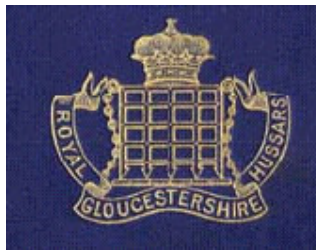




Private 3400 / 235821 Edward Colston PRICE

1892 - 1982

1/1st Royal Gloucestershire Hussars (Yeomanry)



Egypt & Palestine 1917

This has been compiled from material found in the following war diaries:

WO95/4565 – 1/1st Gloucestershire Hussars
WO95/495 1/1st (South Midland) Mounted Brigade
WO95/4565 & 4550 – Australian Mounted Brigade
Main Map from diary extracts WO153/1035 part 2

Along with extracts from

Palestine 1917 - Robert Wilson
Allenby of Armageddon – Raymond Savage
The History of the R.G.H - Frank Fox
British Campaigns of the Nearer East - Edmund Dane
Military Operations Egypt & Palestine - H.M.S.O.

Photographs

From various sources including
The Royal Gloucestershire Hussars – Rollo Clifford
E.C. Price's own collection.

A precise overseas date for Edward Colston PRICE has not yet been established, however the best estimate, from his service number, is that he was sent as reinforcement from the 2/1st to the 1/1st RGHY and had joined the latter by early 1917.

During 1917 the R.G.H.Y. served as part of the 5th Mounted Brigade under Lieutenant General Sir Philip W. Chetwode. 5th Mounted Brigade in turn was part of The Australian Mounted Division.

The 5th Mounted Brigade comprised of 1/1st Warwickshire Yeomanry, 1/1st Gloucester Yeomanry, 1/1st Worcester Yeomanry, 5th Mounted Brigade Signal Troop and the 16th Machine Gun Division. Formerly The South Midland Mounted Brigade.

Indications are that E.C. Price served in D squadron (made up by men from Bristol area) in Sergeant Bromhead's DCM troop, under Major Algar H. S. Howard of Thornbury.

January 1917

January 1st Less D squadron leave camp for MAHLA (SINAI) for a 13 mile journey to MADDAN, where they bivouac for the night. Riding conditions are said to be "heavy going". Departing MADDAN at 0830 on the 2nd they again encounter difficult riding conditions due to heavy rain as they ride a further 9 miles to road marker "kilo 139", D squadron leaves MAHLA to rejoin the Regiment (reason for having remained at MAHLA is not explained) and a draft of 24 O.R. reinforcements joins. (N.B. the diarist almost always refers to the 1/1st as "the Regiment")



EL ARISH Camp Jan '17

D squadron arrive at kilo 139 at 1130 on the 3rd having ridden up in heavy rain, and the following morning the whole Brigade moves forward seven miles to EL ARISH. Heavy rain at night makes camp conditions uncomfortable.

January 6th "Brigade drill and dismounted action", and the Gloucestershire's diarist records the Regiment's parade state as 19 Officers, 223 OR's, and 242 horses. A court of enquiry is held to investigate an unspecified injury to 3464 Lance Corporal F. Williams and the diarist records that a hostile aircraft flies over the camp. Hostile aircraft again appear during the morning of the 7th and drop an unspecified number of bombs, returning after dark to drop a further 4 bombs and, flying low over the camp machine-guns the area. The diarist does not record any casualties.

The Brigade leaves camp and joins the Divisional fighting column "at the rendezvous at 1530", arriving at SHEIKH ZOWAID at 2100. During the early hours of the 9th they again move forward as part of the force which take part in "The RAFAH Raid".

The Battle of RAFAH took the course of a cavalry raid and was undertaken by Lieutenant General Sir Philip Chetwode (later Field Marshal Chetwode) a cavalry leader of the old school. The force consisted of the 5th Mounted, the ANZAC Mounted Division, the Imperial Camel Corps and a battery of H.A.C. (Honourable Artillery Company). 29 miles of dessert had to be ridden and troops had to be ready to rush the enemy position, if possible, at dawn. However the Turks and Germans were expecting them and heavy fighting broke out as soon as it was light enough to see.

7/1/1917 Operational Orders by Major A.J. Palmer, Commanding 1st Royal Glos. Hussars

1. **Situation:** (1) The enemy are holding an entrenched position near EL MAGRUNTEIN. (2) The 5th Mounted Brigade, less one squadron, Worcestershire Yeomanry and one troop Warwickshires, will leave for SHEIKH ZOWAID for a position of readiness on the point 210 RAFAH road. The I.C.C. will co-operate on our right through point 250 and the ANZAC Division, on a boundary line. 1 squadron of Worcesters will be at a point near the bifurcation of the RAFAH-DARB-AMAD roads.
2. **Intention:** The enemy will be attacked at dawn. In the event of the enemy retiring the 5th Mounted Brigade will take up the direct pursuit which will not be continued beyond KHAN-YUNIS without special orders.
3. **Orders:** The Regiment will parade ready to move off at 0100, 9/1/1917, following B Battery H.A.C.
4. **Prisoners:** Should any prisoners be taken, bolts will be removed from their rifles and men made to carry them back to SHEIKH ZOWAID and handed over to A.P.M. A & N.Z.M. Division.
5. **Communication:** It is most important that lateral and front to rear communication be maintained throughout the operation.
6. **Reports:** Reports will be sent to O.C. with Regiment. Exact position will be notified later.

(Signed) A.G. Wykeham-Musgrave Captain & Adjutant.

Marching Out State 8/1/17

1st Royal Gloucestershire Hussars Yeomanry

	Officers	OR's	Horses	Mules	Natives	Camels
A	6	102	114	4		
B	6	109	119	6		
D	5	73	80	4		
Machinegun	1	24	26	9		
HQ	3	17	22	2		
Sigs		8	10	1		
Transport	1	5	1		11	22
Total	22	338	377	26	11	22

RAFAH RAID



On arrival at SHEIKH ZOWAID at 2100 I received orders to off-saddle, feed and move again at 0200. I arrived at point 210 at 0450. We then waited for aerial reconnaissance and the attack by the ANZAC Mounted Division to develop round the right flank. At 0600 we could observe a certain number of tents and fires, and the enemy moving on point 255 which was a strong redoubt. One could observe tents being hastily struck and stores etc. being removed on camels, as if preparing for a hasty evacuation.

