Lt. Col. Young being in command.

ESTARTZ - BAEI INN - On reporting to the C.O. of the Bn of the Commandos the unit was allotted the reserve area immediately in the rear of the above unit. An endeavour was made to use the MG Pl. on the right of the Commando's position. This however was found to be impracticable and this Pl. was then allotted a reserve area.

The Carrier Pl. with two carriers immediately adopted a role of road protection against AFVs and motor cycle combinations of which a report had been received. Contact by the Commandos with the enemy was obtained shortly after the unit arrived and for the remainder of the day this unit which moved from its reserve position came into position on the left of the Commandos and held that area until ordered to withdraw at 2100 hours that night.

No definite thrust was made by the enemy that day, his main tactics being that of harassing fire with mortars HMGs and LMGs.

Information was obtained that during this day the advanced enemy AFVs and motorcycle combinations were repeatedly broken up by two cruiser tanks operating forward of this position.

KERATES - IMVROS - This was the area through which the unit withdrew from the last position, no tactical role for this position was ordered, the only orders being for this Bn to clear the IMVROS road area by 2115 hours. Prior to this the above area was subjected to long range mortar fire. Both this unit and the 2/7 Bn. who withdrew later cleared the area without any difficulty.

During the whole of this move the progress of this unit was considerably impeded by personnel being marshalled for evacuation plus a large number of vehicles transporting wounded for the same purpose. This road congestion became so pronounced at about 0200 hours the following morning and combined with the physical condition of the troops and the complete blockage of the road, that when about a mile from its next area, the unit was ordered to halt and sleep off the road.

This was definitely the worst night move during the withdrawals and in my opinion could only be attributed to bad staff work in the case of the officers concerned in the evacuation of these casualties and others plus the fact that no consideration was given to this or other units moving back to become the rear guard for the withdrawal. Orders were actually given by a senior British staff officer at IMVROS that this unit was to move off the road and halt until all these people for embarkation had been cleared to the beach, a distance of approx 8 miles. This however was not done, the procedure as outlined above being carried out.

At daybreak the same morning, the congestion on the road having cleared, the unit moved into an area allotted and about two hours later received orders from Bde that it had become the reserve unit of the rear guard, its role and task being to adopt a tactical position in an area in rear of forward Bns and to be responsible for the protection of the left flank of the forward line.

This role was carried out and the unit continued this task for the next two days during which any attempt at penetration on the left was effectively stopped. At this stage it is interesting to note that the physical condition of the men was considerably weakened. Rations were very light and water although plentiful had very little salt content and movement of any troops even for a few hundred yards entailed in most cases a state of physical exhaustion in the men.

This unit embarked on Sunday morning 1 June at approx 0130 hrs after considerable re-arrangement of the orders of embarkation. Again it is pointed out that the staff arrangements for embarkation at SPHAKIA to the beach area were bad, control was practically non-existent as it was necessary for the units concerned in this embarkation to take the necessary measures to secure a passage down to the beach and keep back personnel of all arms and services who threatened at various times to break through the line of troops at embarkation.

Mention is made here of the appreciation of the efforts made by Brig. HARGEST of 5 NZ Bde and other NZ C.O.'s who were largely responsible for arrangements on the beach which enabled this unit to commence embarkation the moment we arrived on the beach.

The unit was embarked mainly on the A.A. cruiser HMS "PHOENIX" a small number being embarked on the destroyer HMS "JACKAL".

The voyage across to EGYPT was uneventful and the unit disembarked at approx. 1730 hours at ALEXANDRIA.

(Sgd)

Major

C.O. 2/8 Detachment in
CRETE

APPENDIX 1

ENEMY WEAPONS

The following brief notes were made on the characteristics of enemy weapons as experienced by this bn.

HMG's

Maximum range approx 4000x. Explosive and tracer bullets used.

LMG's.

SPANDAUF approx rate of fire 1500 r.p.m. Sighted up to 2000 x. Extremely accurate with small beaten zone. Belt fed-air cooled-interchangeable barrels-calibre approx .30-recoil operated weight 30 lb.

Sub Machine Gun.

Similar to our own - bakelite fittings - short range - about .38 calibre - not as efficient as our own.

Rifle.

Snipers rifle fitted with telescopic sights - ver accurate.

Grenades.

