

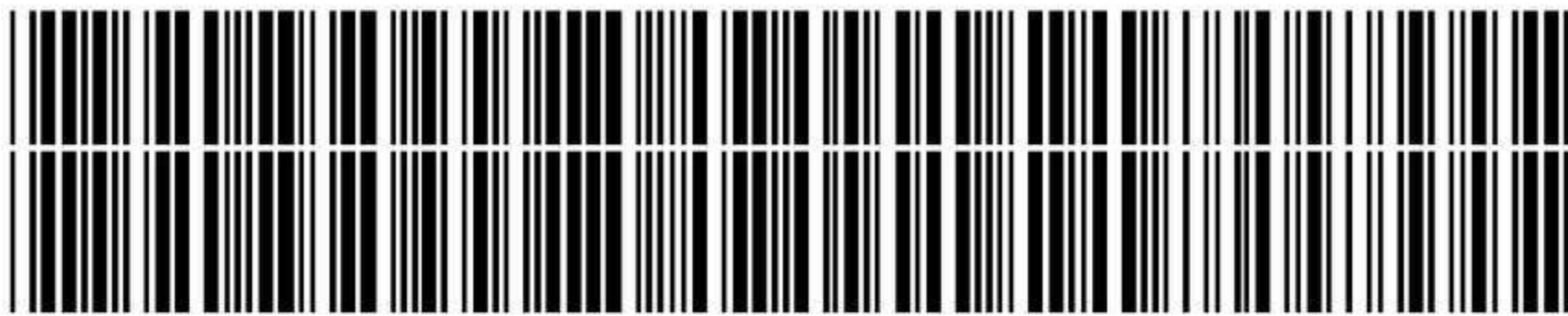
**AWM38**  
**Official History,**  
**1914-18 War: Records of C E W Bean,**  
**Official Historian.**

Diaries and Notebooks

**Item number:** 3DRL606/2/1

**Title:** Diary, January - March 1915

Comments on soldiers' reactions to Bean's despatch critical of their behaviour, training and sight seeing.



AWM38-3DRL606/2/1



DIARY 2

Original  
AWM 38

DIARY NO. 2

30RL '606 ITEM 2 [1]

DIARIES AND NOTES OF C. E. W. BEAN  
CONCERNING THE WAR OF 1914-1918

THE use of these diaries and notes is subject to conditions laid down in the terms of gift to the Australian War Memorial. But, apart from those terms, I wish the following circumstances and considerations to be brought to the notice of every reader and writer who may use them.

These writings represent only what at the moment of making them I believed to be true. The diaries were jotted down almost daily with the object of recording what was then in the writer's mind. Often he wrote them when very tired and half asleep; also, not infrequently, what he believed to be true was not so — but it does not follow that he always discovered this, or remembered to correct the mistakes when discovered. Indeed, he could not always remember that he had written them.

These records should, therefore, be used with great caution, as relating only what their author, at the time of writing, believed. Further, he cannot, of course, vouch for the accuracy of statements made to him by others and here recorded. But he did try to ensure such accuracy by consulting, as far as possible, those who had seen or otherwise taken part in the events. The constant falsity of second-hand evidence (on which a large proportion of war stories are founded) was impressed upon him by the second or third day of the Gallipoli campaign, notwithstanding that those who passed on such stories usually themselves believed them to be true. All second-hand evidence herein should be read with this in mind.

16 Sept., 1946.

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

C. E. W. BEAN.

ACCESS STATUS

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On Jan 5. Gen Birdwood issued the following order to the Australian & N.Z. Army Corps.

"In taking over the command of the Army Corps composed of the Australian & New Zealand contingents I wish to tell my comrades of all ranks how proud I am of at being associated with them in the great work which is before us all

"We have been selected to fight for the honour & integrity of the British Empire. Before victory is assured much hard fighting will fall to us, fighting which will call for the highest degree, not only of discipline but of self denial & self sacrifice. These are qualities in which I know I can look to you to prove yourselves second to none.

"For myself, I pray to God in all humility that I may prove myself worthy of the great trust which has been placed in me (keeping in mind that I may gain the confidence of my comrades with whom I feel it to be an honour to be serving. If I can succeed in this I well know you will make victory a certainty."

W B Leslie Maj. A.A. & A.M.G.

Lt Gen W R Birdwood KCSI, CB, CIE, DSO.

HTB Walker Brig. Gen. Gen Staff

Jan 12.

Jan 1st 1915.

January 1.

The Emden firing we heard by men on foote of Osmarah & this morning returning from Cairo, which was a good deal quieter than of late, although it was ~~was~~ rather a special occasion, I walked from the train terminus along under the big gum trees towards our camp amidst a distant babel of sound. Something unusual was afoot. On the dark carved-wood balcony of Mena House I could see several nurses standing & watching events & I thought I heard a couple of distant pistol shots. Then on the air came the distant refrain of one of many brass bands - it was playing Auld Lang Syne. That gave the clue to it all. I had forgotten until that moment that it was 0.10 am on the morning of Jan 1. 1915.

Jack's birthday - 34<sup>th</sup> I think. I walked down in the morning to wish the old beggar the best of luck - many times to be repeated I hope. He put in an extraordinarily strenuous day & finally threw himself on his bed & went to sleep quite exhausted. That was his way of enjoying his birthday. His regimental lines are. (thanks to his ~~was~~ never tiring of getting about at any hour

you want to write to NCO in charge of them. He thought in spirit of



January 1

day or night to see to things himself) a model to the camp, & he has been told so. His nice corporal, Malone, who is a splendid chap when sober, is off on the scoot - went into Cairo with leave yesterday & has not returned. I believe this breaking of leave is getting a serious matter. Between 200 & 300 of our men at this present moment are somewhere in Cairo - their whereabouts not known. I know this - from conversations Peter Schuler has had with the men - to be partly due to the inexperience of the officers. In a force like this, hastily raised, there is no uniformity in the way in which the officers treat their men. A fellow who is breaking <sup>leave</sup> ~~camp~~ will tell you: "Well, look here, I got back half an hour late last week & went into camp past the main guard & gave myself up squarely - & the Colonel gave me a weeks C.B. for it. And then a chap in the next line breaks camp & stays out two days, <sup>& is caught</sup> getting in at the back of the Pyramids & only gets 2 days. I'm going to do something to get punished for, this time." The



January 1

Slackness of N.C.O.s is another cause. Our N.C.O.s have very little idea, some of them, of their responsibility. They were all mates out back, & they will often do what they think is a good turn to a chap by giving him in as present when he is absent. But when all is said & done the chief cause of trouble

is the tone amongst a certain section of old South African soldiers, & men who have been through the Imperial service. I have noticed <sup>British</sup> letters. This myself & I have heard it on every side, so much so that if one sees a chap in trouble now, drunk or brought up a prisoner, or if one sees a dirty untidy soldier going without his belt in town or in a crumpled field service cap (which looks sloppy & is against orders) one looks automatically for the South African ribbon. I saw 3 fellows in trouble, for example, in Jacks regiment today. Two of them had the S.A. medal, I'm not sure about the third. In the tram the other night there was a full load of smart young soldiers. Only two men were ~~seen~~ making themselves noticeable at all. One was a youngish chap, fairly smart looking as far as his face



January 1.

4.

was concerned, but with his belt off & his coat undone. He had the S. African ribbon. He only opened his coat about 6 times coming in, & on at least 4 of those occasions it was to advise one of his mates to do something which according to the rules he was not allowed to do. The other case was that of a man who was using filthy language, not worse than soldiers often use amongst themselves but such as very few men wd use in a public vehicle. He was talking to a boot black & he used the word Hamshee - instead of Smshi. Hamshee is a <sup>native</sup> word used by British soldiers in India, & it is odds on this man having been in the Imperial Army.

When I got back from Cairo <sup>the other night</sup> Gen. Bridges <sup>to night</sup> had had a letter from Gen. Birdwood on this point and he would show it to me. However from what he said I take it that he would not take it amiss if I sent a letter & a wire to give people in Australia some idea of how things are; we shall probably be getting rid of a few of these old ~~hard~~ <sup>hard</sup> heads - sending them back to Australia. And it is just as well Australians should have an idea of why <sup>some of them</sup> they are returning or else they will probably treat them all (on their own representation) as heroes. It must be



January 1.

5

pretty awful to <sup>be sent</sup> ~~be~~ back at this stage. I believe one of the first men <sup>intended</sup> to be sent back was an officer. I see that an officer has asked leave to enlist as a private in his own corps - so this is probably he. He has been allowed to do so, & it is the best way out unless a chap is in absolute disgrace. Jack's corporal - Malone - will probably be reduced to the ranks. I don't think these chaps who stay out all ~~the~~ night (& sometimes don't come back all day) realise what how their crime might be treated. It's all very well whilst we have our own commanders who understand us. But someday that may change - & then ~~we shall~~ some man will wake up with a shock in the guard room to realise that he is on active service & that the sentence punishment to which he is liable <sup>for his rank</sup> is death.

They say these old hard heads often make the best soldiers - I don't believe it. I daresay they fight well. But their influence on the <sup>young</sup> fellows with them, & on the general tone of the army, far more than counterbalances that. Some of our commanding officers have had boys come to them - bright decent youngsters who in Australia <sup>would</sup> have been



January 1.

6.

ashamed to do or think of the things, or so near  
the places, into which they have been led here —  
the youngsters have come to them almost in tears  
bitterly ashamed & half horrified with themselves.  
I don't mean that Australians are squeamish,  
but there are clean debauches & unclean  
debauches & Cairo is the home of all that  
is filthy & beastly if you like to go & look for it  
~~etc~~ Well, we are going to settle down to  
work & eschew all this — & high time too, to  
my idea. A guard is to be placed on the bridge  
~~road into Cairo~~  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile out of camp on the  
road into Cairo & no one will be allowed over  
it who has not a pass. There will be three  
pickets in town instead of one & they will  
deal at once with any man whom they  
find drunk or misbehaving himself. I believe  
the system is now in force & that accounted  
for the comparative quietness of Cairo last night.

Sir J. Reid dined in Camp, at Headquarters.  
Gen. Birdwood (now Sir Wm Birdwood) proposed  
his health — which I fancy (& Sir G. Reid said so in his  
~~was a means reply~~) meant really that Sir George  
ad had to make a speech — which he did.  
I was in Cairo sending cables.



He told us (as they all do) ~~that he was not a~~ <sup>that he was not a</sup> guide but a watchman. He showed us the face of the Sphinx by mappesium wire. Then a figure strolled up from an arab camp near where the paws of the Sphinx used to be - it was another watchman - & offered to tell Col. Patterson his fortune. This consisted in drawing a cross on the ground, putting a coin (a silver coin he insisted) in the middle of it, prodding it a certain number of times in a circle round it a certain number of times with a forefinger; & then telling Col. Patterson that two ladies loved him; that one was taller than the other; that he had received letters before & was going to receive them again - & several other <sup>home</sup> truths of the same sort.

When we got back I wrote on till 3 & then turned in.

I always devour some chocolate ~~to~~ for a sort of supper when I finish working on a late night like this.

I worked off 2 letters. At midnight Col. Patterson asked me to stroll up to the Pyramids with him as the moon was bright & he wanted some exercise. I did so. ~~Of course~~ a guide fastened on to us at the gate - ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> of course.

Sat Jan 2. I have leave from Gen. Maxwell to go down the Canal - up to & including January 6. ~~was~~ I decided a day or two since to start this week, as there ~~are~~ is news which shows pretty definitely that the Turks are to be expected to attack the Canal shortly. The two English journalists who have been down to the Canal at Ismailia say that the attack is expected in about a fortnight - Jan 15. An interview appeared <sup>two days ago</sup> recently in an Alexandria paper with an American missionary who had come straight from the coast of Syria-Palestine (Jaffa, if I remember rightly) & who said there was no question that this attack was to be expected & was seriously meant. Four big guns, ~~12 inch~~ six inch ~~secondly~~ according to some accounts if not eight, were being brought & the number of Turkish troops actually in Palestine was 30,000.

Our intelligence Officer, Mr. Blamey, told me that he wants



January 2.

8.

be seeing the Intelligence people in town & would  
let me know if there was anything to be known;  
I arranged to meet him in at tea at Shepherds,  
& ~~did so~~ & as a matter of fact saw  
him <sup>at the Continental</sup> after he had seen them. ~~But~~ he gave  
me nothing <sup>in the way of</sup> news. But he gave me what  
was much more useful - a letter to  
Gen. Bingley ~~General Staff Officer~~ <sup>General Staff Officer</sup> at the  
Headquarters of the Suez Canal Defences.

I left by the 6.15 p.m. train &  
reached Somalia at 9.6. The hotel  
was full but I got a bed in a room  
two - bedded room - the other bed being  
occupied by a soldier, a private in  
the 8th Lanc. Fusiliers, servant to  
Maj. Saddleby who was staying in the  
hotel. This was a real simple old  
Lancashire factory hand. He had been  
a packer & then enlisted. When he  
left the army he went back to packing  
& was getting 34/- a week when the  
Union secretary came round & asked if  
he had served his time. He had not,  
& said so - & as his employment



January 2

9.

would have meant a strike of the men  
his employer shifted him to another class  
of job at 28/- "I lost that," he told me,  
"by joining the territorials. I went away  
to ~~my~~ camp & when I came back  
I found a chap working in my place  
at 20/- a week. They took me back  
at my and the two of us were working  
for a time side by side - but the foreman  
came along & started grousing at the expense  
of having to pay me so much when they  
could get a chap to do the work at 20/- ?  
so I lost my job." &

He was devoted to his officer.

"It's curious how you get attached to  
a man," he said. "It's a

~~his broad language~~ "I like it at Cairo well enough," he said in  
"of course there" "Ah look it  
well enough at Cairo," he said.

"O' course there's lots to do but it  
keeps you movin' an' employed  
all the time. Sometimes ah get dead  
tired of it an' I ah think ah'd  
like to leave his belt to clean in the



January 21.

10.

mornin'. But then he maast want it an' he'd ~~have to go~~ drop it in, an' ah doant want that whatever happens. If anythin' was to happen to him - if anythin' was to happen - I doan' know what I'd do. ~~But if~~ If anyone was to touch 'im" - he banged one fist into the other, & shook his head & clenched his teeth - "I could, I could do anything. I don't know what I'd do if I lost 'm. It's curious how you get attached to a man. Ah don't know if he knows it - ah don't suppose he does..."

He was going to be called at 5 am. the next morning to clean his ~~of~~ major's belt & have everything ready for him when he called him at 7 am. ~~He had been so~~ ~~He was rather late~~ ~~going to bed~~ "He knows ah'm no saint," he told me.