Orders were received at 1040 that the ANZACS were about to occupy the redoubts and we were to make a rapid advance from the west. The Regiment advanced in the following order: - D squadron, advance guard, A & B squadrons in echelon, Gloucester Machinegun section, Worcester Machinegun section in rear, under Captain E.J.B. Herbert. The advance guard was held up at the M in MAGRUNTEIN at 1100, and the Gloucester

Machinegun section came into action at this spot and brought fire to bear on the enemy's redoubt at a range of about 2000 yards in an easterly direction. This place was held and the Regimental Command Post and Signal station established there.

Meanwhile A squadron took up a line on the left of this position with its left resting on the foot of the sand dunes, while B squadron, less one troop with the Worcester Machinegun section, was ordered to work round the sand dunes to the north of the enemy's position.

2nd Lieutenant R.H. Wilson, who was ordered to act as liaison Officer, was sent to establish communication with the Warwickshire Yeomanry on our right was slightly wounded in the arm. He returned at 1120 to the command post with his message and then went to the dressing station.

Lieutenant Robert Wilson writes in his diary.....'The battle was proceeding when I was told to take a message to the Commanding Officer of the Warwickshire Yeomanry who were in action about half a mile to our right. I left Jack Taylor with my spare horse safely tucked behind a sand dune, galloped across, handed my horse to one of the Warwickshire horse-holders, and started to run up to the ridge where they were heavily engaged. Suddenly I thought I had been blown to smithereens, something hit me with such terrific force that, although I was running forward as fast as I could, I did a complete summersault backwards. I sat where I was and the sergeant in charge of the led horses called out "bad luck, Sir, where have you got it?", "Damned if I know" I replied, "all over the place I think." Then I saw a little trickle of blood running down my arm and realised I had the simplest of wounds: a bullet through the top of my arm. But it must have touched a nerve or something to have given me such a shock. I hung about, did a few more messages for an hour or two, and was then told to take the wounded of the Brigade back to where we had come from – in other words – to ride 29 miles of desert again'

In the meantime it was observed that B squadron patrols were being held up by parties of enemy snipers in the sand dunes, and one realised that until these sand dunes were clear no further advance could be made by D or A squadrons to the redoubt. I instructed Major H.F. Clifford to proceed to B squadron and ascertain and report on the situation.

At 1125 it was observed that the enemy had occupied a trench north of the fort and the Worcester Machinegun section was instructed to enfilade this position from the sand dunes. About 1200 as no fire was being returned from the redoubt, and no men for some time having been seen in the trenches, D

squadron was ordered to advance along the southern edge of the dunes with a view to galloping across to the GREEN HILL which commanded the fort, and where cover from redoubt could be obtained on the north side.

A squadron was ordered to co-operate with D squadron and 1 troop B squadron, being in reserve to act as escort to machineguns. Field ambulance, sand carts and Brigade ammunition reserve were at point 210.

On arrival at the base of the sand dunes, D squadron proceeded for about 100 yards in an easterly direction, and were then observed by me to be held up and turned north into the sand dunes and took up a position. B squadron could be seen pressing forward on the top of the dunes a further 500 yards to their east.

At 1200 orders were received from the G.O.C. 5th Mounted Brigade, to push on, and at 1225 the following message was sent to them:- "Advancing slowly along sand dunes, cannot ascertain at present for certain who are occupying the house in RAFAH, sending patrols to ascertain."

At 1226 a message was received from O.C. D squadron, that he was holding sand ridge 1000 yards north west of enemy redoubt, enemy trench 150 yards long facing west north west commanding valley. He was in touch with B squadron on his left who were advancing.

The situation in RAFAH still being uncertain I decided to proceed myself over the sand dunes with a view to sending out patrols from B squadron, to clear up the situation.

On arrival at D squadron I observed a line of dismounted men issuing forth from the house at RAFAH towards the redoubt and at the same time I received a message from Major Clifford to the effect that he was in touch with the ANZAC troops at RAFAH about 1 mile distant on his left. In reply to this message I informed him that the ANZAC troops were moving on the redoubt, telling him to instruct O.C. B squadron to co-operate and confirm to their movements, also that O.C. D squadron would conform on the right, the Worcestershire Machinegun section being sent to D squadron where they could be placed in a good position from 900 yards range to bring overhead fire to cover the advance.

Whilst returning to the Regimental Command Post I encountered O.C. Worcester Yeomanry, who informed me he had 6 troops. I told him the orders I had issued to O.C's B & D squadrons, and asked him to co-operate on the right of D squadron; A squadron R.G.H. would co-operate on his right again.

At 1300 the following message was sent to 5th Mounted Brigade:- "Still advancing along sand dunes, but meeting considerable opposition. O.C. D squadron reports 3 stretcher cases and the loss of 8 horses and asking for sand cart for removal." Whilst on his way to attend these cases I regret that R.M.O. Captain C.M. Forster was wounded in the leg. He, however, continued to carry out his duties and eventually rode back to EL ARISH with the Regiment.

About 1340 I reached Regimental Command Post. The following messages were sent out at 1350 to O's C. B & D squadrons to prolong their left and close the gap between them and the ANZACs, and push on as fast as possible to the green redoubt. The 5th Mounted Brigade was informed of this situation.

At 1450 The Gloucester Yeomanry machinegun section were ordered to Brigade H.Q. where I went myself and explained the position on our left. Whilst there the following message was received from the adjutant, from Regimental Command Post, "Advance on left appears nearly held up at present."

At 1510 the following message was handed to me by the Brigadier :- "At 1530 a concentrated attack will be made on the redoubt by N.Z.M.R., Brigade and other available ANZAC troops. You and those Worcesters with you will co-operate. One squadron Warwickshire Yeomanry and one squad Worcester Yeomanry will be sent to reinforce you. This attack will be pushed with the utmost vigour." At the same time I was ordered to see Colonel Williams and tell him to take command of the troops on the left. I immediately proceeded and found Colonel Williams with the Worcesters coming off the sand dunes and delivered my message from the Brigadier. He told me he was prepared to take up a position on the right of A squadron, who were lying on a ridge about 400 yards from the bottom of the sand dunes.