Two types - stick and oval type. Stick type string operated - oval type approx 1 lb. in weight lever operated. In Greece it was noticed that certain men carried nothing but grenades in a bag slung around their neck.

Pistols.

LUGER 9 mm knee action - magazine holds eight rounds.

Bayonet.

Two sizes - short approx 10" long - long type approx. 2" longer than our own - short type double edged.

Daggers Knife type.

Two kinds - long and short blade.

Tools.

Parachutists carry light entrenching tools with convertible head.

Demolition Box.

Hexagonal box about 4' long one end being a T handle, the other end had an aluminium cannister 8" in diameter which acted as a cushion on the box on hitting the ground. The box when opened contained 4 pneumatic tyre drills which were fitted to the container with bayonet joints. Contents were explosives; factory made bengalore torpedoes in lengths of about 4' which could be connected together with bayonet joints thus making the torpedo to any length required. The ignition already fitted up with safety fuse 2' long, one end of the fuse with a bakelite attachment fitted with a detonator; the other end had a non-flash ignitor.

The box also contained 200' of rubber covered F.I.D. which was of a very flexible nature and even if knots were tied in it it would explode. Further contents of the box were a box of explosives in metal boxes of 2 and 4 lbs weight. In the end and two sides of the blocks were threaded recesses into which could be slipped a detonator and attachment thus making these into anti personnel or anti tank mines. Colour of the box is grey.

German Light Mortar.

Characteristics. Range. Is reputed to slightly exceed 4000 yds. Maximum range is very definitely in excess of 1500 yds.

Calibre. Examination of recovered tail fins indicates about 3.7.

Danger Area. Appears to be less than that of 3" light mortar. A number of dud bombs were observed to fall at SPHAKIA by Sgt Cooper and Cpl Quirk.

Rate of Fire. Identical with that of our mortar.

2. Employment. (a) Hun mortars always appeared very soon after enemy forces had made contact. At NEON KHORION the attacking force were motor cyclists, yet they had a mortar with them. This argues extreme mobility of weapon and crew.

(b) Application of fire. The Hun seems to expend the greater proportion of his amm by single rounds, fired with a considerable space of time intervening, and with the point of aim altered each time - in fact, a sort of harassing fire. When concentrations were brought down on apparently observed targets, the rate of fire was not as rapid as we should use.

(c) Ammunition supply. There is persistent reports of P.O.Ws being forced to carry amm. Also pack animals were often used. One escaped P.O.W. reported that he saw "one horse and six donkeys" carrying bombs.

(d) Accuracy. Our tps seemed to have an exaggerated idea of the accuracy of the Hun Mortars. It is not known on what they base this idea.

(e) Concealment. At various times a number of Hun support weapons were seen to be operating (in Crete) without much regard to cover or concealment. This was no doubt due to our lack of arty and aircraft and is hardly to be found to be a regular practice.

Apparent Lessons.

1. Harassing Fire. From the effect of this fire in our own areas, it would seem profitable to adopt its use.

2. Ammunition Supply. We must exploit all avenues of supply - man, vehicle, animal or other - and be prepared to at once convert to our own use any means of tpt available. Mor Dets should be taught how to load pack animals.

3. Physical Fitness. It is essential that Mortar personnel be at the peak of physical fitness in action to ensure that mobility is not lost.

(Sgd)

Major

O.C. 2/8 Detachment CRETE

PRECIS ON GERMAN METHODS ETC. ON CRETE

PATROLS.

German patrols are invariably strong (up to 30 men) and I consider work in two bodies. One party covering the advance of the other.

Our patrols were instructed to do likewise and will benefit, in that on more than one occasion they met and engaged enemy patrols causing casualties. If a patrol operates in one body it is likely to be ambushed, whereas if in two parties even if leading party are engaged rear party can then contact enemy with advantage of element of surprise. This is copying the German's tactics.

German troops appear to have reached a high standard of individual training their use of ground and cover is very good. Their tactics always appear to be to feel for the flank and make their attack at this point. Their attack is always supported by heavy Mortar and MMG fire.

The advancing enemy appears to fire his Submachine Gun whilst advancing. His aim your general position, idea apparently to intimidate and to force you to keep your head down.

When our patrols clashed we were always the victors. In these brushes we did not lose one man, but inflicted losses each time on the enemy. Our casualties were mainly Mortar fire.