Next morning he showed me the belt burnished bright. I think that was one of the things he lived for. And ?



Jan. 2 + 3.

11

dare say, as he said, his boss didn't know it. The boss ~~was~~ saw at breakfast next day (Jan 3. - on which I am writing this) He was a rather abrupt ordinary looking officer, sandy, ~~with~~ rather sunburnt & freckled, with a toothbrush moustache, ginger coloured. ~~But then~~ He passed one or two abrupt remarks at breakfast (after I had spoken to him). But he afterwards turned out to be not half so frosty as he looked & I dare say, with knowing, he was really one of the very best.

(Sunday) Jan 3. Went to see <sup>the</sup> General ~~Blamey~~ <sup>Blamey</sup> <sup>Officer</sup> Commanding this morning, & was shown into the room of General Bingley himself, to whom Blamey had given me that letter. He was most kind. He first explained me, very graphically, in a few lucid sentences, the defence scheme of the Canal. There are 3 x 1 x 2 Suez & 1 x 2 important & 6 9, Shatt <sup>1</sup> Sinai & Khoubra







January 3.

mile bet so because of the dispersion it wd cause.

Sleeping

the most important means of obtaining info into the country  
 But <sup>as by aeroplane patrol</sup> <sup>These are considered from</sup> <sup>by aeroplane</sup> <sup>to be the most important</sup> <sup>airplane</sup>  
 of Sinai <sup>at</sup> <sup>are not very modern ones</sup> <sup>of Gen. Bingley</sup> <sup>gave me ~~into~~ a pass to see them afterwards</sup> <sup>and the airplanes are rather accurate they must fly</sup> <sup>very far and they are not very fast and they can't cover except in with whole of country</sup> <sup>about 10000 ft</sup> <sup>some can't quite cover the distance between</sup> <sup>between them</sup> <sup>there is a big</sup> <sup>with middle which don't seem to be able to cover</sup>  
 Ismailia <sup>2083</sup> <sup>P.S. & Suez</sup>  
 Sam. <sup>1-175</sup> <sup>1-190</sup>  
 gave me ~~into~~ a pass to see them afterwards  
 I went over <sup>1-175</sup> <sup>1-190</sup>  
 The <sup>1-175</sup> <sup>1-190</sup>  
 P.S. & Suez  
 1-175  
 1-190  
 S.S. of Suez x  
 Ism. <sup>1-175</sup> <sup>1-190</sup>  
 Nakhl <sup>80 miles</sup> <sup>to Suez</sup> <sup>300</sup> <sup>to Akaba</sup>



which caused

January 3.

14

1 M 200 s.c. 7 (, 7 ( ) 5 x 1' 1'  
N 1 2 pm. " s ✓ - - - ) ✓ L 3.30,  
9 1 - 4 x

Maj. Massey who commands the  
~~the aviators~~ aviators tells me that the desert is  
very easy to find your way about. From  
4000 feet up you can see both  
Port S. - 2: - 6 1. - 5 1. x The  
only town there is this town of Nahkl.  
About 10 miles out from here you get  
on rough stone country - wind worn  
sandstone ridges with drift sand  
in between, where it is impossible  
to land.

~~The Turks are expected~~ I had lunch  
with Maj. Howard at the camp of the  
22nd Brigade at Mouskar - Gen Bingley  
gave me a letter to him. He showed me  
all round the camp of his brigade & the  
cavalry brigade Hyderabad, Mysore,  
Patiala, next to it. All the cavalry  
here is Imperial Service Cavalry & one of  
~~the~~ the infantry ~~battalions~~ brigades has three  
Imperial Service regts in it. The men look











(pay missed out)

17







January 4.

19

of the Imperial Service Infantry Brigade  
& the Frontier Brigade (Gen. Sir Geo. Younghusband);  
& he is also senior officer of the two divisions  
stationed along the Canal - they are not  
organised as an Army corps but he  
is the S.O.C. Canal defences & so commands  
the two. Gen. Harry Watson commands the  
Imperial Service Infantry Brigade & his brother,  
another & much taller Genl. Watson, the  
Imperial Service Cavalry Brigade. They  
were both on board the hospital ship & so were  
~~at least~~ <sup>at least</sup> one other general - I don't remember  
his name.

The hospital ship was the old Canadian  
Pacific Lines Empress of India; ~~now~~  
~~turned into~~ she has still photos of the  
Rocky Mtn forests & the companies  
great hotels. She has a crew of Chinese,  
with English officers, 4 Surgeons (<sup>one</sup> native  
Surgeon from the Court of the Maharajah  
of Swatior) 10 assistants - all qualified  
native <sup>Indian</sup> doctors, - & a number of English  
nurses. She has beds for just less than  
300. The smoking room has been turned into



January 14.

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cabins for ten medical officers - 4 big cabins. The rest of the cabins, hatches etc have been remodelled into about 10 beautifully neat wards with rocking beds which can either be locked or else left free to swing with the ships movements. Some of the beds are left specially wide for fellows with broken legs. There is an operating room, X Ray room, dark room, Dispensary with a great deal of surgical stores, a bacterial laboratory where slides can be repaired; 2 isolation wards on deck; a special ward with 3 <sup>beds</sup> ~~rooms~~ for British Officers & a larger ward with about 20 beds for native officers.

The ~~whole~~ ship has been ~~received~~ <sup>obtained</sup> & paid for by the rulers of India (at present ~~some~~ <sup>Maharaja Scindia of Gwalior</sup> ~~at Scindia is doing~~ <sup>who gave</sup> a similar ship during the Chinese trouble, is doing Everything & will collect it later) - the Officers salaries are being paid for by them. They have provided kits for the men who come on board - pyjamas etc., & even kits to fit them out when they leave the ship & go back to their regiments!



January 4.

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Every penny is being paid by the native rulers.

This ship will be on the ferry service probably - There are already no less than 8 hospital ships employed taking wounded backwards & forwards between France & India. Four are employed ferrying across the channel - British & Indian wounded, from Boulogne & Southampton; two are employed from Southampton to Alexandria; & two from Suez to Bombay. The part between Alexandria & Suez is covered by 3 hospital trains - these trains are fitted ~~into~~ with bunks & even with an operating theatre. A man might get a bad haemorrhage whilst travelling & they have to be able to deal with it at once.

One had no idea that this traffic in wounded was occupying the trade routes.

After leaving the hospital I had breakfast - really it was a second breakfast on the hospital ship; whilst it was in



January 4.

22.

progress the two Generals Watson came aboard, with the Maharajah of one of the Indian States & the Khan Sahib, Aga Khan the leader of the Mahommedans in India, who has obtained a commission in the Indian Army. He is a tremendously square powerfully built man - I had noticed him in the Grand Continental at Cairo without knowing who he was. They had about 8 Indian officers with them, & must have come down from Cairo specially to see the ship. She was ~~at~~ anchored not far from the Requin (an old French armoured ship of 1878) to be inspected & was going on as soon as the inspection was finished.

After this I thought I would see if I could get a horse & ride out <sup>to</sup> ~~to~~ the remains of the ancient canal which are marked in the map in Baedeker a little to the North & East of Ismelia. I got an Arab horse - a very light one, with a rather sketchy sort of harness, a bridle made of a thin strip of green hide, a bit tied up with string &



January 4.

23.

wire, & a saddle mostly consisting of iron frame work - At least there was a good large angle of iron framework protruding in front of it which came in very useful when my seat was a trifle uncertain. ~~But~~ There was not far to fall if I had got into trouble. But I survived ~~the~~ 4 hour journey all right. The ~~posts~~ <sup>posts</sup> along the canal probably wondered if I were a German spy wandering <sup>aimlessly</sup> out there at the back of them; but the troops <sup>normally</sup> practice there so they didn't think it worth while to send out & see. I didn't find the old canal - at least I don't think I did. The nearest thing to it was a set of two parallel lines of sand hills but they weren't in the proper place. The only other feature that looked artificial was clearly an old road to El Giar, a village on the highland <sup>along</sup> of the canal.



January 5.

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Tuesday Jan 5th.

Gen. Bingley very kindly obtained leave for me to go with the staff to watch the firing of the Swiftsures' guns in the Canal at Cantara, 15 miles N. of here. We started at 10.10 by train from Ismailia. There were Gen. Wilson, Gen. Wallace (commanding the other division here) Gen. <sup>G.F.</sup> Youngusband, Gen. Bingley & staff some of their staff. (Gen. Youngusband told me that he remembered father in the School House, at Clifton.)

Cantara is the place where the <sup>Trade</sup> route comes in from Palestine & Syria past a lot of wells which are particularly well <sup>filled</sup> ~~watered~~ at present as they had some splendid rains a short time ago - the best for seven years. <sup>Sea</sup> The water <sup>reaches</sup> right down to Cantara - owing to storm they <sup>took in more</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>compounded</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>than was intended.</sup> We have a pretty strong position there,

by Gen. Cox. As we came up we could see the tents  
 19 10 - <sup>spirit</sup> a > he en - <sup>of Gen Wilson was</sup> <sup>surprised to find it.</sup> <sup>It seems he has a post</sup>  
 20 1 - <sup>isolated</sup> <sup>behind</sup> <sup>of all that</sup> <sup>withdrawn</sup> <sup>doubt</sup> <sup>commit ourselves to</sup> <sup>so that</sup> <sup>sally out</sup>  
 21 9 - <sup>of all that</sup>

Just before we got to Cantara we saw a



January 5

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batch of Australian Engineers in their wide awake hats beside the rly line, just on the Western bank of the Canal. They are going to make trenches there on every sort of pattern likely to be of use in France. The trenches will be used as a second line of defence, if necessary. They had just arrived - we saw half of them pushing their ~~cart~~ through the sand along the bank as we arrived. There are some ~~British~~ <sup>Indian</sup> sappers & miners next to them, who have levelled the ground for their camp.

We went by a motor launch to the Swiftsure which was tied up some way along. As soon as we got aboard some one of the officers took us in charge - a very nice & easy way they have of doing things in the navy. I stuffed a good big wad of cotton wool, wedge shaped, into each ear not too tightly. Everyone else was doing the same. The generals mostly went to the bridge to look on. I went with some of the others to the picket boat on the port side & sat there.

The Swiftsure has 4 ten-inch guns, two in a turret forward & two in a turret aft. They fire











January 5.

28.

went to the wardroom which is similarly airy. They have cut great square windows around the ports in order to let in more air & the ship's side opens out even better than a liners <sup>to sit in</sup> ~~the ward~~. It must ~~look like~~ <sup>be like sitting in</sup> a sort of verandah or balcony when the ports are all open. They need this air in the Persian Gulf.

~~After lunch the ship~~ <sup>As we were sitting at</sup> ~~lunch~~ the ship began moving down the Canal towards Ismailia; & as we moved she fired some of her 12 pounders. On each occasion there was a signalling party out in the desert some way at the side to watch the firing & report on every shot. For that reason she fired slowly, one gun as a rule at a time. Then came a helio message from the desert some way to the side of the target. We answered by searchlight from up the mast.

As we moved we saw from the Captain's Admirals Cabin a section of Australian engineers standing to attention as we passed. They looked well, I thought; but someone in the cabin noticed that whilst the officer brought



January 5. 29.

his men to attention he stood at ease in front of them himself.

I heard an interesting point about the Germans. Before this war, so <sup>one of the marine</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>officers</sup> ~~marines~~ told us, they had been manufacturing fixed ammunition for the 11 inch guns & for every smaller gun — Fixed ammunition is ammunition in ~~the~~ which the charge goes into a brass case — like a cartridge case. We used to make it for our 6 inch guns but have since adopted silk.

It was not until the war was actually on top of them that the Germans found you couldn't fire more than 4 rounds consecutively from an 11 inch gun with fixed ammunition. <sup>Part of the</sup> ~~the~~ case sticks to the sides of the chamber & when the gun is hot you can't get more than 4 rounds in. They have had to alter the whole of their system, work out ~~different~~ charges different in size & weight; & there are no doubt (if this is a fact) some of the changes that are being carried out in the ships at Kiel. A bit of very interesting naval news was



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also told me, but too confidential to be mentioned here.

I believe our airmen have had considerable difficulties in getting about the interior of Arabia - or rather Sinai. The mountains run to a great height of 7,000 or 8,000 feet - <sup>4000 feet</sup> - it was believed that you could cross them at 7,000 feet but our airmen found that the lowest crossing was 7,500.

One machine - a seaplane - had a bad smash. ~~Petrol~~ The engine stopped at 4000 feet & they had to descend. There was water higher up the valley, ~~but~~ turned out, but ~~no~~ but none where but none within reach of a vol plane. The best they could do was to head for a marsh. They did this - The ~~marks~~ floats touched the slime & the machine turned over & pinned the English pilot to the ground. The French observer who was thrown <sup>to</sup> some distance was only shaken & he ~~came~~ got the Englishman out - but they say the latter's nerve received



January 5.

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a tremendous shock.

Later: at dinner tonight I got from the  
commander of the Minerva some further details  
of this ~~operation~~ <sup>incident</sup>. Capt. Sterling (of H.M.S.  
Minerva) went up with a French pilot in the  
Gulf of Akaba. ~~He~~ They took petrol for 2½ hours  
& went up the valley, which is a broad  
stretch of sand & scrub between two ranges of  
very high hills - 7000 at least & indeed  
~~they~~ <sup>They</sup> could not find a way over them at 7000.  
They had gone 20 miles when their petrol suddenly  
cut off. They were 4000 feet up & had to get  
down somehow. The French pilot managed  
it with extraordinary skill. There was  
a bit of a marsh - wet sand, little more,  
and he plaved down till he reached this.  
The moment the nose of the machine struck  
the sand the tail went up into the air.  
The French pilot was thrown out several  
yards away & the Capt. Sterling found himself  
pinned to the ground with his legs bent  
back over him.

He called to the Frenchman to  
help him out - but there was no reply.



January 5.

After a long wait he called again - This time the Frenchman got up & came to his assistance. ~~He~~ <sup>the</sup> calling had wakened him. The Frenchman lifted the machine off him. There was no hope of going further in it; - so they set off to walk back to the ship - 20 miles down the valley. ~~There~~ There were Turks about in plenty in the <sup>country.</sup> They had been reinforced - probably reconnoitring - since the first action at Akaba some months ago. (They are not coming this way to the canal). They had not gone far when the Frenchman complained of internal pains; & after 5 miles he said he wd go no further. Capt. Sterling gave him his biscuits & water, left him there & pushed on. He went on till dark & after dark. The Turks got onto his track but he got away from them. Late that night he got down to the shore.