At 1540 the Brigade was informed that the Gloucesters were again pressing and the Worcesters were starting to advance from the west and on the right of A squadron R.G.H., and came under fire about 2000 yards, but at 1545 it was observed that the Gloucesters' left was unable to advance further and had commenced to retire due to heavy machine gun fire at about 500 yards range. I then proceeded to A squadron led horses and ordered all available men to join the firing line – proceeding myself to A squadron.

At 1610 the 5th Mounted Brigade was informed that the advance was progressing very slowly under heavy machine gun fire and the chances of success seemed small, but that the Worcesters were making considerable progress from the west. This information was sent to 5th Mounted Brigade, and that the enemy machine gun that was holding up A squadrons advance was in a trench 100 yards beyond the trench the H.A.C. guns were firing on. Application was made for the guns to be turned on the spot from where the enemy machine gun was firing.

About 1620 2 troops of Warwickshire Yeomanry under Captain Pemberton came up, and I ordered them to reinforce A squadron. Range 900 yards. By that time the Worcesters were advancing on our right and A squadron R.G.H. and Warwickshire Yeomanry continued to advance.

At 1715 O.C. A squadron observed the Worcesters on his right held up and consequently could not proceed. I then went back towards the sand dunes where I met the Brigadier who gave me orders to retire. I returned to A squadron and under cover of darkness the troops were withdrawn. At the time the left of A squadron was within about 150 yards of the enemy trench on GREEN HILL.

All our wounded were taken away at night, Captain Wykeham-Musgrave being left behind to ensure their removal. Troops left RAFAH at 1845 and arrived at SHEIKH ZOWAIIID, watered and fed at 2200 and marched at 0100 on the 10th for EL ARISH, arriving there at 0700.

Shortly after, to the great sorrow, of all troops news was received that Major H.F. Clifford, second in command of the Regiment, had been killed. Our total casualties for the day were 1 Officer and 8 OR's killed; 4 Officers and 33 OR's wounded; 11 horses and 2 mules killed; 15 horses and 1 mule injured. Ammunition expended during the day, including machine gun 55,210. Estimated number of men in the firing line 200.

January 10th Major Clifford's body is brought back to EL ARISH, and a Brigade memorial service is held in memory of those killed in the RAFAH action. The following morning Major Clifford's body is placed onto a gun limber and taken to the railway station for transport to KANTARA where he was to be buried the following day. (The diarist does not mention what arrangements may have been made for the OR's of the Regiment who were killed at RAFAH).

January 11th During the afternoon the Regiment was paraded for a Brigade memorial service, and G.O.C. 5th Mounted Brigade read letters from GOC. Dessert Column and the Inspector General of Cavalry congratulated the 5th Mounted Brigade on their conduct in the RAFAH action.

A draft of twenty-4 OR's arrive on the 12th, and 2 hostile aircraft flew over and dropped their bombs near the camp. An uneventful day on the 13th, and the Regiment inspected by GOC on the 14th.

The following day they take part in a "Brigade dismounted scheme", A squadron and one troop of D squadron leave camp to take up guard duty on the outpost line. Riding out strength for this party is 8 Officers, 144 OR's, 158 horses and 13 mules. B squadron and one troop of D relieve this party on the 16th, and they themselves are relieved by the Worcestershire Yeomanry the following day.

A programme of training begins on the 18th, interrupted by a sandstorm on the 22nd and heavy rain that night. A "lecture on bombs" by Lieutenant Blake, 7th RE Field Troop on the 23rd, and a Regimental parade on the 24th disrupted when a hostile aircraft passes overhead.

January 26th 2 more hostile aircraft pass over and on the 27th A squadron and 2 troops of D take over the outpost line, staying there overnight and being relieved by B squadron the following day. The 2

hostiles return on the 28th and the diarist records that there is a presentation of a medal ribbon to one of the Regiment's men, - the Military Medal to Sergeant William Edward Price.

January 29th A ten-mile ride, with fair going, when the whole Brigade move to EL BURJ. Very misty all day on the 30th, and another 2 hostiles pass over the Brigade positions (none of the diarist ever seem to record any allied aircraft being seen, assuming there were any in the area, - there is never any mention of enemy aircraft being harassed by other aircraft). D squadron patrols to SHEIKH ZOWAID and reports "all clear". The Regimental diarist records animals death for the month as 10 horses and 2 mules killed in action.

February 1917

February 1st Hostile aircraft again fly over, but there is no bombing. D squadron patrols the area of EL MINEITIR and EL GHARRA, without incident, and B squadron brings in 6 Turkish deserters and a hostile Arab. 2 troops of D Squadron again patrol on the 2nd, despite there being a bad sandstorm, and report all-clear. One hostile passes over on the 4th, and D Squadron takes over the outpost line.

February 5th A squadron relieves D, and on the 6th Second Lieutenant R.E. Guise and a draft of 46 OR's join the Regiment. 2 hostiles pass over on the 7th, and D relieves B in the outpost line. 3 Turkish deserters come into the line and are taken prisoner.

February 8th A again take over the outpost line, a solitary Turkish deserter gives himself up. The line is handed over to the infantry on the 9th, and again, hostile aircraft over-fly the area.

February 10th D squadron furnishes standing patrols (without incident) and A and B patrol, capture 2 Turkish deserters. Regimental drill on the 14th, then regular patrols on the days following. The only incident is on the 18th when another Turkish deserter is brought in.

February 22nd The Regiment leaves camp and bivouacs in the desert overnight. And returns to EL BURJ on the 23rd. The remainder of the month is spent in training and no incidents are recorded. The diarist notes that 1 horse has died during the course of the month and forty remounts have been received.



Aircraft attack, Battle of GAZA

March 1917

March 1st 1 Hotchkiss machine-gun is issued to each Regiment in the Brigade and instruction as to its use commenced. Brigade exercises on the 2nd, and it is announced that "The Brigade" was absorbed into the Imperial Mounted Division." Training continues, and the Brigade is inspected by GOC, Imperial Mounted Division on the 5th.