The German will still advance steadily against small arms fire, but at the first threat of the bayonet he will withdraw and if it were possible to exploit this trait of the German character by a strong immediate counter attack supported by Arty or Mortars and M.M.G's, I am of the opinion that success will invariably be achieved.

During the Crete Campaign the men marched over long distances and whilst the "Blitz" was on, the inability to change socks and boots or to leave them off during rest caused a lot of foot trouble which is serious when a unit cannot be relieved.

Fighting by day, patrols by day and night, withdrawals prevented men from obtaining necessary rest and particularly during the last week it was only sheer doggedness that kept the men going. When the men embarked they were absolutely worn out both physically and mentally.

The large scale aerial attacks did not cause many casualties in comparison to the number of planes used and bombs dropped. Aerial machine gunning does not appear to hit anything and is apparently used mainly to intimidate.

The slit trench is adequate protection against aerial warfare.

(Sgd) C.J.A. Coombes Capt.
O.C. "B" Coy. 2/8 Bn. A.I.F.

- April 27. Bn lands at SOUDA BAY, CRETE, from destroyers from T.S. "COSTA RICA" which had been bombed and sunk, all medical equipment being lost.
Marched 12 miles and bivouacked for night-men tired and dis-spirited and rations very short.
- April 28. 14 Officers and 378 O.Rs. present, R.A.P. personnel intact but only six stretcher bearers present.
- April 29. Bn organised into three Companies - 1 medical orderly and two S.Bs to each. No stores obtainable except Field dressings from R.A.S.C.
Bn commences training Syllabus to keep men from moping and a course of training for medical orderlies and S.Bs instituted.
Some stores obtained from Chemist shops in CANEA
20 Convalescent soldiers evacuated to hospital in GREECE reported back to unit.
- May 1. Bn moves to area 1/4 mile East of KALIBES to take up a position against attempted parachute troops landing.
Ordinary sick treated by 2/1 Aust Fd Amb, stationed in the village
Men much happier after issue of clothes, tobacco etc, and gradually becoming equipped with arms.
- May 3. 1 M.G. platoon from 2/1 M.G. Bn under command.
May 8-19. Bn moves by foot to GEORGIOPOLIS. R.A.P. 200 yds NORTH of LAKE KOURNA
Role is beach defense, contacted 2/7 Aust Fd Amb and evacuation route arranged. Apart from minor dressings and a mild case of diarrhoea sickness is nil. Stores still not procurable but disinfectants obtained for latrines which were dug daily, also soakage pits for urinals - these were treated with petrol and burnt.
Area is highly malarious but no anopheles found - nets and Dovers Cream issued, and used, all water boiled before use as no sterilizing powder available.
Improvised stretchers made from small pine trees and blankets - they were very heavy and cumbersome and fortunately never used
R.A.P. position selected off side of road and dug in to be used in the event of action.
Toured the camp vicinity with an M.O. og 12 British Mobile Field Lab. but no anopheles breeding could be found - though on May 17 I noticed many, A superpicbus mosquitoes in in our tent.
By arrangement with Brig VASEY of 19 Aust Inf Bde HQ the convalescent sick were transferred to transit camp. to be evacuated.
Medical Orderlies class continues.
- May 20. German parachute troops land between SOUDA BAY and CANEA. Bn moves by transport to take up a position WEST of village of MOURNIERS, EAST of the creek just outside MOURNIERS, with the enemy on two high features in front.
2 stretchers obtained from a dump abandoned by troops and shell dressings obtained from neighboring Naval Hospital. I still had Morphia and a syringe
- May 21. Four wounded on fighting patrol - three walking cases treated and evacuated - 1 stretcher case which had been taken to a GREEK R.A.P. retrieved and evacuated by ambulance.
- May 22. Heavy dive bombing and machine-gunning attacks but no casualties.
- May 23. Bn moves forward to next creek WEST of our present position on left flank of 2/7 Bn - on EASTERN side of creek from village of ARGYOS with left flank on NORTHERN edge