The Minerva at that time used to put out from the shore every night,

~~because of Turkish guns. They used to come down to~~  
 close range, <sup>hide themselves & fire at her & she did not reply to them</sup>  
 because she was not able to locate them. She put back into



January 5.

33.

the "Gay" on "Spec" - turned on her searchlight for a few seconds - & heard a hail from the shore. It was Capt. Sterling. They had never hoped to see him again as they knew his time was long since up.

The next day, as a matter of honour, they landed a party to look for the Frenchman. The party went back up the valley, & was fired on by the Turks, but saw no sign of the pilot. They gave him up for lost & put to sea.

But that night the Captain of the *Mierva* had a strong ~~and~~ prepossession that if he put back <sup>to</sup> a certain part of the beach he wd find somebody. He got out of bed, went up on the bridge, ~~and~~ put the ship ~~to return~~ about, & steered for this place. When he reached it he turned on the searchlight in a few rapid flashes. It fell on ~~the~~ an Arab hut; & out of the hut staggered the Frenchman.

It is a curious thing, noticed by these



January 5.

34.

aviators that when you come off the sea onto the land (or <sup>perhaps</sup> vice versa) you fall straight for 300 or 400 feet until you reach a new level of air.

Also, when a machine has reached its limit of height & tries to go higher, it is like standing on tip-toe. The machine raises its self; & then the effort seems to fail & it wobbles back to a lower level. They notice this fall in going over Lake Timsah, at Ismailia.

Every ship entering the Canal is searched. In suspicious cases a guard is put on board. For example, not long ago a Norwegian ship appeared with a suspicious cargo - a half cargo of cement (which wd set in one huge concrete block if the ship were sunk.) An officer & a number of seamen were put on board. There was one to watch the Plimsoll mark; another sounding with a line; another to watch the stern & see nothing was dropped over; another watching the wheelman; & so on. If the ship had got too near the side as







January 5.

on an average } → deck

} → 6ms

Swiftsure mounted in her fighting tops.

1 - 6 0 0 0

parts

let in Pt Sait comes south

Cantara } with any chance of

North of point road End

from Nahkel seem impossible therefore chances

Cantara - 2 6 1

near Cantara

Krupp → Sangars



January 5.


37.

9 limbers p ( . . . ) 4 → x <sup>Shore</sup> . . .

plug away  . . . <sup>Several</sup> . . .

 . . . <sup>draw</sup> . . .

6 . . . <sup>the 2 guns</sup> . . . <sup>narrow ledge</sup> . . .

✓  . . . <sup>backwards</sup> . . .

p . . . 3 <sup>hoppers</sup> . . . <sup>six tugs</sup> 6 L . . .


at Port Said <sup>Cantina</sup> <sup>Suez</sup> . . . <sup>searchlight</sup> . . .

4 <sup>frameworks</sup> <sup>towers</sup> . . . . .

✓ <sup>amid</sup> . . . <sup>stern</sup> . . . <sup>sometimes</sup> . . .

b<sup>7</sup> . . . <sup>but</sup> . . .

✓ . . . <sup>old Balak</sup> . . .

 . . . <sup>pumping</sup> . . . <sup>over</sup> . . .



January 5. 6.

breaking  
 L. 2 2 2 2 2 cut 2 2 2 2  
 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2  
 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2

Jan 5th. (Wednesday)

Left ~~the~~ Ismailia for Cairo & camp.  
 The line runs along the Fresh Water Canal which  
 comes across from one of the Branches of the  
 Nile direct to Ismailia in the middle of  
 the Canal. If the Canal is pictured as the  
 top of a capital T laid on its side so - ->  
 the fresh water canal is the shaft of the T.  
~~It runs north~~ It splits in two (just as  
 the railway does) at Ismailia & runs North  
 & South along the canal, ~~on~~ close along the  
 western side of it to supply water to the  
 workmen & stations on the Canal. Wherever it  
 goes there is of course green vegetation  
 - laid down in a narrow strip across the  
 desert; the railway, the fresh water, the  
 vegetation & cultivation & the part of the country



January 6. 7.

39.

which is therefore habitable & passable by human beings & by our troops all follow the shape of this capital T laid on its side. Outside that all is desert. <sup>passifland</sup> the only communication with the <sup>seas</sup> Canal is by the shaft of this T (unless troops were moved on foot across the <sup>wetlands</sup> desert, which ours could not be any more than the Turks, if as well). The only other communication with the Canal is by sea - with both ends. Troops can come in <sup>ships</sup> from Egypt to the northern end or from India and ~~to~~ Australia to the Southern end.

Thurs  
Wed

Jan 7<sup>th</sup>. I hear that all leave is to be stopped tomorrow midday, so that any man found in Cairo will be <sup>a man</sup> breaking camp. Pickets will be sent in to round them all up. Some of them I suppose have been in there for days or <sup>even</sup> weeks. A few may be at Port Said or Alexandria - goodness knows where. We have been so comparatively lenient (rightly, I suppose) up to the present that it would be impossible to shoot these chaps - in fact it wouldn't be just except in cases of most



January 7. 8.

140.

serious crime (of which I don't personally and definitely know of any). But they recently shot 3 Indians for trying to get away from the Canal on a pilgrimage to Mecca. This was to stop ~~the~~ a "rot" from setting in, as we say in cricket.

Jan 8<sup>th</sup> 1915. (Thursday). I went in to Cairo today to see if I could get hold of Capt. Sterling of the Royal Flying Corps, secretary of the ~~Sporting~~ Club here, whose extraordinary adventure with a French pilot in the Gulf of Akaba I wanted to send to Australia. I found he had just left the same morning to go back to Akaba for further flights (so his nerve wasn't broken, after all, as I heard it might be). His mother & sister were in ~~2~~ after a good deal of trouble I found them. I have certain indications which seem to point to the other presence (I therefore probably Schuler, who works with them which I cannot very well do) having got this story. I saw Sir John Maxwell <sup>today</sup> about the pamphlet I ~~was to send~~ am getting out for the troops. He asked me ~~may~~ what I had seen on the Canal



January 8.

41

what my opinion was of the sort of thing the Turks would have to face - how the firing went off etc. I said that of course the difficulties in front of the Turks were enormous but we had difficulties too & I ~~was~~ thought if I were a Turk I knew how I wd make the attempt. ~~But at the back~~ I could see that in General Maxwell's mind the greatest question was - could the Tanks possibly transport those heavy guns? Can they ever get across that 110 miles from El Arish with their flank exposed to us all the way from Katieh - the last 30 miles. We have let in the sea there & they have to turn off half left at Katieh & skirt 30 miles of water all the way to Kantara where the first possible crossing is. Can they look at it?

I told Gen. Maxwell that I should probably make use of the story of Capt. Sterlings flight. He said - "oh, you can telegraph that - it's gone through to London already." So I did -

That cable kept me late. It ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> 8 when ~~it~~ <sup>it</sup> ~~came~~ <sup>came</sup> back



January 8

42.

I drove back after seeing Capt. Stirling's mother & sister at his house. ~~As it was~~ I sat at the Cable office writing it up until about 10.30 & then strolled along to a rather nice little confectioners shop opposite the Opera House which is always open late, & had some bread & butter, cakes, & a cup of chocolate. ~~Then~~ The tram I caught back started at 11 p.m. & it was taking back some <sup>men from a</sup> belated picket, with their officer. Another lot joined later, who had been sent in to get some prisoners & bring

them out. ~~Owing to some duplication of orders~~ ~~some~~ this <sup>guard</sup> picket had been sent in by the <sup>2nd</sup> brigade. Owing to some duplication of orders the battalions had also sent in ~~picket~~ guards to fetch some of this same lot of prisoners. I have noticed that through some want of arrangement or other in the units the divisional orders <sup>Sometimes</sup> ~~often~~ do not get to the men who have to carry them out. eg. There is an order that it is forbidden for ~~small~~ cabs to take ~~more~~ than 4 men & although this seemed to have an effect for some days I noticed that the guard on the bridge  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile along the road to Cairo, which



January 8.

43

stops every cab & motor going either way, as well as the trams & forces men to show their passes - did not enforce this rule & probably ~~did~~ not know of it.

The pickets in town this night had orders to stop & inquire into the cause of arrest every Australian they saw. Leave had been stopped some time before & no one had any right to be in town except on urgent business with a special pass. There were a good number of Australians arrested (a New Zealand officer told me they got over 100 Australians & only one N. Zealander, but I don't altogether trust this). However, there are a certain number of men still ~~out~~ unaccounted for. They are mostly pretty wary old birds, I fancy. Anyway when they saw there were no men coming into town they suspected something was up & at once began I suppose to lie up like hares in various haunts round town. They got to know that the pickets were



Jan. 8. 9 to 30.

44.

all carrying sidearms, & I believe some of these deserters managed to raise sidearms from somewhere & started to venture abroad in them. The pickets caught a few & of course from that moment the pickets began to suspect <sup>that</sup> every man they saw wearing side arms was a deserter in disguise. The consequence was that the pickets spent most of the rest of the night arresting other pickets. They were from different <sup>battalions</sup> ~~regiments~~ so they did not know one another - & the officers were kept busy ~~going~~ travelling between their pickets & the citadel & releasing <sup>their</sup> men whom other pickets had ~~imprisoned~~ arrested. I came home with one <sup>officer</sup> in the train ~~who had~~ <sup>who had</sup> been kept till the late train by getting some of his men out of "quod".

Jan 9 to Jan 30<sup>th</sup>

From this time on, although there was a great deal of disease amongst our men, which they brought on themselves by their indulgences in Cairo, the discipline steadily improved. The disease is simply deplorable, but apparently quite unpreventable.



January 9 to 30<sup>th</sup>

45.

Cairo is a hotbed of it - in particularly serious forms - & some of the cases are simply tragic; young soldiers, really fine clean simple boys who have been drinking & have found themselves with a disease which may ruin them for life. In one case which I heard of, the youngster was said to have been made drunk by two older soldiers - the beasts that old soldiers will sometimes make of themselves inclines one to wish that we had not a single example of them in the force. (By the bye I was talking to an officer of the intelligence corps here ~~who~~ who was in ~~one~~ of Kitchener's new army. I asked him if they ever got any trouble - by enlisting criminals, for example. He said there was wonderfully little - but there was some; & the cause of it, he said, was the old soldiers. If ever a man got drunk twice (& drunkenness was treated as a serious crime) you were pretty safe if you asked him in what regiment he had served before. Maj. Austin, a very fine type of imperial officer who is with us as ordnance officer &



January 9 to 30

146.

who has a fine hold of every Australian officer & man who comes near him (they all swear by him) tells me that he noticed the peculiar slackness of the Imperial reservists at Broadmeadows. ~~They~~ The same thing was noticed on the Miltiades - the only ship in our fleet which gave any trouble, she was the ship carrying the men who had served in the British army & who were <sup>still</sup> liable to serve in it ~~soon~~ when war broke out.)

~~It~~ In the third week in January the Kyarra (an Australian coastal steamer of 7000 tons) arrived painted (but not otherwise fitted) as a hospital ship & containing 2 general hospitals (base hospitals) 2 stationary hospitals & a clearing hospital. The general hospitals were of 500 to 600 beds; the stationary of abt 300; & the clearing hospital abt 250. The <sup>two</sup> general hospitals brought 160 nurses ~~between them~~ in all. It seems a huge lot & although they are fine public spirited women I've no doubt I don't think the authorities would



January 9 to 30

47

care to see them settled down for any long period next door to a permanent camp. No 1. General Hospital & No 1 stationary were brought out to Mena; the General Hospital took over Mena House, ~~and~~ occupies also a number of tents on the flat; The stationary is put into tents & has some of the gonorrhoea cases shifted into it.

But the worst gonorrhoea cases have been sent back in the Kyarra. The authorities have decided to do what was clearly the best thing — to send back to Australia by this ship about 500 or 600 men who have been found to be endangering Australia's good name by their behaviour; or who have <sup>generally</sup> ~~in~~ the case of the old soldiers) generally shown themselves drunkards or shirkers; or who have made themselves unfit for service by ~~the~~ incurring disease. Some of these last cases are hard ones in that the men going back were merely more unlucky than most of those staying behind. Still, they must have known in most cases the risk they ran. Along



January 9 to 30

48

with these there are going back (on Feb. 1 from Suez) a certain number of men who are ill or incapacitated through no fault of their own.

There is being sent back with the men an account of exactly what they are being sent back for: - a medical report in the case of each disease - & so on. The Government will therefore know - (or, if it likes, can publish) exactly the reason why each man is being returned.

There was a time about Xmas when the sights in the streets of Cairo were anything but pleasant for an Australian who had any regard to the good name of Australia. There was a great deal of drunkenness & I could not help noticing that what people in Cairo said was true - the Australians were responsible for most of it. There were rowdy noisy British Territorials & rowdy drunken N. Zealanders, but my own observation was that the Australians were easily the most noticeable.



January 9 to 30

49.

& the most frequent offenders were Australian.  
~~the~~ I think we have to admit that  
our force contains more bad hats than the  
others, & I think also that ~~the~~ the average  
Australian is ~~probably~~ certainly a harder liver.  
He does do bad things - at least things that  
the rest of the world considers as really bad;  
but it is equally true that he has extraordinarily  
good points - more, I should say, than the  
English soldiers here & than the N.Z. soldiers.  
If he is unrestrained he is also <sup>extraordinarily</sup> generous and  
~~the~~ openhearted. He is not in the least colourless  
or negative - he has ~~so~~ you don't often meet  
an ~~Australian~~ <sup>Australian</sup> who is without a character. He often  
has strong positive vices but he more  
often has strong positive virtues also; &  
the virtues are so good & so attractive that  
I think the Australian will have to rely on  
the good things he does to wipe out the  
bad ones; & I think the sum will come  
out on the right side when it is all totted  
up. That is my great comfort when I  
reflect ~~that~~ wonder how I shall ever  
manage to write up an honest history of



January 9. to 30.

50.

this campaign. I fully expect the men of this force will do things when the real day comes which will make the true history of this war possible to be written.

~~It is~~ The other day when I was talking to a <sup>British</sup> officer now in Cairo he told me: "You know when the Territorials first came here they got a real bad name for themselves. Their officers didn't seem to have any hold on them at all" (which would certainly not be true of us & is probably an exaggeration applied to them) "and <sup>they used to be the talk of</sup> officers down on the Canal. ~~elsewhere used to be~~. But people have forgotten it & they have shaken down & you hear nothing but good of them now." Well that is clearly happening to our chaps also. The Territorials, too, when first they got here had ~~a~~ a lot of disease amongst them 500 cases, I am told; & their numbers are fewer than ours. They get very little now - & the same is becoming true of our men.