March 10th The whole Brigade moves to SHEIKH ZOWAID, the diarist recording "Bad sand storm" on the 11th, repeating this on the 12th. He then makes no further entries in the war diary until the 21st when he notes the whole Brigade moving to RAFAH, with the Regiment mustering 21 Officers, 368 OR's, 402 horses and 10 mules.

March 23rd The Regiment sends patrols about 15 miles in the direction of GAZA, and although parties of the enemy are observed, they are not engaged. A detachment of the Warwickshire Yeomanry, on patrol in the same area, come under machinegun attack and have one man wounded. Two days later the whole Brigade (each man carrying 5 days rations) travel 12 miles along the coast road to assembly points at DEIR EL BELLAH, and the following morning they go into action in the First Battle of GAZA.

On arrival at DEIR EL BELAH at 1700 on 25th orders were received from the C.O. to report to the G.O.C. 53rd Division. At 1930 the G.O.C. 53rd Division gave the following orders: -

At daylight your Regiment will cross the wadi GHUZZE under cover of the 2/4th Royal West Kent Regiment, and co-operate with them. The role of this column was to divert the enemy's attention from our left flank and prevent him reinforcing the ALI MUNTAR position.

It was to demonstrate and was not to allow itself to be involved in a close hostile attack from which it would be unable to extricate itself. Should the enemy attack in strength it should adopt rear guard tactics and delay the enemy's advance as much as possible, the R.G.H. paying special attention to the sea shore and also responsibility for the safety of a section of the 15th Heavy Battery R.G.A.

The Regiment moved from DEIR EL BELAH at 0200 accompanied by the Gloucestershire section of the 16th Machinegun squadron. A heavy fog came on about daylight. The Regiment crossed the wadi about 0600, B squadron acting as advanced guard proceeded up the coastline with a patrol on the beach. This squadron soon came into contact with enemy patrols, who retired but owing to the fog progress for a time was delayed. 2 squadrons held an advanced post about 2 miles north of the wadi with one squadron in reserve, the 2/4th Royal West Kent Regiment co-operating on our right. The Regimental H.Q. was at the caves.

On the fog clearing about 0900 Regimental H.Q. were established on the coast some 600 yards south west of GREEN HILL. At 1120 an advanced squadron was holding GREEN HILL about 1¾ miles north of the mouth of the wadi. On their right another squadron was occupying some sand dunes and to their right again they were supported by the left of the infantry. Owing to enemy snipers it was difficult to estimate the number of enemy holding the trenches.

At 1330 a message was received from a small knoll to the north of GREEN HILL that the enemy had been reinforced on his right flank and at 1400 a message was received from the O.C. the 2/4th Royal West Kent Regiment that he was advancing about 1000 yards and asking me to push on.

At 1500 I informed the O.C. the 2/4th Royal West Kent Regiment, of my positions and requested that the battery should be turned on to the enemy trenches where men could be seen fortifying their positions.

D squadron in the sand dunes had meanwhile been pushing on and came under considerable fire from the enemy in their entrenched position. The infantry were observed to be collecting and drawing away from us to their right, leaving a considerable gap between the 2 Regiments, and as they were withdrawing it appeared any assistance from them couldn't be relied upon.

At 1700, in order to clear up the position, the C.O. went to O.C. D squadron, and finding his squadron some distance in advance of the infantry and drawing considerable fire, ordered him to hold on until dusk, bringing up the reserve squadron to cover his retirement. This was effectively completed at dusk and the Regiment returned to water on the south side of wadi.

A squadron provided a standing patrol on the beach and protection to the guns and infantry batteries that had formed round them. 1 troop B squadron was detailed as a post on the caves

The strength of the Regiment on leaving DEIR EL BELAH was 24 Officers, 345 O.R.'s, 411 animals.

The casualties for the day were 2461 Sergeant Nash and 3350 Lance Corporal Wetherell, who were both killed and buried. 1 horse was killed and 2 wounded.

The Regiment less A squadron and one troop of B squadron bivouacked for the night on the south side of the wadi.

March 27th The Regiment stood to arms at 0430, and re-crossed the wadi, sending out small patrols who reported patrols of the enemy were occupying positions, which were evacuated by us the previous evening.

These were driven in and our positions on GREEN HILL and the sand dunes were again established. Though informed the infantry on our right were adopting the same tactics as on the previous day, they appeared to be facing in a more north east direction, and there was considerable space devoid of troops on our right.

A message was sent to 5th Mounted Brigade, reporting situation of the previous days casualties.

At 0630 instructions were received from Desert Column to send a patrol to ascertain the military situation on the west and north west of GAZA and to establish direct communication by heliograph with East Force H.Q. which orders were carried out immediately.

At 0900 information was received that the enemy had considerably strengthened the redoubt and the trenches running to the sea.

At 1040 a patrol along the beach reported that it was within 500 yards of the gardens south of SHEIKH AHMED and observed some movement of Turks there at 0930 but it was impossible to estimate their strength.

At 1045 information was received from the Royal West Kent Regiment, that the heavy battery had orders to re-cross to the south side of the wadi.

At 1140 the beach patrols reported they had been fired upon from the gardens of SHEIKH AJLIN.

At 1240 the beach patrols reported enemy in SHEIKH AJLIN and gardens as 50-60 and 100 in the redoubt to the east and that they were held up. At the same time a report from the advanced troop in the sand dunes reported about 400 Turks advancing on our front from the redoubt.

At 1255 a message was sent to O.C. Royal West Kent Regiment informing him of the position and asking if he intended to support our right. The Turks opened a brisk fire and the machineguns were brought to bear at a range of about 2000 yards on the advancing enemy, which appeared to considerably check their advance, and the respective positions were maintained until 1405, when instructions were received from G.O.C. 22nd Mounted Brigade, that he would relieve the Regiment.

Owing to firing still being in progress relief was not completed until 1645 when the C.O. again reported to the G.O.C. 22nd Mounted Brigade who gave him orders to rejoin the 5th Mounted Brigade at DEIR EL BELAH. This information was reported to Desert Column.

After watering and feeding the Regiment left the wadi on the south side of the caves at 1730, and after proceeding about 1 mile met the camel convoy with fanatis, rations and forage, which were issued.