- May 23 (cont). of this village, R.A.P. in centre rear 50 yds from the road. Stretcher squad from 2/7 Aust Fd amb reported for duty
- May 24. 14 casualties from dive-bombing attack on carrying party in village, these were evacuated to 2/7 Aust Fd Amb by truck.
- May 25. Usual enemy aerial activity but no casualties.
- May 26. 1030 hrs enemy attack commences. Bn withdrew in late afternoon-wounded evacuated by motorbike, carrier and truck to Naval Hospital.
Bn takes up a position across CANEA-SOUDA Road with left flank against 2/7 Bn-a frontage of 500 yds.
- May 27. R.A.P. situated 300 yds in rear of Coys in a sunken track. 1030 hrs enemy attack-1 killed-4 wounded-3 walking wounded sent back, 1 stretcher case evacuated together with 13 stretcher cases from 2/7 Bn, by truck after dark. These were sent to SOUDA Point, where they were evacuated from CRETE. Bn withdrew at 2200 hrs and marched 14 miles along NEON KHORION Road and took up defensive positions
- May 28. 1100 hrs withdrew through NEON KHORION to take up a position at ESTARTZ reinforcing left flank of LEA-FORCE-enemy contacted at 1430 hrs. R.A.P. situated in creek bed alongside main road near gridge. 1 casualty evacuated by truck as far as it is possible along the SPHATHIA Rd.
Bn withdrew at 2100 hrs and marched through VYRSES, southward, 13 miles and rested.
- May 29 Moved at 1000 hrs to SAN AMMOUPARI and rested for the remainder of the day-water plentiful but rations A very scanty. Move at 2030 hrs and marched towards SPHARKIA forced to sleep on the escarpment road owing to congestion of embarking troops.
- May 30. 0900 hrs Bn moves to take up a position on the left flank and to the rear of the 2/7 Bn, covering a ravine. R.A.P. divided into two, one section on either side of the RAVINE SPHARKIA in caves.
Contacted enemy patrol all of whom were killed, without any casualties inflicted to ourselves.
Evacuation of any wounded must be by hand, camp without stretchers, 3 miles to the beach in hope of evacuation or be kept in R.A.P. and abandoned. Rations obtained and water plentiful.
- May 31. Carrier personnel in a delayed action-2 walking wounded dressed and sent down to the beach.
- May 31. No enemy activity-men rested and feel better-no areal activity.
Embark on H.M.S. PHOEBE at 0130 hrs. No casualties.
- Jun 1. Arrive at ALEXANDRIA without mishap-by transport to AMIRIYA. Men much heartened by the marvellous work done of the Red Cross and Comforts Fund Societies.
- Jun 2. Issued with clothes and entrained for PALESTINE, eventually into camp at KHASSA.

(sgd) P.R. Anderson Capt.

R.M.O. 2/8 Bn.

AMO's War Diary

War Diary 2/8 Bn. 1941.

April 27. 1. Bn. lands at SOUDA BAY, CRETE from destroyers from T.S. "COSTA RICA" which had been bombed and sunk, all medical equipment being lost.

Marched 12 miles and bivouacked for night - men tired, disappointed and rations very short.

28. 14 Officers, 378 O.R.s present, R.A.P. personnel intact but only 6 stretcher bearers present.

29. Bn. organised into 3 Companies - 1 medical orderly, and 2 S.B.s to each. No stores obtainable except Field dressings from R.A.S.C.

Bn. commences training syllabus to keep men from moping and a course of training for medical orderlies & S.B.s instituted.

Some stores obtained from Chemist shops in CANEA.

20 Convalescent soldiers evacuated to hospital in GREECE reported back to unit.

MAY 1. Bn. moved to area 1/4 mile East of KALIBIES to take up a position against attempted parachute troops landing. Ordinary sick treated by 2/1 Fd. Amb. stationed in the village.

Men much happier after issue of clothes, tobacco etc. and gradually becoming equipped with arms.

May 3. 1 MG platoon from 2/1 MG Bn. under command.

8-19. Bn. moves by foot to GEORGIOPOLIS

RAP 200 yds NORTH of LAKE KOURNID.

Role is beach defence, contacted 2/7 Fd. Amb.
and ~~unobscured~~ ^{evacuation} route arranged. Apart from
minor dressings and a mild case of diarrhoea
sickness is nil. Stores still not procurable
but disinfectants obtained for latrines which
were dug daily, also soakage pits for urinals -
these were treated with petrol and burnt.