January 9 to 30.

As an example of ~~The Australians~~ the Australian - I heard a lady, an English woman, white haired, pleasant faced, talking to several Australian soldiers & trying to get them to come & visit her home again when next they came into town. She had been doing what several English people in the town have tried to do - to make our chaps feel at home by entertaining them, & some of them appreciated her kindness. "Now mind you, come again the next time", she said again repeated -

And then an Australian soldier (they were all Australians) standing next to her said the worst & most horrible thing I have ever heard said to an honest woman. I think he had had a little drink but he was not drunk nor even anything approaching it. I couldn't believe my ears - I was wondering if I had been mistaken. But one of the others didn't wait to wonder. He ~~it~~ turned round a moment & then took the blackguard by the throat & pushed him back into the road; & then hit him hard in the face; & then hit him



January 9 to 30

hand in the face again. The other chap was a bit of a cur & didn't want to fight; but the youngster who hit him was white with rage. "An Australian" he panted as they dragged him off, "did you hear what he said? One of our own Australians & he insulted that English lady who was trying to be kind to us! He's not a man he's a cur! One of ~~our~~ our own lot to insult an Englishwoman..." One of his mates was nearly as excited as himself. That was the worst thing I have personally seen in Cairo - by far; but it was also pretty promptly avenged - by an Australian. I don't think the lady, from the expression on her face, understood what was said. Probably she went away shocked with the wicked behaviour of the soldier who had deliberately hit an inoffensive fellow soldier in the street.

Except in a very few cases neither the Australians nor the New Zealanders have acted offensively towards the natives. They have managed to get, I ~~believe~~ <sup>am told</sup>; into lower



January 9 to 30

53.

quarters ~~there~~ in Cairo than are visited by the British troops & have run the risk of making the Egyptian despise them - which is said never to have occurred to British soldiers before - but on the whole they have been kind to the natives. I have heard of a few wild exceptions of Australian & New Zealand bullying - presumably through drunkenness - One big Australian is said to have walked up to an Egyptian sitting quietly at a table outside a cafe & hit him hard under the ear knocking him onto the pavement. The soldier was drunk & his friends were trying to get him away. But I don't know if these things are true because I didn't see them myself & didn't get them from a man who actually had seen them. On the whole our men, if they have erred, have erred on the side of being over familiar with any class of native who simply wants to exploit them.

I have seen something of the Syrians in this country - they are practically Europeans, being largely the descendants of crusaders who settled on the coasts of Syria & ~~Asia Minor~~ <sup>Palestine</sup>. They know the ~~country~~ <sup>country</sup> ~~well~~ <sup>well</sup>.



January 9 to 30

54.

Turks & Egyptians very well & know what they  
~~they are talking about~~ are talking about. Often  
when I was at Ismailia, or here, when I  
go in to have a light lunch or dinner at  
Gruppi's Restaurant, I wonder what the  
young men in fezzes ~~who~~ <sup>who</sup> are chatting  
excitedly in low voices at the other tables are  
discussing. You often see them throwing  
~~obvious~~ side glances of obvious suspicion at  
you. Well, the Syrians, who are Christians  
& whose one fierce desire is for the British  
or French to free their country from the Turks,  
tell me that this talk is almost entirely  
against the British. Although these young  
Turks & Egyptians are often as white  
as I am, red headed with hazel eyes  
in many cases, they are Mahomedans;  
& although their religious feeling is not very  
keen there is a ~~keen~~ <sup>sentimental</sup> strong bond between  
Turkish & Egyptian Moslems however slack  
their actual belief. One of my Syrian friends  
has argued long with them - ~~they~~ asking  
if they or their fathers don't remember what  
this country was like when the Turkish



January 9 to 30 Feb. 6.

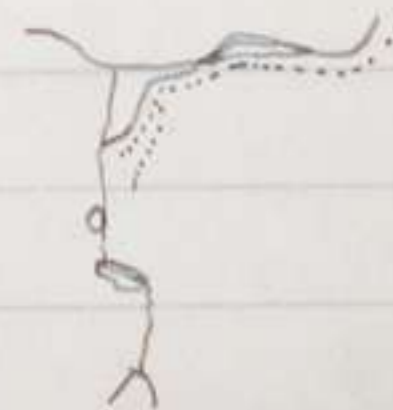
55.

rule was here - how neither their property nor their women were respected, & even their religion was interfered with. But they have forgotten all this. They are anxious for the Turks to succeed - if the Turks crossed the Canal they might try to help them. One Egyptian said to a friend of mine when all arguments had been brought to bear on him - "I know - but I would rather have a Turkish hell than a British paradise". You can't argue with a man like that.

Feb 6<sup>th</sup>  
~~Jan 20~~

The Turks have been <sup>seen</sup> on the Canal for some days. The first actual contact with them was on Jan. 26 when our patrols were fired on East of Kantara at long range by a body of Turks with mountain guns. ~~one of our~~. This was one of several bodies of advanced troops which we have located. These troops are coming down along three main lines - (1) By the <sup>Caravan route</sup> ~~coastal road~~ along the Mediterranean shore past Bir el Abd, Katia, Bir el Nuss, Bir el Dueidar, Hott el Aras, Bir el Mahadat, \* Bir Madkur.

This seems really to be the main line of advance. There are comparatively





February 6.

56.

large bodies of them moving along this road, which is the best watered of all those across the ~~pen~~ isthmus.

(2) By a branch road from El Arish diagonally across to a steep gully leading down onto the plain at Moiya Harab. There are about 7000 already camped at the mouth of this valley opposite the Bitter Lake, about 25 miles E. of it.

(3) A third raged lot have come ~~right~~ <sup>right</sup> across from Maan & Nakhl. They are at Bir Mabelik at the foot of the hills ~~opposite Suez~~ 12 to 15 miles E.S.E. of Suez. Some of this lot have been down to worry Tor in the Gulf of Suez, without effect.

~~As I mentioned, the first brush we had with them was~~

And now they are just beginning to brush up against our outposts & patrols along the Canal. Four days ago was the first brush. Early on Jan 28 <sup>came a second</sup> ~~was another~~ - also at Kantara, where <sup>when I was on the canal</sup> we had a fair size post out in the desert about a mile on the Turkish side. They also made a sort of reconnaissance <sup>along</sup> at the southern end of the Canal; at least I suppose it was a reconnaissance. We captured an Indian here



February 6.

57.

who had been found by the Turks in Mecca & forced to march against us. He was armed from a depot at Maan & marched from there <sup>across</sup> the plateau road via Nakhl.

These of course are only the advanced parties of an army which <sup>seems to be</sup> advancing in a very haphazard sort of fashion. A main body is behind them; it has certainly entered Egypt & was at El-Arish a few days ago. But I do not think that the whole Syrian army has advanced. So far as I know, the main body ~~is~~ on the road consists of about 10,000 men & guns; & there are perhaps 25,000 to 30,000 men already on the canal. These ~~are~~ <sup>seem to be</sup> concentrating mainly about 3 to 5 miles East of Ismailia. They include ~~roughly~~ a brigade or two of regular Turkish troops. Another force, coming presumably from the ~~same direction~~ This force has marched along the coastal road & turned South before reaching the range of our guns. A second force has swung a little further South to the point opposite the Southern end of Lake Timsah. At these two points, just N. & S. of Lake

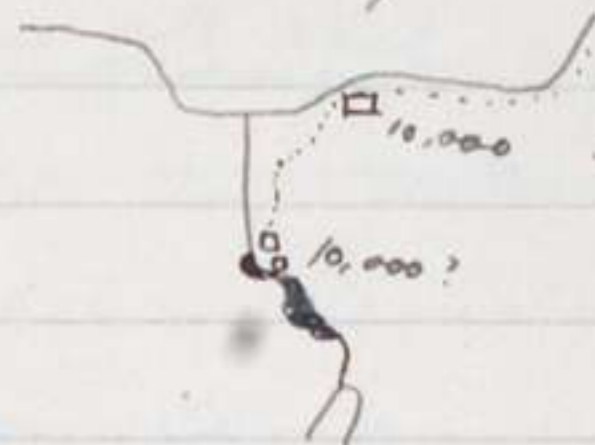


February 6

58.

Timbuktu & are at present the chief force of Turks. They have brought some heavy guns already, & also pontoons & rafts - it is really a great feat to have crossed the desert with these & arrived so early. Fresh bodies seem to be arriving almost every day & <sup>with</sup> those at present here the bulk are moving into the position above mentioned.

Those indicated seem to be the main forces at present here.



The second force now on the road may come up opposite Kantara, or may go to strengthen the force opposite Ismailia where the canal banks are high, & they ~~will~~ make a concentrated effort to break through here.

The puzzle to me at present is:

- (1) Has the main Syrian <sup>army</sup> ~~force~~ (or at any rate as much of it as is intended to attack the Canal) <sup>yet</sup> pushed off? If not, what is it waiting for? Is it that <sup>really</sup> the <sup>big</sup> force cannot cross the desert.
- (2) Why are the Turks attacking with the



February 6

59.

rubbishy that had first arrivals on the Canal. They made an attempt to cross below Timsah on the night of Feb. 2<sup>nd</sup> ~~3<sup>rd</sup>~~ ~~after~~ & kept up a sort of fight until the afternoon of the 3<sup>rd</sup>; at the same time they tried to entrench just N. of the lake opposite Ismailia, & twice (on the 3<sup>rd</sup>) attacked Kantara. Were they trying to ~~keep us~~ <sup>send us all rushing off to</sup> the S. of L. Timsah whilst they ~~entrenched~~ got themselves established in trenches at Ismailia? Or was it a serious attempt to cross? or was it merely a reconnaissance? They can hardly need to reconnoitre in this expensive fashion if they have aeroplanes coming along. However <sup>it</sup> is possible they want to find out the sort of fire that can be developed from our trenches, & where those trenches are, & are sending along these wretched Syrians & Arabs to test it. They have so far left 400 killed, 600 prisoners; & probably have had from 1500 to 2000 wounded. The loss at any rate is estimated by the Press Bureau at 3000. Ours is abt 150. They have been falling into the hands of our patrols like sheep - On the



February 6

60

4<sup>th</sup>, for example, our "patrols" (who I expect are the Imperial Service Cavalry) fell in with 200 men + also 90 camels, ammunition, stores, + 3 machine guns - + all surrendered.

~~Whilst all this has been going on the~~

Since the arrival of a Turkish force off the Canal I seem to have noticed a change in the attitude of the people here. As one walks through the streets remarks are made behind ones back which one cant understand - but I think they are probably cheeky. There is a perceptible insolence in the manner of some of the inhabitants. In <sup>Cairo</sup> ~~the~~ one of the picture ~~shops~~ <sup>shops</sup> the other day, there were shown ~~some~~ films of all the nations at war. The audience sat glumly through the ~~new~~ pictures of French + Russian troops; when it came to the Germans they cheered. The Kaisers portrait was cheered + that of the King of England hissed. Some of our officers + military police were there, + there was a bit of a row over it.

The Egyptian fellah doesn't care who is over him - he has been a slave for 5000



February 6. January 20. 61.  
years & he doesn't want to be anything else.  
It makes no difference to him that the British  
have fed him; but he wouldn't rise against  
them, I think, simply because he's indifferent.  
The crazy town crowd on the other hand is  
apt to rise to a head like boiling milk.  
Instances in the past have shown that a  
couple of hours is enough to raise them.  
A handful of soldiers will suppress them  
but in the meantime they have <sup>probably</sup> boiled  
over & cut the throats of a lot of  
Christians - Syrians, Greeks, Italians  
chiefly, because, they are most numerous.

Well about Jan 20<sup>th</sup> I was allotted a horse. We are  
bringing a certain number of Arabs  
in order to bring the Division right up to its  
proper strength; 1700 horses arrive with  
the "second lot"; but they won't be fit for  
work for weeks. So Lieut. Smith  
(who was a police roughrider in Victoria) &  
Capt De Bucey (who was in an English  
Lancer Regt.) & Maj. Matson, Assistant  
Director of Veterinary Services, were



January 20.

62.

constituted a board to buy some. They went down to Kasr-En-Nil Barracks & there, <sup>almost</sup> every day, met a crowd of wild looking raggamuffins with small arab horses of all shapes sizes & conditions. The arab wd come up, tell a few voluble lies about his property, jump on it & go like the wind across the parade ground (they always thought, for some reason, you wanted to see <sup>hoofbeat</sup> the beast could gallop) dismounted & told more lies, went away shaking his head at an offer of £20 to £25 & presently returned & accepted it. These officers know a horse & consequently some very pretty little beasts have been gradually filling the stables & there are a few in ~~all~~ most of the infantry horse lines. Only they are all stallions & the consequence is they are very restless; always wanting to fight other horses & generally a nuisance. It was therefore decided to operate on them all - & this is being done. My little chap, being very young, has stood it splendidly. He's a beautiful little grey, only three years old, a pocket edition of a horse.



January 20

63.

Two of the first three times <sup>that</sup> I rode him, I being a very inexperienced bad rider, he was inclined to take charge, & bolted with me three or four times. I very nearly came off on several occasions. But I got to know him better afterwards. Bazley <sup>grooms him and takes him ~~to~~ to water.</sup> ~~the first second time I rode him~~

Just after I had got him we went for a 10 mile route march in order to see that the Headquarters was ready to move. One third of the Division (~~A~~ third of the artillery, the first Infantry brigade, and various ~~at~~ details) marched out of camp at 9 with every baggage wagon packed, & the horses properly loaded, exactly as if we were ordered off to the Canal. The route ~~was~~ along the road to Cairn for some miles; then along a road - a sort of mud embankment across the plain - to the left through two villages & back onto the desert; dinner there - & back to camp along the edge of the desert. During lunch which we had on a stretch of green grass, for a wonder, under some palm trees, the Headquarters



January 20. 31

64.

Staff issued an order & had it distributed through signallers - despatch riders. ~~It was~~ The march was well carried out - the only thing being that the artillery started 4 minutes late owing to Col. Hobbs' watch being wrong (which shows how important official time is) & that when the infantry struck the soft road after leaving the Pyramid road they lost step & were apt to straggle. The result was a big gap between the infantry & the <sup>part</sup> piece of the column ahead of them.

The other ~~part~~ two thirds of the Division went out on other days & the staff published <sup>in orders afterwards</sup> its comments on their marching. On the whole there was little fault to find. The improvement in the men is noticeable - & never more noticeable than when the "second lot" arrived.