The Regiment reached at DEIR EL BELAH at 1930, where it The Oldown Troop holding an advanced line at EL MUNKHEILEH 19/4/17 bivouacked the night under instructions from the desert column.

During the day 2315 Corporal Chandler was wounded in the leg.

March 28th During the morning made touch again with 5th Mounted Brigade, and the Regiment was allotted camping ground in the Brigade area near DEIR EL BELAH.

March 30th The Regiment takes over duties in the outpost line between in SEIRAT and ABASAN EL KEBIR and on the 31st they are relieved and return to the camp at DIER EL BELAH. 1 horse has been

killed during the month and 2 wounded. 8 replacements have been received, and a draft of 10 OR's arrived on the 31st.

April 1917

April 1st Twelve more Hotchkiss machine-guns are issued to the Regiment, and training continues. On the 3rd the diarist notes " A great deal of artillery activity in the morning" (although this is remote from the camp), and the Regiment move to man the outpost line near In SEIRAT. Return to camp on the 5th and then take over the OP line the following day. On the morning of the 6th patrols are said to have been in contact with the enemy, but no action is recorded, and no casualties.

April 7th They move to a new camp nearer the seashore and have a period of rest. The Brigade take over the previously occupied outpost line on the 11th returning to the new camp the following day. Horses had no water since they left camp the previous day. A hostile aircraft (the first recorded for sometime) drops three bombs on the camp on the 14th, wounding one man of the Worcestershire Yeomanry.

Distant artillery is again recorded on the 15th, and on the 16th the Brigade again leaves camp and moves off in the direction of GAZA. Events from the 16th until the 24th of April, "The Second Battle of GAZA" are described in the Regimental report:

April 16th 1917 DEIR EL BELAH, The Brigade moved out leaving camp at 1700 to march to IN SEIRAT. Halted there until dusk and then proceeded to TEL EL JEMMI and went into bivouac there at 2000. Marching out strength, 20 Officers, 333 OR's, 400 animals.

April 17th at 2400 orders were received to leave at once. Marched out at 0100 and proceeded to EL MENDUR with orders to turn down the wadi EL SHARIA and clear party of enemy out reported at KHIRBET UM RIJL.

On arrival at MENDUR got in touch with the 3rd A.L.H. Brigade, who reported that the enemy had retired to KHIRBET UM RIJL. Brigade took over outpost line from EL MUNKHEILEH to KHIRBET ERK both inclusive. R.G.H. left on the line from EL MUNKHEILEH to wadi north of KHIRBET UM RIJL inclusive; Worcestershire Yeomanry on right of the 3rd A.L.H. Brigade on the left with 54th Division on their left again. Considerable parties of enemy were observed all day holding the high ground covering the GAZA-BIR-SABA road, and the forward observation line exchanged shots most of the day.

At 1200 the enemy shelled our Regimental H.Q. at EL MUNKHEILEH, no casualties were incurred. The Regiment was relieved by the Buckinghamshire Yeomanry at 1530, and proceeded to water at HISEIA,



distance 4 miles, arriving there about 1700 and proceeded thence to bivouac at TEL EL JEMMI, distance 5 miles, arriving there at 1900. The day was very hot and there were several men effected by the sun including 2nd Lieutenant G.E. Hookham who went to hospital.

The Olddown Troop holding an advanced line EL MUNKHEILEH 19/4/17

April 18th Brigade remained in reserve at JEMMI and had to proceed to EL HISEIA for water in the evening. C.O. and squadron leaders proceeded on reconnaissance to MUNKHEILEH.

April 19th Brigade moved out at 0200 and arrived MUNKHEILEH 0400. Bombardment commenced 0510. Brigade moved into battle line at 0600. D squadron on left in touch with Worcestershire Yeomanry.

A squadron on right. B squadron plus section of machinegun in reserve. They advanced on bearing 55° up the wadi BAHA. The ANZAC mounted Division was responsible for our right flank, but this was considerably hindered by enemy occupation of SAUSAGE HILL. We were supported on the right flank by the Ayrshire battalion the southwest corner of SAUSAGE HILL. The Brigade despite considerable shellfire was able to continue its advance at a considerable rate.

At 0910 our right which was being enfiladed from trenches on the north end of SAUSAGE HILL was supported by a squadron of Warwickshire Yeomanry, and orders were received for the Regiment to advance no further than was necessary to keep touch with the Worcesters on the left.

At 1040 a squadron of the N.Z.M.R. Brigade came up on the right as escort battery.

At 1055 the following message was received from G.O.C. 5th Mounted Brigade:-“N.Z.M.R. Brigade coming up to take SAUSAGE HILL on our right. When that is clear you will push on to the GAZA-BIR-SABA road, turn left handed between road and telegraph wire and attack RIJM EL ATAWINEH while the N.Z.M.R. Brigade will attack point 467. Do not advance until SAUSAGE HILL is cleared”.

At about 1200 owing to the line having been swung to the left leaving the right flank exposed, considerable opposition was met with from this quarter and as the N.Z.M.R. Brigade was unable to make much headway against SAUSAGE HILL B squadron Gloucestershire Yeomanry had to be brought up to guard the right flank from where the enemy seemed strong in artillery and had the exact range, causing considerable casualties. Artillery support was asked for, but the enemy's guns could not be silenced and their aeroplanes discovered and heavily bombed our batteries. During the day 2 enemy planes and one of our machines were brought down.

At 1245 the 3rd & 4th A.L.H. Brigades who had reached the GAZA-BEERSHEBA road were forced to retire, and the enemy, who had been heavily reinforced, at SAUSAGE HILL strongly counter attacked against wadi BAHA. The Warwickshire Yeomanry up to now had been in reserve were sent up to support the Worcestershire Yeomanry on the left.

At 1345 the counter attack was checked but the enemy still continued to press heavily.

At 1415, however, were again reinforced and re-commenced to advance.

At 1430 the Australians on both right and left were retiring, therefore with a view to being compelled to withdraw in conjunction, B squadron were sent back to a covering position. By this time the 6th Brigade came up on the left and the enemy were again checked.

At 1615 the situation was about the same with the enemy being held.

