

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

Diaries and Notebooks

Item number: 3DRL606/64/1

Title: Diary, November 1916
Relates "Chauvelle's" (ie Sir Harry Chauvel's)
account of the Australians in Palestine, July-
September 1916.



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**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.

C. E. W. BEAN.

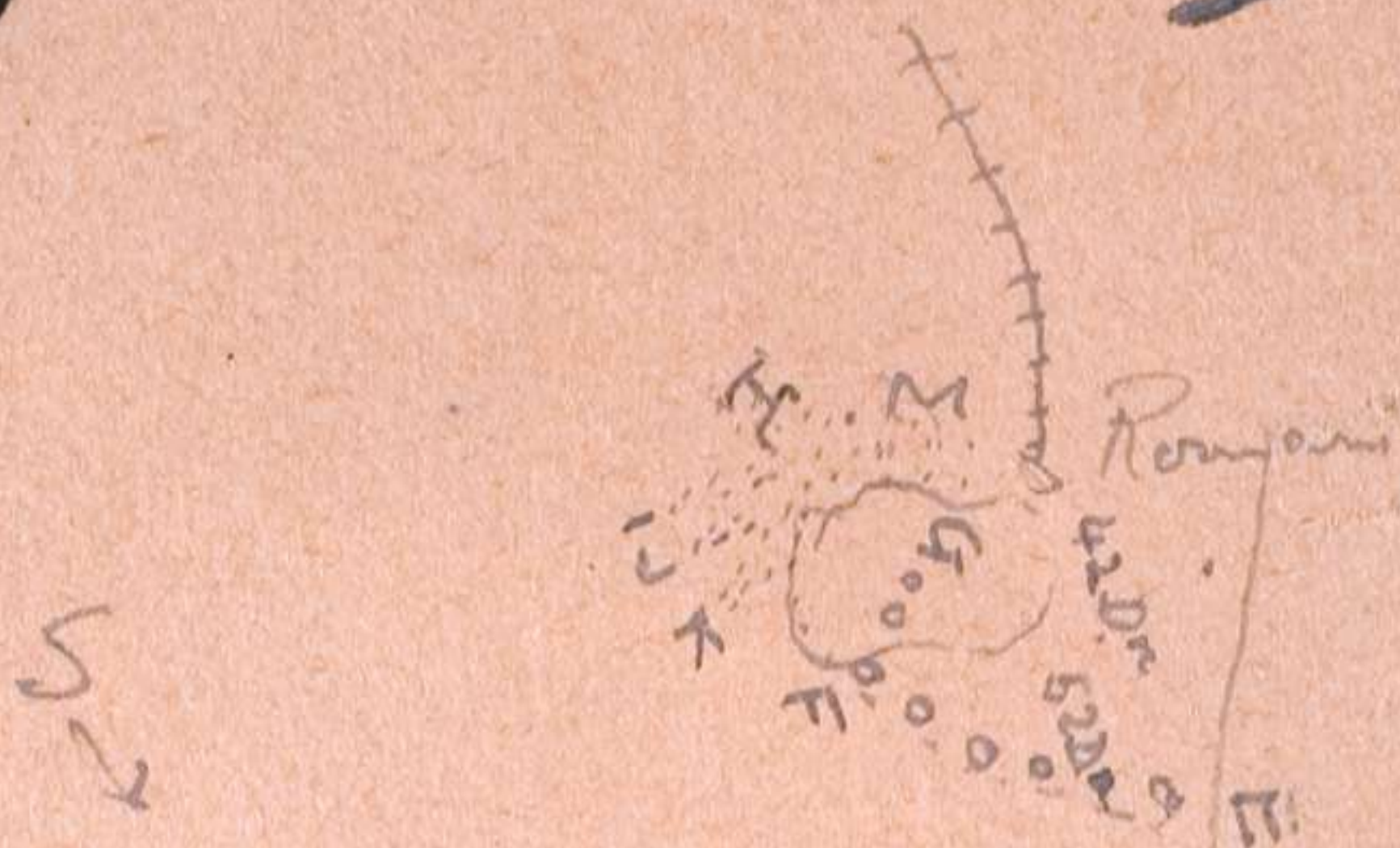
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O R P Z
Quatia

B A

65 2 Nov 4

Nov. 4. Chauvelle arrived in France, on 6 weeks leave from Egypt. He stays here tonight - He gave me folg. acct of Light Horse fighting in Egypt.

L.H. used to make patrols.

On July 19¹⁹¹⁶, starting to make patrol from Quatia, (1 Bde there, & another at Romani;) when aeropl. reported 3000 Turks at A, 2000 at B, 2000 at C, 2000 at D.

Chauvelle ordered patrol to be off, & small patrols to be made instead. (The other Bde was to move up to Quatia when first Bde went out to patrol - but this was countermanded now.)

Turks dug in on line A-B. Light H. was kept at

Remain, but each night
one Bde moved out to Quatia
before dawn & stayed there
all day & withdrew after
dark, so the Ts. thought
Q was held by us.

On night of Aug 3 Ts
attacked Q. — their orders
showed they planned to
attack it; next morning
they were in occupation
of it. clearly attack at
hand.

It had been arranged
3 or 4 days before that if
Ts attacked, L.H. should

65

4

strengthen infantry's right.