Just after the Turks turned up on the Canal our "second lot" were due to reach Egypt - a new Infantry Brigade, the 4<sup>th</sup>, with the 13<sup>th</sup> 14<sup>th</sup> 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> battalions of infantry; a Light Horse Brigade, the 2<sup>nd</sup>, with



January 31

65.

The 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, & 7<sup>th</sup> Light Horse, and about 3000 reinforcements - 10,000 in all. We have heard that they are a fine big lot, mostly country men owing to the new method of selection by which a man can be selected in the back blocks by the police without coming to Sydney or Melbourne or the other capitals to try his luck. The ~~new~~ system is so obvious that I wonder it wasn't tried at first. We hear the 2nd Lt has a big proportion of these men, & letters have been received that they painted Colombo red. A hundred or so of them got ashore without leave & made a name for Australia in Colombo. (Some officers in the force since they have arrived tell me the thing was exaggerated; others say it was not).

~~When~~ Nobody ~~at our post~~ <sup>at Meng</sup> seemed quite to know when they were coming. The Divisional staff here is not concerned with them because they don't belong to the <sup>1st</sup> Division. They will mostly be under Godley in the 2nd Divn. The reinforcements come up to the Base until they are actually sent in to join their



January 31

66

units & so they come under Col. Sellheim who has now been made officer commanding the Australian section base depot which has been ~~established~~ in Cairo. He has an office in the city there, & he is the only officer really concerned with troops coming along the lines of communication as reinforcements.

It struck me that it would be a good thing to get leave to go down & ~~see~~ <sup>see</sup> these new arrivals at Port Said. Very likely they might actually have trouble in the Canal, & if so, one would hear of it - possibly even see it. So about the time when they were due at Port Said I asked Col. White if it wd be possible to arrange this. He said he thought it was a good idea & he would see if it could be arranged. ~~the next~~  
It was at dinner down in the mess of Jocks battalion, the 3rd, that I asked him. ~~The~~ The battalion was having Gen. Birdwood, Gen. Bridges & their staffs in to dinner & ~~at~~



January 31

67

I got an invitation from them also. The dinner was very nicely done in their rapped old mess tent - the cooking was good, the waiters smart in their black & red turkish costume uniform livery, & the music was good also - the band of the 3rd is one of the best we have. I asked Col. White after dinner & he sd he wd ~~be~~ ring up ~~to~~ Maj. Broadbent (who I fancy was looking after the disembarkation) next day.

Next day he ~~td me that~~ <sup>rang up and</sup> was told that the convoy had already reached alexandria - at least it was disembarking there that day! It was too late for Port Said.

I started at once for Port Said. Peter Schuler, who had heard the same news from Col. Sellheim <sup>was going</sup> ~~went~~ down by the same train. We got to alexandria about 10 and drove to the Hotel Majestic. There was no crowd of officers there - it is generally a sort of mess for people with all sorts



January 31.

68

of duties when the ships get to Alexandria,  
but we could see <sup>no</sup> ~~no~~ <sup>embarkation</sup> officers. The manager has  
a sort of vague notion some <sup>transports</sup> ~~ships~~ had  
arrived that afternoon. So Peter & I  
went off in a cab to the harbour to  
see — & after a long search round  
the wharfs came home ~~with~~ convinced  
the transports had not arrived. When  
we got back to the Hotel we found  
this to be true — ~~some~~ <sup>an</sup> of the embarkation  
officers whom ~~we~~ I knew ~~was~~ there  
& he told us the ships were at  
Port Said & were not expected till  
the next day. As a matter of fact  
I believe they had been stopped for  
a night at Ismailia on their way  
through the Canal.

I have told of their arrival  
in an article & won't repeat it here.  
They came in next day after lunch.  
The first ~~thing that~~ ship we saw was the  
Themistocles & the first incident we saw  
as we stood on the wharf was the  
ships police ~~running~~ running down the



January 31

69

wharf side to catch a private who had slipped down a rope in the bows & was making for the town. Four others got away before the military police got them. The ship was crowded with men in khaki who looked the police.

That was the first we saw of the Themiostoles. The second thing was the lifting of 4 bottles of beer (or some stuff) in a sack through a porthole.

A <sup>tiny</sup> Lancashire territorial bought the beer from someone <sup>in the crowd</sup> at the barrier at the wharf-end, & coolly loaded it into a sack which was slowly hauled up by a ~~strong~~ <sup>small</sup> string. I must say I admired the <sup>small</sup> Terrier's coolness. He didn't turn a hair, but just <sup>walked up in front of quite a lot of officers,</sup> put the four bottles ~~into the~~ down on the wharfside one by one, & then loaded them into the sack. They were being hauled up when a staff officer, with the usual red band round his cap, ran up & tried to stop the proceedings. The only result was that the sack was hauled in quicker & the men on the ship above started hooting the Staff officer. About ~~one~~ minute later the four bottles came back empty through the porthole. The ship's sentries on the wharf,



January 31

70

in spite of ~~supposed~~ to the military police badges on their arms were the slackest I ever saw. They didn't prohibit the natives from doing what they willed. One man ~~walked up and down~~ stood talking to a bunch of Terriers waving his stick in illustration of his yarn, & smoking his pipe without a vestige of care whatever was going on around him. A naval commander who passed him asked him if he were a slutty. He said yes. "Well then" "Well then take your pipe out of your mouth" - said the officer. The chap took it out; & the next instant, as soon as the naval officer turned his back, he ostentatiously ~~struck a match~~ <sup>put it in again</sup> & struck a match - staring straight at a couple of Australian officers as he did so.

One couldn't help thinking that we were in for a hot time in Cairo if they are going to be all like this. The Ulysses, however, the flagship, which came in just after, ~~was~~ seemed to contain a much steadier lot. I went



January 31

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As she came in we could see Charlie Smith, the "Argus" representative standing there on the promenade deck in a big khaki helmet & a nice fitting suit of light khaki. And to my great surprise, up on the bridge, next to Col. Monash the ~~com~~ brigadier commanding the <sup>troops in this</sup> Conway, was Maj. (now Col.) M'Glynn of Sydney who has come as brigade major. I had not heard he was coming.

We went on board & had a long yarn with Smith, & afterwards with M'Glynn & Col. Monash who were exceedingly kind & made us stay to dinner with them. Unfortunately I had eaten something that morning or the night before which disagreed with me — or perhaps merely had eaten too much of something that agreed with me too well, as one is apt to do in these hotels — & I was rather seedy in consequence, only just managing to sit the dinner out. It was just biliousness & one was soon better.



? AE 2.

January 31. Feb 1. 1912

They tell us that they had only one warship - submarine A1 - for convoy. The Berrima towed her. ~~She~~ and she was a constant terror to the captives - I suppose they were afraid of running her down at night. They had 17 ships of which those containing the wheeled transport go on to England. There were 3 New Zealanders - & they sailed, like us, in 3 divisions. This time the N. Zealanders were not painted grey. Our ships had a big AUSTRALIA painted in black across the white canvas front of the bridge.

Schuler & I came back from Alexandria on Monday Feb. 1. by the early train. The first night we were there - we shared a bed room - ~~boarded~~ in the middle of the night I was wakened by the door banging in the wind. It continued to bang - so I got up & shut it; I ~~also got up~~ In the morning just inside the door I noticed two ~~envelopes~~ <sup>envelopes</sup> which Peter had apparently



February 1 & 2.

73

dropped. Presently in front of the looking glass I noticed a piastre which he had presumably dropped also. A few minutes later he put on his coat. I saw him feeling in his pockets. "Compound it Bear!" he said — & then told me his silver had all gone. Someone had evidently been in the room at some time during the night & had gone through Peter's pockets; ~~but~~ he took about 10/- or 15/- of silver including <sup>an American</sup> a dollar given to Peter by Muriel Starr the actress — but he missed a ~~note~~ pocket book with £8 or £9 in notes.

On ~~Wednesday~~ <sup>Tuesday</sup> Feb. 2 ~~to~~ whilst having tea on the terrace of the Continental Hotel in Cairo I saw with several English pressmen & Peter Schuler I saw Col. Mackay enter the hotel.

That night about 10 he walked into this room which I share with the A. D. Cs at Mena. "Just my luck," he said. "I told my batman — 'get me out a clean



February 2.

74

pair of pyjamas, a clean shirt, clean collar, clean tie, socks, pants — I am going <sup>to sleep</sup> ~~into~~ in town for once & I don't want ~~see~~ a particle of sand in my clothes for 24 hours! And I had scarcely got there when a messenger <sup>overtakes</sup> ~~chases~~ me to say I was wanted here at once."

It was just his luck. He has been working, perhaps overworking, his brigade — & it was chosen to <sup>squad</sup> ~~go~~ <sup>2 battns</sup> the front forthwith. Headquarters got the order at 9.30. Col. Mc Kay got it at 11.30. This Brigade got it at 12.30. The brigade staff went to bed at 1.30. I got up at 6; the ~~brigade~~ two battns. <sup>marched out of camp</sup> ~~started~~ at 6.30. That is the way things happen. Some N. Zealanders, (2 battns, I believe) & their artillery, went ~~out~~ down to the Canal a few days before. The Territorial artillery went a few days before that — & possibly some territorial infantry.

( 6 - 1 - 2 - 0 - x



Some time ago February 2.

75

~~On Feb. #2~~ I asked Col. White if there wd be a chance of my getting to the Canal if there were any fighting. He said "Oh, I shd be most disappointed if you didn't go. I wdnt have you miss it for anything."

When the Scrap seemed imminent I asked him whether, if our Sid Engineers were engaged, I might get down & visit them. He said "I think your best plan is to wait a little & see if some of us go down from here."

When the 2nd Brigade moved off he said at tea one day. "You know, Bean, I think you ought to be down there."

I said I thought so too.

"Well you leave it to me. I'll see what we can do," he said.

Col. White never forgets anything. You mention a thing to him one day, & think the next that perhaps you'd better remind him. You <sup>invariably</sup> find that the thing is already half done.

On thinking it over it struck me that it



February 2 + 3.

76

was time for me to try & get my position thought out. I had of course given it a good deal of thinking already at odd times - so I suggested to Col. White that I should put on paper the ideas that had crystallised out of it all: ~~the~~ ~~as to~~ as to censorship if I go to Imailia, ~~many~~ ~~other things connected with~~ as to the proper contents of cables & letters - & so forth. He agreed & I did so. This paper has now been sent on to Gen. Walker, chief of the Army Corps Staff. I asked to be allowed to discuss the question of the limits <sup>within which</sup> of ~~what~~ I could write in letters & cables; so I shall hear in a day or two.

In the meantime, today, I ~~sent~~ <sup>sent</sup> ~~the~~ the first ~~tele~~ cable dealing with the part our troops take in the war - a cable to say that so far we had taken no part in it. These cables have to be very limited at present, because the Turkish main attack is likely to be made before long & the one thing they want to know at present is where to make it. I took the cable to Gen. Maxwell's Headquarters;



February 6

77

just as I went up to the general staff room I met him coming out. I showed him the cable. As a matter of fact I got him at a bad time because he had ~~the~~ another cable in his hand. "There, that's the way news gets out," he said ~~about~~ tapping it. "It's all these private telegrams. What do these fellows want to be sending all this ~~stuff~~ for?" He indicated the telegram & I couldn't help seeing it was signed <sup>GODLEY</sup> ~~Godley~~ & had something to do with the part the Auckland & Wellington battalions had taken in the fighting. It was very short however. Sir John said he himself had sent cables to the High Commissioners for Australia & N.Z., & to the Defence ministers. He explained why he could not send the other pressmen down to Ismailia. "I don't want to keep them away from seeing things," he said, "but what could they see if they got there? Where is there for them to go? They ~~don't belong~~ <sup>don't belong</sup> ~~any particular~~ <sup>anywhere in particular</sup> & there's no position from which you can observe what's going on unless you go into the trenches. ~~So~~ I don't want to have in the trenches



February 6

78

anyone who has no particular place or duty. The best place for them is in Cairo."

He signed my cable - "I can't be my own censor you know," he said. I said of course I realised this - (as a matter of fact I didn't go there to see the general, but his chief of staff or some other officer who could get the cable through for me).

I hear the boots of our men are not wearing too well - although I haven't heard any of the men themselves complain of it, & I can't say I've personally noticed it. Still the officer who told me is in a position to know what he talks about. Of course the equipment of the force had to be manufactured in a tremendous hurry, & they had to do with what <sup>leather</sup> they had to hand. It's rather a change <sup>on the South African War</sup> ~~than the~~ army boot when it is taken for granted the army boot should be something much stronger, softer, better fitting than the ordinary boot. At that time you took it for granted that ~~the~~ the army boot <sup>of course</sup> wd be all the soldiers could expect but not <sup>of course</sup> as good as the private boot.



February 6. 7.

79

You didn't expect the solos to be of brown paper, but you did expect the articles to be very rough & possibly ready - & generally inferior.

The Ceylon Planters Rifle Corps of about 250, mostly young Englishmen of a very fine stamp, which came with us from Ceylon, has practically disappeared. Sixty of them got commissions on the Canal; I am told a great number are getting commissions in England - so there will be very few left. In fact I see a few about <sup>still in their uniforms</sup> but I don't really know whether the corps exists any longer as a corps or what has happened to it. Some of our best young N.C.O.s seem likely to get British commissions. One would hardly grudge it to ~~I am very glad for them~~, but it will be a big loss to this force, which needs <sup>good</sup> N.C.O.s badly & will need officers later on.

Sunday Feb. 7th This evening I walked out from town to Siza & had a look at the Zoo. They have some enormous giraffes. The giraffe is simply a prehistoric animal which has survived. When they die out we shall wonder in what a glacial period these animals must have lived which eat the leaves of trees. The monkeys seemed all to be consumed in a senseless rap at the existence of the monkey next door. I suppose that is just what we have returned to. ~~Went across to Maade to see Oliver to Hogue, my old colleague (or rather young colleague) on the S.M. Head Hogue. He was out; but as I was going in to~~



February 7 + 8

80.

The Continental Hotel who should come up but he, in a smart uniform with the red sashes of a staff officer. Had tea together & I took his photo.

I took train to Siza & from there walked most of the way back to camp in order to get some photos of the Pyramids in the fading light. There ought to be some beauties in this lot.

Feb. 8<sup>th</sup> Monday. All the generals - Birdwood, Maxwell, Bridges & some British Brigadier Genl. went out to see ~~the~~ <sup>our</sup> artillery fire this morning - possibly to find out if they were good enough to go to the Canal. The 4<sup>th</sup> Battery, which is supposed to be good, was firing shrapnel from a concealed position & I believe they made very bad practice.