At 1645 orders were received for withdrawal to take place at 1850.

At 1850, however, orders were received for the withdrawal to be deferred until 1945, owing to inability to evacuate wounded before this hour.

The enemy appeared to have no further intention of pressing and by 2030 the Brigade was entirely withdrawn and returned down the wadi to EL MUNKHEILEH. The Brigade then proceeded to water at TEL EL JEMMI, arriving there at 2300 and from thence to bivouac at EL MENDUR. The last named place was reached at 0215.

Casualties for the day:- 1 O.R. killed, 12 wounded. S.A.A. expended during the day 14,000 rounds. Only 1 horse was wounded.

April 20th The Brigade was kept in reserve with orders to be ready to move at half an hours notice. Watered in morning at TEL EL JEMMI; distance 3 miles, and on return were ordered to immediately entrench in outpost line from EL MENDUR to TEL EL JEMMI. There was increased aerial activity throughout the day, the enemy bombing to a large extent.

At 1645 orders were received to be ready to move at 1700 to MUNKEILEH to take over the outpost line from the 6th Brigade. R.G.H. were on the left in touch with 3rd A.L.H. Brigade, holding the line as far as the

wadi north of EL RIJL. The Worcestershire Yeomanry prolonged the line to point 320 on the right along the wadi EL SHARIA with Warwickshire Yeomanry in reserve at Brigade H.Q. at point 280. A squadron R.G.H. held the right of the line, and B squadron plus 1 section of machine-gun on the left, 2 troops of D squadron in the centre, 1 troop in support. The night was quiet

April 21st Early morning patrol captured 1 Turkish soldier. The Regiment continued to hold the line and digging commenced on a second line in afternoon.

We held an observation post on SAUSAGE HILL and were more or less occupied with snipers throughout the day, who were attempting to find a way up the wadi BAHA.

B & D squadrons, and one section of machine-gun occupied the outpost line with A squadron in reserve. Lieutenant Turner and the desert column escort troop rejoined the Regiment the night was quiet.

April 22nd Trench digging was continued throughout the day principally in the support line. Observation post on SAUSAGE HILL had increased activity principally with enemy snipers firing 1,000 rounds during the day, and the Turks appeared to be considerably reinforced in the ATAWINEH district. Orders were received to withdraw at 1930, the whole Brigade moving to ABASAN EL KEBIR, which was reached without further incident at 0230.

April 23rd At 0600 orders were received to moved to a new camp 1½ miles south of ABSAN EL KEBIR.

April 24th At 1230 orders were received to proceed to a new camp near KHAN YUNUS so as to be near the horse water troughs.

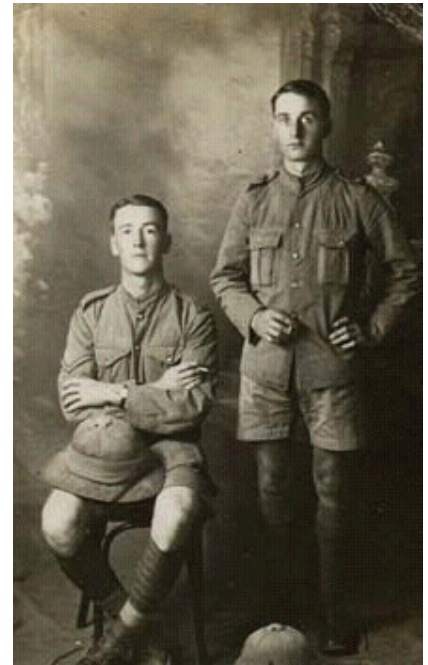
(The Brigade files contain, apparently, a very unusual document, which lists the casualties of the 19th by Regiment, name and number. Under the Gloucesters a Private 3438 W.Brockett is noted as having been killed in action. And twelve other men are identified as wounded).

April 25th The Regiment rides to WELI SHEIKH NURAN, to fill in old Turkish trenches; started at 07:00 returned at 1700. Intense heat. The same day a patrol is sent out for the purpose of collecting Bedouins, (with no further comment as to the purpose of this exercise, but the Arabs were reputedly sympathetic to the Turkish cause and were considered to be information gatherers on their behalf). This patrol returned with a collection of 39 men, 56 women and children, and 94 donkeys, ponies, cattle and camels. What became of them is not recorded.

April 26th At 0730 the Regiment ride to DIER EL BELAH to bathe, and the following morning the whole Brigade moves 11 miles to EL SHAUTH where they occupy recently abandoned Turkish positions. Patrols are sent out and report being fired upon by the enemy, but no casualties are recorded. The remainder of the month is spent trench digging and consolidating new positions.

May 1917

The Regiment is relieved on the 2nd and ride back 8 miles to BENI SELA. A draft of 18 OR's join, and a period of inspections and training begins. On the 4th Private 2249 Clutterbuck is wounded when and enemy aircraft drops a bomb on the camp, on the 8th a party of 3 Officers and 27 OR's ride to a redoubt ½ mile south of ABASAN to take part in a "gas demonstration" (not explained further, but normally meaning the highly unpopular experience of being sent through a tunnel full of gas). Later in the day the Regiment moves to a new camp at TEL EL MARAKEB, which is bombed a number of times during the night, although there are no casualties recorded.



E.C. Price & Pal (CAIRO)

Bathing in the sea on the 9th, and all camp lights ordered to be extinguished by 2030 (it seems to have taken a while to think of this fairly obvious precaution against night bombing). Training courses

continues until the 19th, when the Regiment, less D squadron, ride to the “ablution area” at ABASAN EL KEBIR for bathing parades and the cleaning of clothes; D squadron being unable to attend owing to shortage of water. There is a severe sandstorm at night

The Regiment leaves camp at 1900 on the 22nd and arrives at GAMLI at 2300, moving to Brigade Reserve to the south of KHASIF the following morning, and then forming a rear guard for the Division at 1845.

At 1125 on the 24th they set off for EL FUKHARY, where the diarist records that their “gas helmets” are re-sprayed on the 25th (presumably they were still using the smoke hoods pattern of 1915 vintage). On the morning of the 28th they ride 2 miles to positions west of TEL EL FARA, and the following morning (along with the rest of the Brigade) they have patrols out engaging the enemy. Return to camp at 14:30.