Area is highly malarious but no anophelids
found - Nets and Doves Cream issued
and used; all water boiled before use as
no sterilizing powder available.

Improvised stretchers made from small pine trees and
blankets - they were very heavy and cumbersome
and fortunately never used.

RAP position selected off side of road and
dug in, to be used in event of action.

Toured the camp vicinity with an M.O of 12th British
Mobile Field Lab. but no anophelids breeding could
be discovered - though on May 17th I noticed
many *A. superpictus* mosquitoes in our tent.

By arrangement with Brig. VIGSEY of 19th Aust. Inf.
Bde. HQ the convalescent sick were transferred
to transit camp to be evacuated.

Medical Orderlies class continues.

May 20 ^{German} Parachute troops land between SOUDIA 1344
and CANEA. Bn moves by transport to take
up a position WEST of village of MOURNIERS,
EAST of the creek just outside MOURNIERS with
the enemy on 2 high features in front.

2 Stickers obtained from a dump abandoned by
troops and shell dressings obtained from neighbouring
Naval Hospital. 3 still had morphine and a syringe.

21. 4 wounded on fighting patrol - 3 walking cases
brought and evacuated - 1 sticker case ^{which had been} taken to
a Greek RHP retrieved and evacuated by ambulance.

22. Heavy dive bombing and machine gunning attacks
but no casualties.

23. Bn moves forward to next creek west of our
present position on left flank of 2/7 Bn -
on Eastern side of creek from village of ARGYIOS with
left flank on Northern edge of this village RHP
in centre near ^{50 yds from the road.} Sticker
squad from 2/7 id. amb. reported for duty.

24. 16 Casualties from dive bombing attack on
carrying party in the village. These were
evacuated to 2/7 id. amb ADS by truck.

25. Usual enemy aerial activity but no casualties

26. 1030 hrs enemy attack commences Bn withdraw
in late afternoon - wounded evacuated by
motor bike, carrier and truck to Naval Hospital.
Bn takes up a position across ~~creek~~ CANEA - SOUDIA
road with left flank against 2/7 Bn - a frontage of
500 yds.

May 27. RAP situated 300 yds in rear of Coys. in a
sunken track. 1030 hrs enemy attack.
1 killed. 4 wounded - 3 walking wounded sent back
1 stretcher case evacuated, together with 13 stretcher
cases from 2/7 Bn, by truck after dark.
These were sent to BOUDA POINT where they were
evacuated from CRETE. Bn withdrew at 2200 hrs
and marched 14 miles along MEON KHORION road
and took up defensive position.

28. 1100 hrs withdrew through MEON KHORION to
take up a position at ESTARTZ reinforcing
left flank of LEAFORCE - enemy contacted at
1430 hrs. RAP in creek bed alongside main road
near bridge. 1 Casualty evacuated by truck
as far as it is possible to go on the SPHARRKIA
road. Bn withdrew at 2100 hrs and marched
through VYRSÈS southwards, 13 miles and rested

29. 1000 hrs moved to SAN AMMOVPARI and rested
for remainder of the day - water plentiful but
rations very scanty.

Move at 2030 hrs. and march towards
SPHARRKIA - forced to sleep on the escarpment
road owing to congestion of embanking troops.

30. 0900 hrs Bn moves to take up a position on
the left flank & to the rear of 2/7 Bn, covering
a ravine. RAP divided into 2 - one section
on either side of ~~RAVINE~~ SPHARRKIA, in caves.

May 30 Contacted enemy patrol all of whom were killed,
without any casualties inflicted to ourselves.

Evacuation of any wounded must be by hand
carry without stretchers 3 miles to the beach
in hope of evacuation, or to be left in R.A.P. and
abandoned. Rations obtained and water plentiful

31. Carrier personnel in a delaying action - 2
walking wounded dressed and sent down to the
beach.

31. No enemy activity - men rested and feel
better - no aerial activity.

Embark on H.M.S. PHOENIX at 0130 hrs. no casualties

JUNE 1. Arrive at ALEXANDRIA without mishap -
by transport to AMIRIYA. Men much heartened
by the marvellous work done by the Red Cross
and Comforts Fund Societies.

2. Issued with clothes and entrained for
PALESTINE - eventually into camp at KHASSA.

A. Anderson Capt
RMO 2/8 Bn