Last night a disastrous occurrence took place at the back of the stables - between them & the village on the edge of the desert. A money changer - a very respectable decent fellow, I am told, who is a keen supporter of the British here & a



February 8

81

really honest native - was going home from his stand near the tram terminus taking with him his money. It was about 8.30 pm & he was crossing the sand behind the stables when he was set on by four ~~men~~ men whom he says were Australian soldiers, masked & armed with knuckle dusters. They broke the head of the native who was with him & took from him I believe £130. It was clearly a premeditated cold blooded affair, planned by somebody who knew the man's habits well. He says the men escaped <sup>back</sup> through the Mena House stables - from which fact <sup>some</sup> suspicion has fallen on our Divisional Headquarters men - but the clue is very slender. There are a lot of fellows of the larrikin class still in the camp & no doubt a few professional criminals. They ought to be shot if they are found but it will be desperately hard to find them. These are the sort of blackguards that bring discredit on the whole of our force.

I went in today by arrangement to



February 8

82

see Gen. Walker, chief of staff to Birdwood, about my own position. He says that Maxwell's staff sees no reason why my position is different from that of any other journalist <sup>in Egypt</sup> which, if it is true is simply thick headed, because there are clearly only three other journalists in my position in the British Empire & none of them ~~are~~ is in Egypt: that is to say - "Eyewitness" whom the British people is allowed to have with its soldiers; the Canadian "Eyewitness" appointed by the Govt of Canada; the journalist who will be appointed by the Govt of N. Zealand; & myself who have been appointed by the Govt of Australia. I think Walker saw the point before I left him. But he referred me to Capt Holdwick on Maxwell's staff. I asked Lt. White if I shd see Holdwick & he says he will write him a letter - that wd be better than wiring to Sir George Reid, which might seem to Maxwell like working behind his back. There is always

Our Engineers, it appears, have been under fire. Maxwell wires to Australia that



February 8

83

they have comport<sup>ed</sup> themselves as ~~they~~ wd have been expected.

I had a very curt intimation from Capt. Newcombe of the local Intelligence Dept. today, saying that as Lord Kitchener had asked for all communiques to be ~~sent~~ wired to him before publication, & they wd be published in London, I wd not in future receive copies. This means, in conjunction with Maxwell's decision to the effect that my position is the same as that of all other correspondents, that I simply can't do the job the Australian Govt sent me here for. As my work could not by any possible flights of imagination be considered as doing ~~the~~ the least vestige of harm to the minutest military interest, I don't mean to accept the position without, if necessary, a reference to the Australian Govt. I have to get the story of the war for them for subsequent publication. ~~and~~ I can't ~~possibly~~ possibly do that without seeing something or hearing something more than I am at present allowed to do under these restrictions.



Wednesday February 10 814  
Feb 10<sup>th</sup> I have had luck in my enquiries on  
the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Division. No sooner do I  
make up my mind that they are getting  
thoroughly into the collar, well disciplined, well  
set up & a credit to their country than  
somebody goes & commits some ~~evil~~ wild  
crime & gives the whole show away; - or, what is  
<sup>truer in reality</sup> ~~at any rate~~ - proves that all the Blackguards  
were not sent back in the Kyarra last week.  
I was walking in the Kodak shop, Opera  
square today when a crowd rushed past  
the door. Of ~~course~~ <sup>course I knew</sup> it was some Australian  
in trouble. I generally steer clear of these  
excitements; but just for once I thought  
I would go in & see. ~~They had~~ <sup>The crowd</sup> had swarmed  
into a large cafe by the time I reached  
them. They were piled thickly around the  
door, <sup>all gazing in,</sup> ~~at~~ some of the hanging onto ~~the~~ lamp post  
outside in order to see over the heads of  
the others. Inside the cafe some native  
police were keeping more or less order  
kicking out the natives. Australian soldiers  
in khaki were making their way in & out of  
the ~~crowd~~ <sup>room</sup> through the crowd in the confident



February 10

85 8

manner they have - nobody would stop them; ~~and~~ ~~each~~ each man who passed <sup>by the place</sup> wanted to satisfy himself what was the matter; ~~and~~ pushed straight in, satisfied himself that he wasn't wanted, & came straight out again. I went in too. Over in the far corner in the half light surrounded by the closest part of the crowd was of course the inevitable Australian. He was a battered looking chap, with a big clean shaven face ~~rather~~ like that of a hard drinking broken down actor - the blue capillary veins <sup>which</sup> ~~gather~~ showed ~~up~~ on his nose & cheeks gave him the air of having been living hard of late. His hat was a rather dirt battered grey felt - the buttoned up <sup>flap</sup> ~~side~~ had come down & all the badges were gone. ~~As I came~~ Just before I came in someone had fetched one of the military police - a fresh looking English youngster, not half heavy ~~enough~~ enough to tackle the crowd if there were any opposition & as I entered ~~this boy had clearly asked the derelict to come with him,~~ ~~the boy~~ & the derelict & ~~another~~ another Australian were thrashing out the question of whether the derelict should go along with the



February 10

86

police man. The second Australian, <sup>a big straight</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>was talking</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> talking "Yes, go along with him - that's my advice - you go with him. If you're right what 'arm can 'appen to you? You go with 'im lad." The derelict seemed unconvinced, so the old soldier repeated - "You go with 'im, that's my advice." The derelict went - the military policeman with him - they got away by a side door. As the door closed the old soldier, who looked as if he might have lived pretty hard at times himself sat down at the table, near which he was standing with two mates, & ordered some beer. "Gawd strike me pink?" he said turning round to a number of his mates - "Gawd strike me pink if I can understand you blanky Australians. It's not that I'm an old soldier and anythink different from you, but <sup>where does</sup> ~~can~~ your reason set to? 'Ere's a bloke - they say they've found 'im pinching jewellery from a shop - say they've found three pieces of it on 'im. He says they 'aren't. Well if 'e's right what 'arm can 'appen to 'im.



February 10

87

'E's only got to go along with that man & he'll be cleared. An' if he's wrong - Gaw Bless my soul, are you going to get yourself into trouble over ~~the~~ man like that?"

He looked round him. Several men murmured a sort of subdued agreement.

"~~Would~~ <sup>Are</sup> you?" he repeated. "I'm not.

Here's a chap said to be shaking jewellery out of a shop, ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> as soon as he calls out you're all ready to put & want you to get him out you're all ready to run your 'eads into trouble over it. And does 'e asks you. ~~If that the sort of bloke~~

'E's right nothing can't happen to 'im; & if 'e's wrong, is that the sort of bloke you're going to run your 'ead into trouble over?"

"That's right" said several of the onlookers.

They were quite convinced now, ~~they sat~~ <sup>they sat</sup> down to their beer & ~~dismissed the matter~~ <sup>the whole incident</sup>

had ~~of~~ disappeared from their consciousness before the beer arrived. But if they hadn't had that chap their with ~~an~~ a bit of reason in his head the chances are that some of them would have got into really serious



February 10 & 11

88

trouble - made themselves criminals - by attempting to rescue a man charged with exactly the sort of offence which is bringing can bring disrepute on the whole force, & for which the force is not in the least responsible. Both the two main actors in this comedy - ~~both~~ the dervet & the man who ~~sp~~ advised him to go with the policeman - ~~was~~ <sup>won</sup> the South African medal.

Feb 11<sup>th</sup> Thursday.

As I was waiting for the train in Cairo to come out to camp, a private came up & asked me to lend him a pin to fasten his belt - the button was gone. It was a private of the 8<sup>th</sup>. They have returned from Port Said today. I lent him my tie pin. His name was Bolton, & he turned out to be the son of the colonel - a private in his father's own regiment.

That night I strolled down to the lines of the 8<sup>th</sup> & found the officers just finishing their mess. It seems that half their battalion was in the trenches



\* I have forgotten this was told before. The date is evidently mixed.

February 11 + 12

89

from <sup>near</sup> El Ferdan to near the hospital north of Ismailia Ferry. Part of the Seventh - two platoons - were also in the trenches. They believed some of the New Zealanders. The Australians saw no fighting. They say they heard heavy gun firing ~~on the night~~ <sup>last night</sup> or the night before - but it must have been a false alarm for I believe there is not a Turk within 40 miles of the Suez Canal.

Friday Feb. 12<sup>th</sup> \* More bad luck to my encomiums. Last night about 8 o'clock four men in masks committed a very wanton crime just at the back of the Mena Hotel stables - which are opposite the Hotel, on the Pyramid side of the road. There is a very respectable money changer, an Egyptian, who has his stand at the entrance of our camp near the tram. He is an exceedingly good looking man, & happens to be very friendly to our side & one of not many natives who has



February 12

90

the reputation of being thoroughly honest & whose word can be relied on. He lives in the village just below the Pyramids. Last night about 8, he had packed up his cash & was walking with an attendant home across the sand behind the ~~Py~~ stables when four men in masks & wearing the Australian uniform set on him. They ~~attendant~~ had knuckle dusters & both Egyptians were knocked down - The money changer was hurt & the native with him now lies seriously ill. The four men got the money - which I have heard put at from £30 to £130 - and ran away through the stables. The fact that they clearly knew <sup>way through the</sup> the stables ~~well~~ has thrown suspicion on the Headquarters camp, because we are the only people who use those stables - our horses & cars are there. But the evidence is very slight. ~~Our~~ military police system is not in the least likely to ensure their capture. I dare say <sup>the project</sup> the marshal has not enough men for his work. The native was asked why he took such

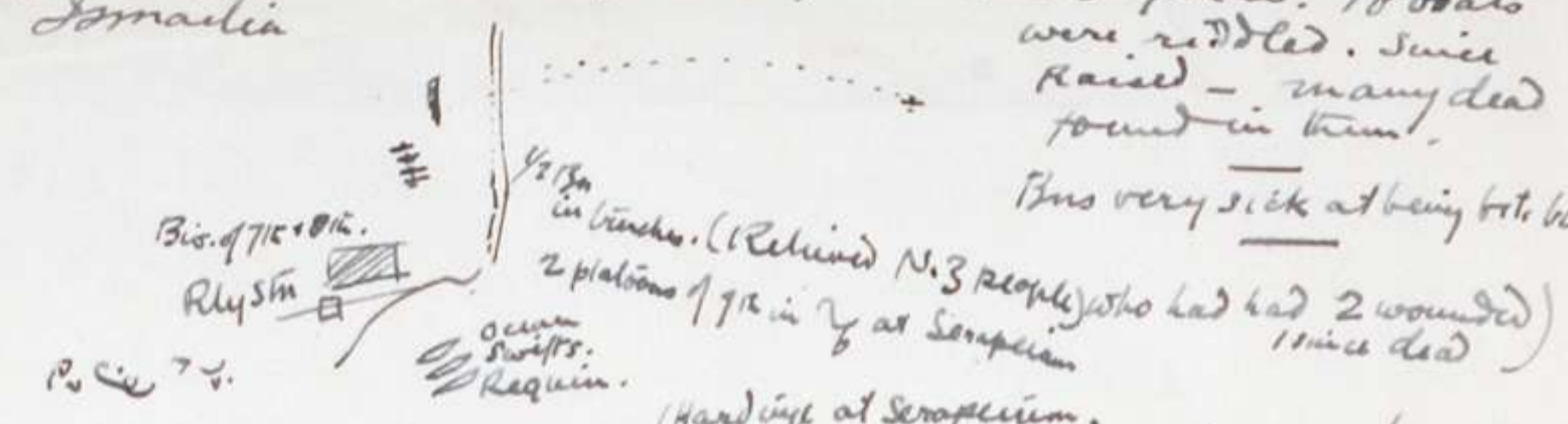


Feb 3 - 11<sup>th</sup>. <sup>went on 3rd</sup> ~~11th~~ ~~12th~~

We knew attack was going to be made on night of Feb 2 owing to aeroplane reports. The Turks were all to come right up & cross with 20 boats; when Eq. artillery, who had slipped

7th & 8th at Ismailia

possible, dropped gun up bank of canal & fired shrapnel at 25 yards! 18 boats were riddled. Since raised - many dead found in them. Thus very sick at being let back.



Acta & 2 hrs (7) (Harding at Serapeum. They say Requin & Ocean got range of their guns but never Swifts sure)

Wed.

Thurs. Col. Bolton is A, he <sup>across</sup> ~~do~~ ~~pony~~ ~~v~~ ~~2~~ ~~v~~ ~~20~~. They had removed <sup>some</sup> ~~our~~ landmarks & cd be seen entrenching on morning of Wed. abt 1200 yds from our men. Entrenching

tools were afterwards found with shrapnel bullets in them. Tranches were put up v. quickly - spades made in Germany.

White flag incident where Capt. Cochran was killed. <sup>Rifles also but</sup> ~~marked in arabic~~. He went out & was shot w 20 others.

Almost all our wounded shot in left arm i.e. Enfilading fire.

On Frid. night we were to have made an attack (Turks ~~v~~ to retreat that morning) but it went made. Night of Wed Feb. 10 & Thurs Feb 9 heavy firing <sup>was heard</sup>. Of 179 ~~Co~~ seen by the 8th abt 1/2 were in smart uniform w 3 officers.

Men all well fed - mostly rifle wounds.

Guns were not located - I bin gun we cdnt see the aeroplanes up all day. Our little terrier guns 15 pdrs went utterly outstranged. A low break for rly wh was near them was shrapnel w shell abt 20 falling near it.

Our men splendedly fed. Pack service organized inst. of transport.

February 12/13 91

risks - why he carried his money about without <sup>Some sort of protection</sup> ~~any~~ ~~protection~~. He said simply: "There has never been any need for it".

Sat. Feb. 13<sup>th</sup>. I went down to the Suez Canal today, just 10 days after the fighting there. I have told of the fighting & of what we saw there pretty thoroughly in the articles I wrote afterwards. I went round with Maj. Blamey (the Intelligence officer on our staff) & a party of officers mostly from our 3rd Brigade. The arrangements made to show us round at Kantara were very complete. A Maj. Bingham gave us a very accurate connected account of the fighting there. But at Toussoum we were not in charge of anyone who had any actual knowledge of what had taken place there. It gave me a bit of a shock at Toussoum to see, after we had entered the canal, some Indian soldiers ~~fasted~~ about 200 yards behind us dragging something from the canal & piling it - one, two, three I think there were - on the bank. Dead Turks.



February 13.