The Regiment suffered one fatal casualty during the day; Private 3502 C.H. Ward, whose body was brought back to the camp by the Divisional Field Ambulance. Ward was buried the following day, some 200 yards south of the railway near GOZ EL EZZ.

May 31st is spent patrolling and furnishing digging parties (the purpose of the digging is not explained), and at 1700 the Regiment parades and rides to EL FARA where the Brigade is concentrating. Bivouac here overnight.

June 1917

Leaving their bivouacs at 0300 the Regiment take up a “cover line” for a reconnaissance by the Desert Column. There was long range firing at enemy patrols during the day. Withdrew to camp at 1215. On the 2nd a digging party consisting 1 Officer and 68 OR's is furnished, with similar numbers performing the same task during the next three days. On the 5th the diarist notes that “About 120 men are being dressed daily for septic sores out of a total strength of 293 OR's.

Furnishing digging parties and training is the routine until the 21st when the Regiment leave camp and take over the outpost line. The night was quiet. At 0300 the following morning the line is moved forward a mile, and during the course of the day there is some incoming enemy shell fire which causes one casualty, - Private 2063 B. Coe is wounded. Night patrols report that the enemy's outposts appear to be manned, but there is no record of there being any contact made.

Patrols again sent out on the 23rd but no contacts are recorded. The enemy mounts an attack on one of the Regiment's outposts at GOZ MABRUK; this is driven off, although the Turks return on the 24th and make a second, unsuccessful, attempt. The diarist record that the Regiment's garrison here consists of 1 N.C.O. and 8 men; no estimate of the attacking force is given.

June 25th the Regiment takes part in operations in the EL BUGGAR – KARM area. Orders for the action:

R.G.H. OPERATIONAL ORDER No:1 24/6/17

1. Information. The enemy have small detachments within the area west of the general line point 720 EL BUGGAR - RASHID BEK supported by a squadron at EL BUGGAR

2. Intention. The mounted Regiments of the Brigade reinforced by the Bucks., and 1 squadron of Dorset Yeomanry, will take part in a drive operation of the 25th instant. The above force (less R.G.H.Y.) will bivouac near point 750 - IM'ALAGA on the night of 24th/25th. The R.G.H. with 3 light armoured cars will take up the perimeter KH IMLEIEH - point 720 - cross roads west of TAWEL HABARI exclusive (northern sector) while the rest of the force will continue to perimeter to ESANI (southern sector) 1 squadron 4th A.L.H. Brigade will occupy line KHIRBIT - BIR EL GIRHEIR by 0800 on 25th.

3. Orders. (1). The Regiment will concentrate near point 510 at 0745, and move off 0815 via north of point 630 to be in position by 1000 on the line KH IMLEIEH - point 720 - cross roads west of TAWEL HABARI exclusive.

(2). B squadron, will be responsible for the sector KH IMLEIEH to ½ a mile south east of point 720 on the ABU SHAWISH road. A squadron will prolong the line to the crossroads exclusive where they will gain touch with the Warwickshire Yeomanry. 1 armoured car will accompany B squadron, and 2 will go in rear of A squadron.

(3). The drive westwards will commence at 1010 on 2 bounds to the following general lines;- (a) All units will move at a trot to the line west UM SIRR - EL BUGGAR - point 680E - point 680W. (b) All troops will converge on a line drawn north and south of KARM, pace as required. A halt of ten minutes will take place between bounds unless prompt movement is required of any unit, and the Regiment will adjust its alignment and check its direction.

(4). Flank and Rear protection. Squadrons will provide their own protection during the approach march and drive. At least 1 troop under an Officer will be used in each squadron for this purpose. Captain A.H.S. Howard with a galloper will watch the movements of the rearguard.

4. Medical. Motor ambulances will be at SHANAG and GOZ EL BASAL by 1100. 2 cycle carts will accompany the Regiment under the M.O. and remain with B squadron at IMLEIH. Should serious wounds occur during the approach march or drive, units will arrange for protection and also notify their rearguard.

5. Communication. There will be a maximum of signalling. The helio will only be used by B.H.Q. in case of need, when called units will reply by same means. Flags will be sparingly used: if it is necessary to ask or give identity between units, the first 2 Regimental letter followed by the squadron letter. At least one flag per troop should be taken. Should Turks be seen moving in the area, the letter T may be flagged, followed by the compass letter to give direction. Scouts and patrol Officers will signal enemy's presence by waving their helmets. Lieutenant E. Gilholme will act as galloper to the O.C. and each squadron will detail 1 Officer or senior N.C.O. for this duty with the squadron leader. The advanced scouts of each squadron should also be under an Officer or senior N.C.O.

6. Formations. A general alignment only is required of bodies larger than a squadron. Extensions should be small in view of possible mounted action, and no units smaller than a troop should be used in the drive. An approximate frontage for a squadron of 4 troops should be ¾ to 1 mile, but when enemy is reported or suspected to be in strength, a closer formation is needed: all Officers must show dash and initiative in intervening in any combat entered into by neighbouring formations. The charge will be preceded by a cheer or a warning to others and Officers must remember to fall back one horse length into front rank when charging.

7. Equipment. Troops will march as light as possible. One bandoleer only will be carried. Wallets, mess tins, or iron rations will not be taken. Only hotchkiss rifle packs will be taken. Spare shoes will be left in wallets.

During the drive southwestwards will be drawn and carried across the pommel of the saddle by all except scouts and rearguards, who advance their arms.

8. Pursuit. Pursuit is left to the discretion of leaders subject to the following general instructions. (a) within the drive Turks in movement will be followed by an equal force until their capture by another unit seems certain; (b) The general alignment should be kept by other than perusing bodies; (c) stragglers breaking back will be rapidly followed as far as the rear guard line or further if capture appears immediately possible. Rear guards will observe all country behind them and help to cut off stragglers whenever the situation allows.

9. Prisoners. Prisoners will have the bolts taken out of rifles and marched with linked horses under suitable protection to KARM. Wounded prisoners will, if possible, serious cases can be left. Captured camels, if they cannot be brought along, will be destroyed.