52nd Divn (w 3 weak Bdes)

held line of posts ⁽⁰⁰⁰⁰⁾ from E to
 (beat back to Romani)

F₁. From F to Romani was

plateau, fairly good going -

firm sand - but dotted

part was very loose heavy

sand. L.H. was to hold

edge of this plateau from

southern most infantry

post.

Turks attacked this
 on night Aug 3-4 at 12

midnight. They meant

to turn infantry's flank,

cut them off from rly,
& dig in in front of
Romani facing Romani
(where railhead then was).

The L.H. held them for
4 hrs - they attacked up
valley between F-K, & K-J, &
around by I. The
L.H. defence made them
stop & extend further &
further to H1 where they
got into bad sand.

The L.H. were now
outflanked & had to
retire (as previously
arranged) on a line to

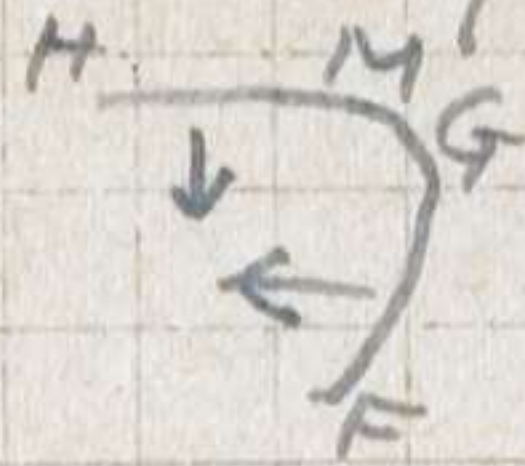
join up w infantry at
Romani. This had all
be mapped - telephone
connections made etc.
(But Chauvelie was
unable to get to his
arranged D. H. Q, where
telephone was, bec. of m.g
fire).

The N.Z. Mtd B. & the
5th mounted Bde (yeomanry)
were now ordered to come
up & attack from Roman
the west - from H ~~to~~ M
Eastward. They got the
edge of ridge by 5 p.m.
Then the 1st & 2nd LH wh

65

had fallen back to F-G

C. attacked & the Ts. were driven gradually off the position they had won.



The 5th Div. was also asked

to let a Bde attack from F - but this Bde did not begin its attack till 8 pm. & did not finish it till 9 am. next day. In the mean time the Ts. had been asked to retire - we got 500 prisoners overnight & 2500 next day in this angle - but 6000 or 7000

got away who shd have
be taken.

The 42nd Div. at
Romania, on 1 other hand,
when asked for 2 bns
to hold point G when
the L-H. advanced, sent
up a bde an hour
earlier than asked for!
The Turks went back to Quatia
On ~~Aug 5~~ next day

- Aug 5 - Antilla 3rd Bde
coming up from S was asked to
secure the flank by securing
O. The 42nd Div were
to attack from P - but
never got half way there,
poor chaps; the 52nd
were to secure point N, but

never ^{got} ~~reached~~ it. The

two first LH Bdes were
to make flanking attacks
— one at Q, one at R.

As none of other attacks
came off, this had to be
a frontal attack by the
two LH Bdes alone —
& it did not come off.

There was fighting for some
days at Quatia ending
w. a big attack on the
9th in wh. losses were
heavier than at Romani.

On the 10th the Ts (I think
this is right) went back to
the Bir-el-Abd position

65.

B - A - a it looked ¹⁰
as if they were going to
hold their old lines.

But there were only
9000 of them left - the
Ts sd so themselves -

They had lost 6000 &
3000 had been withdrawn
or disappeared.

After further attacks up
to Aug 12 by the L.H. &
other mounted troops, the
Turks withdrew.

They had an outpost
at some place w a name
like Magan - 25 miles
E or SE of us. But we
raised this at the

65

20th Sept. Our L.H.¹¹
got right behind the Turks
— ~~to~~ bomb the trenches behind
him. But he retired
into an interior system
of redoubts — & we
could not make a
trench fight of it — the
L.H. were nothing like
strong eno' for it.

So we got our guns
onto him (when I saw
first ~~rose~~ & 1 Turk was
quite surrounded — the guns
(2 batteries) could not be
used bec. of the light
being in 1 gunners eyes.
But later they hammered

him. We withdrew 1 fully
 night & so did 1
 Turk. There are
 4000 now at El
 Arish, but none
 between. We have 1
 rd to Bir el Abd
 now & Divl H.Q. of
 the Chagae into Dira
 is by the rd there.

The Germans have
 an aeroplane wh visits
 us every day - probly
 from some aerodrome
 a little off the Central
 road. &

The Turk has played
 same as he always
 did. When he retired
 he left over 1 grave
 of some of his dead to
~~with~~ Cholera. message
 warning us that this man
 died of cholera. We
 thought it might be buried
 common at first - but
 it was not so.

We got the cholera
 later too - the 10th L-4.
 Especially. At 12 deaths.

altogether have
occurred from it.

The Ts also left
messages: "Do not
follow us too hard; we
are going through soft sand".

On the other hand Col.
Ouston was shot by a
German who fired at him
after a while flag had gone
up. He shot this man
himself — he was badly
wounded by 1 German
bullet & will not be fit
to fight again. The German

Serft in charge of
 party wh put up 1
 White flag ws up for a
 Court martial, but
 Gen Murray quashed the
 proceedings. Quite right
 I decessay; but I ~~under~~
~~st~~ cant see 1 German
 quashing 1 proceedings if
 the offence had be committed
 by us — even if it were
 no offence at all they wd
 shoot the man.