92

When we got out at Toussoum fort I asked a native doctor to show me where the Turks brought their boats down. He said - "down a gully a little way down there." I asked if it were 500 yards. He said "Oh no - I'll show you - just 100 yards - just down there". And there was the place - not 70 yards away, right below the muzzles of the rifles of Toussoum post. There were dead Turks buried in it & their cartridges lying about all over the place. The whole of this side of the canal for 2 miles or so had a very rank nasty smell. The burial parties had scarcely covered some of the dead Turks - you could see their legs sticking out - sometimes bare feet, sometimes boots, sometimes stockings with curious leather soles. We walked along the bank as far as the Serapeum - the Turkish trenches were all along the top, very thick, just little separate dugouts in the sand.

In one place was the mark of a Turkish boat on top of the bank - probably the one Lieut. Commander Palmer



February 13.

93

climbed up there to destroy. I picked up a bit of one blown up boat, several Turkish cartridges, a bit of a cartridge box & some of their rations - biscuits baked in the desert I believe. There seemed to be plenty of them.

No one could understand why we, with our big reserves on the Canal, had not hit back at them at all. We seem to have allowed infantry, strips of camels, guns even, to march up & down across our front for two or three days without stirring hand or foot; & when we had beaten them & they were clearly in a terror of being cut off we ~~made~~ <sup>let</sup> them retreat absolutely undisturbed - <sup>easy for them</sup> made the job which they thought difficult. This was done under direct orders some say from Ismailia, some from Cairo, others from England. They are almost wild about it on the Canal. It is said we did have the Indian cavalry brigade over there one day, & that they found some Turkish infantry retreating within close distance of them quite unconcerned & that they let it go because the orders



February 13. 18. 20

94

against attacking were so strict. I doubt if anyone has fought quite such a defensive battle in this war.

Thurs. Feb. 18.

The general <sup>& staff</sup> went down a few days after we did - & returned highly disgruntled, I believe. No one made the least preparation for them except at Kantara. They had to sit kicking their heels on the jetty at Ismailia for an hour before the old tug was ready to take them to Toussoum. Really, these imperial people have the most extraordinary ideas of hospitality at times. I don't think they mean it! - they treated me splendidly on the Canal. But imagine a British staff coming to visit a post held by Australians....

Saturday Feb. 20. Bob Lowrie, who is Lieut. & Quartermaster in the First Australian Stationary Hospital asked me to come down & see him on the Canal at Ismailia. I mentioned it to Capt.



February 20. 23

95

Engledue & he said he saw no reason why I should not go there privately. I had a fine day down there - saw Janet Ratchiff of Hobart who is one of their sisters; & <sup>heard</sup> ~~got~~ a magnificent story from Lieut. Comdr. Palmes - a simply splendid yarn, which I wrote up. I should have liked to ask him a few more questions but he dried up as soon as I began. I think he did not want to appear to brag - but there was no bragging in it. Came back same night.

Tues. Feb. 23. Sent of Palmes story & the ~~story~~ account of what the Australian nurses saw of the fighting. Maxwell is wrong about our engineers being under fire - they weren't. Their own officers told me so.

I have in hand a most interesting unfinished article - the building up of a division - the first Australian division - How it gradually becomes a body out of being a collection of separate parts. You can see it most clearly in



Feb 28.

The 3rd Infantry Brigade moved out today for an unknown destination. The brigade was complete except for artillery; & everyone thinks they have gone either to Syria or the Dardanelles. They were all out of camp by a little after dark, & all on their way to Alexandria by train before daybreak. One of their transports is the Ionian.

I believe Gen. Birdwood has been off with Col. Steen in the Swiftsure for some days, looking at the place where we land. The force we have so far sent is under Col. MacLagan.

I don't know where we're going. But the hospitals are ordering fly stickers & mosquito netting & the nurses have been told to get sun helmets. I believe only the General & Col. White & Col. House know.

February 23. 27 28

96

The case of the 1st Australian Divn.

Sunday Feb. 27. Brand asked me to come & see his brigade after Church Parade. I did so - they marched past in column of platoons. The men are mostly miners & they looked magnificent. The lines were beautifully kept, & there was a fire <sup>& snap</sup> about them which showed that every chap was doing his best. They are a thundering good brigade, the Third, with a very good staff.

Monday, Feb 28. Went out to see these same troops in the desert. They were excellent. One ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~men~~ battalion had to retreat at the double for half to three quarters of a mile through the sand & stone under a fierce sun. It did it, ~~with~~ <sup>down</sup> playing the game to the small points. There may be some hard drinkers amongst these miners but they are splendid soldiers.



March 1 | 2

97

Tuesday ~~March 1~~. Writing up the article about the division -

Wed. March 2. That article which I sent last xmas ~~has got to~~ about the troops being in danger of losing their good name through a rowdy element which ought never to have been allowed to enlist, or at any rate to sail, has got back here & is causing a quite unexpected amount of feeling amongst the troops. I have read it & re-read it & I can't see a word in it that anyone in the force - any decent man at any rate - can object to. Most of the men on the staff thoroughly agree with me in this; so do <sup>most of</sup> the officers of the Engineers, many artillery officers, & several amongst the men who have spoken to me about it. But the great majority are inclined to be quite bitter about it & I am clearly in for a rocky time. There seem to be two reasons for this: (1) their wives



March 2/4

98

\* families have misunderstood the article - or perhaps only heard it at second hand - & have written to him about it. (2) The Sydney Sunday Times which does not apparently go to the expense of buying my articles, ~~at~~ borrowed this one, instead, from the Melbourne papers & tried ~~deliberately~~ to make a scare out of it. They said it was my first article; as a matter of fact it was the 18<sup>th</sup>. But the men, who can't be persuaded I didn't write the Sunday Times article & I don't suppose ever will be, think it is the first I wrote & that I have done nothing but abuse them. A poem written to that effect in camp - rather a good one, I believe, has already been sold to the extent of 2000 copies.

Mar. 4 Thursday. I have done two things to ~~stop~~ try & put things as far as possible right, with regard to that article. There is no doubt it is exceedingly unpopular & I don't suppose I shall ever be anything else with the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Division now. I get things shouted at me whenever

Mar 4

went out to see the 4<sup>th</sup> Inf. Brigade yesterday. On getting to Helwan I found - after walking about 2 to 3 miles about the place that it was out on a big field day. I walked out & found it 10 miles out. Walked back afterwards. <sup>Afterwards</sup> as it was cold in a cab, I walked from Giza to The Pyramids - 5 miles. That makes about 25 miles between 11.30 & 9.30.



March 14

99

I go through the camp - "Set of bally wasters"  
(What I am supposed to have called them - of  
course I didn't; but I ~~do~~ suppose they  
misunderstand the word "leaven" ~~of~~  
wasters which I used referring to the  
handful of chaps - now mostly sent back -  
who were getting these chaps a bad name.)

"Do you read the Argus?" & things a good deal  
warmer, occasionally, than that. Now the  
history of the article is as follows: It  
was actually written because the General asked  
me to write something to prepare the people  
of Australia for the return of the men who  
had been disgracing their country in Cairo &  
bringing a bad name on the whole force. They  
are mostly old soldiers, <sup>many</sup> of them not born  
in Australia at all & when one saw  
what splendid <sup>willing</sup> young chaps most of the  
force was composed of one could not  
help being angry at the way these old  
hardheads were losing the whole of this

five bodies of young Australians their good  
name. I thought something ought to be written about it but didn't think they would  
ever let anything through. One gets very ashamed of oneself of crying continually that all is well when  
~~as a matter of fact all is not well - It doesn't seem fair to the people of Australia. However, I~~  
~~was preparing to write a lot of little pretty trivial stories when the general met me on the~~  
stairs & stopped me. He said he had received a letter from General



March 4

100.

Birdwood, who had been spoken to by Gen. Maxwell about the conduct of this rowdy section of the Australian force. The general said of course I was not to send the letter itself; but he would show it to me & I could write something about it to prepare the Australian people <sup>for the sending home of these rowdies.</sup> I asked if I should do so by cable or letter, & he said he thought both. I therefore cabled an extract from Sir George Reid's speech about "the" if there is any amongst you that is unworthy etc. etc., they must be cast out" - & wrote this 18<sup>th</sup> article carefully avoiding any scare, understating the facts in every direction, & being as far as I could, <sup>They simply don't know - Some of them don't believe they were getting a bad name.</sup> scrupulously fair. But had heard the Australians discussed in the Admiral's cabin on the Swiftsure, when there were about 20 distinguished officers & others at lunch; Sir John Maxwell asked me if they all drank quite so hard, & when they were going to stop it; he said he wd have to put the <sup>hotel</sup> bars out of bounds if they didn't stop it; every time one went into Cairns the censors, the telegraph clerks,



March 4

101

The civilians in the hotels used to ask me when the Australians were going to be tied up & ~~always~~ <sup>often</sup> drew some comparison between them & the New Zealanders & Territorials. I ~~always~~ said it was only the act of a few - & it seemed quite clear to me too that something ought to be written about it in order to see that it didn't happen with future contingents. So I was glad when the general ~~was~~ & also to make sure that the old hard heads who were sent home didn't go back & turn round & pose as injured heroes & start abusing <sup>those</sup> officers & men who were here really doing their work in a way to bring credit on their country. The article prevented that. And now, in spite of the outcry in camp, the general has not gone back upon his opinion. He said the other day he thought it was a good article except in one point - that ~~the~~ it ~~seemed to mention~~ <sup>seemed to make out that</sup> the Light Horse at Maadi were better than the Mena men. Col. White saw my point there - that the civilians at Maadi had done more for the troops than the



March 4

102

people anywhere else & that had (as it unquestionably did) its effect. "I think it was a good thing it was written," Blain," Col. White said, "it is a wholesome article, it will do a lot of good."

And I think so too, although I don't know that I'd have written it if I had thought any Australian papers would twist it into scares about their absent soldiers & that ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~articles~~ <sup>articles</sup> & relations would so hopelessly misunderstand what was so clearly written. I believe the article has done & will do good - anyway my job is to tell the people of Australia the truth. When things go wrong - & they ~~are~~ <sup>looked like</sup> going very wrong at Christmas time - my job is to see that at any rate the blame is put on the right people & that the innocent don't get a bad name for what they didn't do. When things go right I have to try & see that the Australian people knows ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> right people to get the credit. If they want some one to feed them on soft pap, & only to tell them good & pleasant things whatever happens, then I am not the man for the job.



March 14

103

I am not going to shift ~~one-tenth~~ any part of the responsibility for this article onto other shoulders. I have told no one except Jack (although some of the staff know it before) that the General asked me to write this article. What I have done is (1) to try and correct the scare article in the Sydney Sunday Times (which I did not write) by a strong cable to Australia; & (2) to show the men that if I write about things when they go wrong I also write & give them the full credit when things go right. I have got the staff to publish an extract from my article on the Division in orders & also an extract of a cable sent on Feb. 26<sup>th</sup>. ~~I have got Reuters~~ ~~to~~ In order that ~~it may~~ anything said in my article may not affect the reputation of the force outside Australia, I have got ~~at~~ Reuters correspondent here to telegraph an immensely appreciative (& to my mind perfectly true) summary of the work of the A.I.F. here to every paper in Great Britain. I know it has



March 4/5

104

had some effect in Australia because we have had a telegram from the <sup>Defense</sup> Minister there (which has been published in orders) congratulating the troops on ~~the~~ report. I have seen that this also got into the Egyptian Mail.

I can't do more than that - & here I leave it. I am not telling anyone that the General asked me to write the article because, <sup>I wanted to write it & I believe it has done good</sup> ~~for one thing, I approve of it~~ ~~it is~~ <sup>secondly</sup> it would make him unpopular & ~~if~~ it is far better that I should be unpopular than he.

I could apply to be attached to the 2nd Divn - which doesn't feel the same way - but I'm not going to. The 1st Australian one is the one I've been with & I'm not going to criticize them & run away. I've no doubt the 2nd Divn has just as many troublesome rowdies in it as we once had - perhaps more.

March 5 Friday. Spent last night at Heliopolis



March 5

105

House Hotel as I wanted to see the New Zealanders returned from the Canal, & to get Col. Monash to let me have some particulars of the composition of the second force. I saw a divisional manoeuvre of theirs the other day - something very fine spectacularly. I had come over to see Col. Monash or Macgibbon & found they had gone out <sup>on a "scheme"</sup> ~~It was then~~ about 10 o'clock. The clerks in the brigade office didn't know if it was a divisional or a brigade scheme - thought it was a brigade one - out along the Luez Road. I walked out in the direction indicated & after about 2 hours had going found the Divl. Headquarters of Gen. <sup>on a steep solitary hill</sup> ~~with the N-3~~ Mounted Rifles brigade dismounted in rear of it - looking very fine. They told me Col. Monash's Headquarters were probably away on the left - so I pushed on up a sandy waddy & found it about an hour later. The pack was just finishing - an assault on a hill, & I walked back to Ichropolis, had tea there, drove halfway from Cairo to Mena camp - & as it was cold & the teams were



March 5

106

crowded I walked the last 5 miles from Siza to camp getting back about 9.30 + having walked from 2.5 to 30 miles since 11.30. That was a few days ago - Wednesday, I think.

Today, I got back to Wena at midday + we started at once on a divisional manoeuvre, our first. The scheme was explained by the general from Cairn Ridge behind the Pyramids. Then we went out into the desert + placed our H. Quarters at Grey Hill + afterwards drew it back behind a smaller hill at the back. The two brigades were both late in starting ~~for~~ their attack + afterwards got a little too much ahead. Late at night the transport came up through the desert with the men blankets + tucks. It was a fine sight to see them coming - eight horses in a team - through the heavy sand. The old General slept out - just curled himself up in a gutter in the sand - I saw him there all by himself as I was walking about. He had only a rug ~~on~~ over his overcoat,



March 5. 6

stuck into the sand

107

his cap on his stick, above his head, &  
his Balaclava cap over his ears.

Sat. March. 5th. They attacked again - very prettily  
I believe - at daybreak, & then came  
in. As they were coming up the camp  
road, crossing the tramlines, the general's  
horse came a crashing fall. Behind  
him was the orderly & behind the  
orderly the general's A.D.C. Capt Foster.  
Foster stuck both spurs into his horse,  
was at the general's side in two bounds,  
flung himself forward like an acrobat,  
& was holding the general's horse before  
the horse had properly got to his feet.  
I believe it was a risky jump he took  
but it ~~was~~ succeeded. The general's foot  
was deep in the stirrup; his spur was  
caught in the stirrup iron. & he was  
a dead man for a certainty if Foster  
had not reached him.

lunched in the 3rd Inf. mess with  
J & little goldring & Col. Owen. He is  
Colonel is an exceptionally nice man &  
the Battalion simply worships him.



To show me that I was forgiven as far as he was concerned (and he did not agree with the article altogether) he gave me a bottle of Palestine wine which we drank at mess <sup>108</sup> & enjoyed. It is light but refreshing, ~~rewards~~

Sund. Mar 7.

Today Col. Patterson asked me in to see two officers - Maj. Maygor & Maj. Clark, both of the 4<sup>th</sup> L.H. - who had come up to place before Headquarters a letter complaining of my article. It seems the old South African soldiers had a meeting some days ago at which Maygor & others were present. They were tremendously annoyed at my article & made up a letter to be sent to their secretary in Melbourne. Maygor wd not forward it on unless it was first sent to Headquarters. Col. Patterson told them my letter was justified (though he was an old South African war man himself) & said they ought to think themselves under an obligation to me for helping to rid the force of the men who were ruining the name of the South African veteran - or words to that effect. I read my letter to them - neither of them had read it & understood it before; in the end both agreed that every word of it was true & I think Maygor, <sup>& perhaps</sup> ~~if not~~ Clark too (in a half measure at any rate), admitted that there was a ~~re~~ reason for publishing it.



March 7

109

Maygar asked me if I would come down & meet the South Africans & read the letter to them & tell them, as I ~~did the others~~ <sup>had done to themselves</sup>, just why it was written & how the innocent men going home were amply safeguarded. I said I certainly would. He said a meeting would be illegal but if I would come to a social he would guarantee as far as he was concerned that they'd give me a fair hearing. I thought this the best thing - I agree with him that ~~you~~ it is a method that never fails with Australians, to go & face them. They always give you a fair deal if you do. It turned out he let it out that I was supposed to have been invited to the previous meeting - & they actually gave it out there that I had been asked & had not attended. I don't know if this was a bit of double work on the part of the secretary or if he actually sent a letter to some other address. It was untrue - I never even knew that a meeting had been held although everyone else seemed to.



\* Three years later Smith told me that it was his son, a private in the transport, who had told him of it. The boy had heard some artillerymen - rough men - arranging to waylay me on my way to the meeting that night & lay me out. [At least that is what he understood they were going to do. They sd: "It's up to us to see that bloke doesn't get there." He may have misunderstood them - anyway he told his father - Smith didn't tell me but he had the meeting stopped].

March 8. 9

110

Monday March 8. Heard from Maj. Maygar that the "social" had been arranged for Wednesday night. He & the committee invited me & I accepted.

Tuesday March 9. Capt. Smith, <sup>the new</sup> Acting Provost Marshal asked me this morning if I had heard of a meeting of S. African veterans called to meet me. I said I knew a social was being held. He said he would have something to say to it. I said I thought <sup>the holding of</sup> a social evening was not offending against military laws & that it was much the best way for me to go down & put my points straight to these men. He was very much against it. So were Patterson & Griffiths. It turned out that a man who came up from the Field Artillery to join the police gave the show away to Smith the night before. \* Smith asked Col. White if it was legal - I asked White to let it be held, if he didn't see any insuperable objection - but he said it must be laid before the General. This Smith did. The General <sup>was</sup> absolutely opposed to the meeting.



March 9

111

It seems he knew - they all did, but it was news to me - that some leading officer, either Col. Elliott of the 8<sup>th</sup> or Col. Johnston of the Artillery - was agitating his movement against me. The General must have taken some steps because Maygar came up & saw him & afterwards saw me & told me that he had to withdraw from the meeting & he advised me to do the same - he was bound, he said, to give me that advice; I don't think it was his real opinion. This means the meeting may still be held but Maygar may not be there. He told me that this being the case he couldn't guarantee what would be the men's behaviour. I said if the meeting were still held I'd like to go, & I asked him to let me know definitely whether it were on or off. As a matter of fact I don't much relish the idea of facing this meeting, <sup>especially</sup> if no responsible man is in the chair; but I can't have 300 men turn up expecting to meet me & myself not be there. I asked Col. White whether I might go or not as I liked - seeing how things stood & he said



March 9

112

it was entirely in my discretion. "It's quite a small matter really, Bear," he said; "and you know, I'm an optimist in these matters, I always believe that if a thing was right in the beginning it can't turn out wrong in the end. And you know that in this you were perfectly right. You can tell them I said so," he added. "You can say I read the letter before it was sent & approved of it." I determined however not to say this. After all I have this fact as a last resort, that these ex-South Africans can't kick up too much fuss because they know that what I said was true - that is, those who have read it do. I would tell them exactly what I have written & what I have done; & if they liked to get the statistics & I was proved wrong I would withdraw what I said - but as a matter of fact I know the statistics show that I was right & the proportion of old South Africans (probably chiefly old soldiers) amongst the men sent home for misconduct or <sup>whose</sup> services <sup>were</sup> "no longer required" is out of all proportion <sup>larger than the</sup> ~~to the numbers~~ average which they ought to have. I won't



March 9. 10. 11

113

retract a thing that's true; but if the S.A. fellows show up well in the fighting, as they probably will, I'll try & give them every ounce of the credit due to them.

Wed. March 10. The meeting is off. I got a note about 4 or 5 in the afternoon from Magyar to that effect. I was relieved - very relieved; but also sorry, in a way, because this would have explained to the men what I did say.

Thurs. March 11. A perfectly vile day. Yesterday & today have been scorching hot, with a dry wind from the desert blowing very fiercely & bringing with it clouds of dust. Yet the men have been out trench digging in it for two days, both brigades; & Blamey & I found the 2nd Coy of Engineers putting up a wire entanglement right in the thick of it about midday. These hot days Col. Owen takes the 3rd Battalion out of camp very early for a march & lets the men get away



March 11. 14

114

early. One of the Victorian colonels - Bolton, I think - bivouacs his brigade in the desert every night now instead of in camp. The men are getting played out & pneumonia is getting prevalent again. We were luckily rid of small pox 7 cases & 2 deaths - & it has stopped there.

Sunday March 14. over at Heliopolis again

to get Maj. Brereton to look through the stuff I wrote about the New Zealanders.

As I left camp Howse said: "off to Heliopolis? This is the last visit you'll pay there for some time."

When I returned I saw clearly that there had been some sort of an intimation received that we were likely to start.

Also I know that Birdwood had asked Gen. Maxwell to cable home & asking whether I could go to the front & has received the answer that "press correspondents are not to leave Cairo at present. The date when they can do so is not yet settled." That means



March 14 (at war office)

115

that the British Govt (is determined to treat me as any other Press Correspondent - of course it is a slight to Australia - though I don't suppose they realise it - that the man the Australian Govt chose to send with their force to give some sort of account of it shd be treated by the war office as if they don't see any difference between him and the correspondent of any English newspaper. They make a big difference in the case of their own Eyewitness & the Indian Eyewitness & I believe Canada has an Eyewitness too. While who has more genuine sense in his little finger than many war office officials have in their small minds knows that I can do no harm & may do much good. There's no question of my attempting to evade censorship. I'm the representative of my country & not of a newspaper. But the war office is unlikely to grasp the difference



March 15. 16

116

Monday March 15. There's clearly a move in the air. Attacks are to be made on the trench lines built dug by the infantry, but they will be a little perfunctory in spirit because there's a sort of feeling in the camp that the real business is at hand at last.

I was asked over to see Heliopolis Hospital today. Maj. Barnett asked me to come, & at some inconvenience I managed it though today I should be writing. When I got there I was left for  $3\frac{1}{4}$  hours whilst they took photographs of motor ambulances. As there seemed no prospect of seeing the place I came away. I may go again on Thursday - arranged with Smith to do so.

Tuesday. March 16. Cooks told me twice that the mail went today. Now they say it went yesterday - the ship left early for Marseilles. In that case I missed it - with 5 letters, too.

~~Wednesday~~ wired to Sir George Reid, with



March 16. 17. 18

117

White's consent, asking if he would get the consent of the war office to my going off with the troops on condition that I write nothing until authorised.

Wed. March 17. It is rumoured that our plans have been altered. One never knows what to believe. But it is said that Greece was to have come in on March 2. She did not do so. Her ~~God~~ fell; Venizelos went out; & his successor is for neutrality. It is said that this prevents us from doing what some people say we were to have done - occupy Lemnos, an island just off the entrance of the Dardanelles & wait there for the French Expedition from Algeria which is supposed to be coming across the Sea now. They say MacLagan's 3rd Brigade is still in its transports.

Thurs. March 18. Out with the troops all day on a scheme. MacLaurin with the first brigade surrounded ~~the~~ Mr Kay, with the second.

Capt Collins wires that he is



March 18. 19. 20. 21

endeavouring to get War Office consent to my going with the troops. attended funeral of poor Maj. Parker who died in ~~two~~ days from meningitis. He was an officer marked for promotion.

Friday March 19. At work on my book most of the day. I sent a wire to Australia today - the first for about two or three weeks. I haven't wired lately because the move was pending & I didn't want to let it be known, even in Australia, whether we were here or had left.

Left this night for Luxor, by express, with Gen. Bridges, Col. Howse & Bird, Maj: Gasford, Murphy, Casey & Ramsey.

Sat March 20: Saw the Luxor temple, Great Temple of Ammon at Karnak, Temple of Mont, Temple of Khons, & Temple of Mut. I wish I could write something in the style of Rider Haggard. The two brigadiers are also up here, & five other officers.

Sund. March 21. The General & Col. Howse stayed at Luxor. Howse says these ancient buildings



March 21

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leave him absolutely cold. I can't understand that at all. To me the most interesting thing we saw today was the cuttings in the foot of the northernmost of the two Colossi of Memnon, the one which was supposed to sing when the sun rose. There were perhaps thirty inscriptions - old roman provincial governors had camped at the foot of the statue for a day or two, each day being called at sunrise to hear the statue sing. I could not make out all the lettering. But there was one Claudius, I think, a freedman of Augustus & procurator of some province, who said AUDIVIT - he had heard it; I saw several other AUDIVITs & one ἦκουσα. It makes you wonder whether they must not really have heard it.

Ramsay, who was my stable companion in the sleeper up there & back, found the old Dragoman who had shown him round 20 years before, when he was here. The old chap undoubtedly remembered him. He took him round next day with donkeys & brought his son to look after them & would not take a penny for it - so Ramsay of course gave him £1 & 10/- for the kid. ~~Ramsay~~ <sup>Ramsay</sup> asked him if the youngster



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would not be tired. He said. "I bring him - it good for his thinkers. If I leave him he stay at home, he ~~sleep~~ eat all day, he become lazy, cant do any work, same like those other boys. Best way make him always use his thinkers - then he grow up always ready to work" - which was pretty good educational theory put into simple language. We saw the tombs of the Kings, Deir. el. Bahri, Ramesseum, & Colossi this day, & I wish I had seen the Medinet Habu temple & tombs of some of the queens also. The view as you come out from the dry wind worn valley in which are the tombs of the Kings, & suddenly reach the edge of the precipice about 800 feet above the plain, & look out, as Ramsay said, "over & all the land of Egypt" - the little green & black ribbon of river & cultivation which has before now contained most of the culture & wealth of the world, is one of the finest I have ever seen.



March 22

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Monday March 22. Came back early this morning. Jack tells me that a friend of his, Wright, a Cambridge medical (of his own time both there & at Barts) was dining in their mess on Sunday. He didn't know J. was there. He told them that 29 transports had just arrived at Alexandria carrying 40,000 territorials who had presumably come to take our place in Egypt. They also brought <sup>some</sup> mules for our force. Wright ~~was~~ enlisted at the beginning of the war in the London Scottish & was with them during their <sup>first</sup> charge. That so much has been written about. He says that the Germans are very brave, being coming up in crowds to be shot down; but that they are of no more use with a bayonet than an old woman with a broomstick. He described them as waving the bayonet round in circles when they ought to be sticking it in. He told Jack that he had seen some fine troops - The London Scottish were a fine big lot & so were some of the other British regiments. But he <sup>he</sup> had never seen anything like our men in size. He was enormously impressed



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Tuesday March 23. Had two letters to get off for the morning & evening papers & sat at them till they were finished, when it was 5.35 this morning & daylight. Got to bed just as the camp was getting up & slept in till 11.30.

Received a cable from father yesterday saying that my little statuette, the little Greek bronze that I was so pleased with, was stolen in the Mongolia. With postal arrangements as unsafe as they still are it seems to me that the best way is not to register anything.

Registering, under our postal arrangements, does very little more than advertise to every one who comes along that the registered article is worth stealing.

I got three little <sup>mementoes</sup> ~~reliquaries~~ up at Luxor - a small marble torso, a little Ancient Egyptian rag with some <sup>Egyptian</sup> writing on it, and a papyrus with some Greek writing - But one scarcely knows how to send them.

Today I bought in Cairo a small memento



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for Peter Schuler, & a little bronze (9/-) not a bad one, to replace my stolen bronze. When I saw Peter he told me he wasn't going after all. He had heard that Sir Ian Hamilton was coming to command the army or at any rate the British Expedition, & as he knew Sir Ian well he decided to stop on.

A signal company for the Army Corps Headquarters arrived out in camp today. It is a British company brought out I suppose with the convoy that has just arrived in Alex. I hear there are French troops landing in Alex. ~~They~~ <sup>of course they</sup> are part of the Expeditionary Force. ~~They~~ <sup>their landing them</sup> looks as though the Exp. force were held up for a bit.

Wed Mar. 24. <sup>A small Turkish force approached</sup> ~~The Turks attacked~~ the Canal again on Monday & a force under Gen. Youngblood went out & drove them off on Tuesday. They were only one regiment - the 3rd, part of the X<sup>th</sup> Divn 4<sup>th</sup> Army Corps - with a little cavalry & artillery. I suppose life at a miserable little desert hamlet like Beersheba with two pictures shows as its chief entertainment is too deadly for Gen. von Fromer & he must have <sup>an</sup> occasional burst.



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I hear the 29<sup>th</sup> Division is at Alexandria  
- part of the Exp. Force; 40,000 or 60,000 French.  
Some say 30,000 British are already at Lemnos.  
The Exp. may consist of one or two British  
Army Corps & one or two French Corps; &  
two Russian Corps. These last may perhaps  
pass in through ~~the Dardanelles~~ Asia Minor.  
~~It is said that~~ Peter tells me he hears that  
Jan Hamilton is already ~~at~~ here in Cairo  
staying with Gen. Maxwell & that Burdwood  
has left. It is rumoured tonight that Italy  
has declared war on Austria.



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