10. Reports. Brigade H.Q. will leave point 750 at 1000 and will move via ESANI - point 680W. Regimental H.Q. will be in centre of A squadron line, where all reports should be sent.

11. Parade. Squadrons will parade under squadron arrangements in above order with one feed on saddle and unexpired portion of days ration, which should be cut into sandwiches and carried in haversack. Horses will be fed during the concentration: Squadrons should leave camp in sufficient time to effect this. Orders of march :- B.A. H.Q. 3 spare horses per squadron will be taken.

Signed A.G. Wykeham-Musgrave Capt & Adjutant.

Marching out strength 15 Officers, 234 O.R's and 271 animals. For this operation the Regiment concentrated in the vicinity of point 510, in accordance with orders issued, and moved off at a trot in column of troops in extended order. After proceeding half a mile they came under enemy shell fire from 2 guns firing H.E. and shrapnel, the ranging was accurate, and 1 Officer, 3 N.C.O.'s and 1 O.R. wounded (accidentally wounded), 1 horse is killed and 8 wounded.

Return to the old camp at FARA at 15:30 hrs.

All N.C.O's and men are allocated their new Regimental numbers on the 26th, and on the 28th the Division's title is changed from the Imperial Mounted Division to the Australian Mounted Division (the Division is composed of 3 Australian and 2 British Mounted Brigades).

On the 30th D squadron ride to "point 303" in preparation for relieving the outpost line. Strength of the squadron is 3 Officers, 78 OR's and 94 animals.

July 1917

NB there are no Regimental diaries in place for July and August 1917, all information is taken from Brigade and Divisional files.

July 1st 2 squadrons of the Gloucesters move to a camp east of FARA, and from there take over the outpost line between GOZ MABRUK and GOL EL BASIL on the 2nd. "All clear report" at 0410. 6 Turkish deserters come in during the day. Relieved by the Warwickshire Yeomanry on the 5th, and on the 6th the whole Brigade moves to a camp at MARAKEB. The time here is occupied with inspections, training and bathing parades. A demonstration in carrying 5 days rations on packhorses was attempted by one Officer per Regiment at KHAN YUMUS – unsuccessful.

July 19th At 1130 orders are received to "saddle up and await orders", and at 1745 the Brigade is ordered to leave camp and ride to the kilo 9 marker on the RAFAH – FARA road, where they bivouac for the night. Saddled up again at 0500 on the 20th, they receive orders to return to MARAKEB at 1045, arriving back at camp at 1300. 4 Officers and 46 OR's allowed on leave per week (this is for the whole Brigade).

July 21st Routine as usual, and an area at MARAKED HILL between rest station and Warwickshire Camp was allocated to French troops for bathing. They are responsible for their own sanitary arrangements.

Nothing to report, training as usual and usual routine conclude this month, with all units being medically examined on the 26th, and the Gloucesters holding a sports day on the 28th.

August 1917

August 1st 2 Officers and 57 OR's extra went on leave to PORT SAID, otherwise the month begins with usual routine and training, and there is a Brigade horse show on the 9th.

August 14th the Brigade moves to bivouac at RAFAH, continuing on the 15th to EL BURJ, where there are bathing parades on arrival. Leave camp at 0600 on the 16th and arrive at EL ARISH at 0915. The remainder of the day is spent arranging the new campsite.

August 18th Parades, 5 Officers and 426 OR's proceed to the rest camp at PORT SAID. The Brigade moves to a camp nearer the shoreline on the 19th and spends the remainder of the month with training and routine tasks. The last leave party returns 0700 on the 30th and a party of 4 Officers and 396 O.R's go on leave in the evening.

September 1917

The Regiment (and the rest of the Brigade) is taking part in training, gas drills etc. in EL ARISH for most of the month. On the 11th 117 OR's depart for PORT SAID to have 10 days leave at the Desert Mounted Corps Rest Camp, and on the 17th there are "Composite Squadron Tactical Exercises". On 22nd a staff

ride for Officers and N.C.O.'s. and on the 27th the Regiment are warned to "Stand to" ready to turn out at 1230, as 2,000 Turks had been reported in the vicinity of KOSSIAMI. We did not turn out and stand to ceased at 19:30.

September 30th The Brigade leave EL ARISH to rejoin the Australian Mounted Division in the forward area near EL BURJ. The Regiments strength on this day is recorded as 18 Officers, 508 OR's, 541 horses and 46 mules. Casualties for the month are recorded as nil, with 6 horses having died of natural causes.

October 1917

October 1st The trek to rejoin the Division continues, 8 miles to SHEIKH ZOWAID, 9½ miles to RAFAH on the 2nd, and a further 14 miles to reach the rear lines at EL SHAUTH on the 3rd, where Captain A.H.S. Howard rejoins, having been on leave in the UK. The next few days are occupied with inspections and Officers visits to reconnoitre the forward areas.

October 9th The 5th Mounted Brigade moves forward to take over the outpost line, the Regimental orders for this move being:-

R.G.H. - OUTPOST ORDERS 9/10/17

1. Information. Parties of enemy may be seen at points 630 EL GIREIER & 720 EL BUGGAR.

2. Orders. 5th Mounted Brigade will take over the outpost line at 1800 on the 9th instant. The Gloucestershire Yeomanry will relieve the Warwickshire Yeomanry at 1800 on the 10th instant, and will be relieved by the Worcestershire Yeomanry at 1800 on the 11th instant. A squadron will leave camp at 1430 on the 10th instant, and take over the following outpost line at dusk:- from point 280 1½ miles north east of ABU BAKRA - opposite GAMLJ at about 1 mile eastwards of the wire.

No 1. A troop of not less than 16 N.C.O's and men at point 280.

No 2. Not less than 25 N.C.O's and men at crossroads between EL NAGILI and EL DAMMATH.

No 3. Not less than 25 N.C.O's and men on the road ¼ mile north of "U" in CLTIVATION.

No 4. Not less than 25 N.C.O's and men at first "S" in SOSSEIN.

Patrols of 1 N.C.O. and 2 men will be sent every 2 hours commencing at 1800 between posts. No 4 will in addition send a patrol to WADI GHUZZE opposite EL RUEIBIA. These posts will be connected by telephone and a line has been laid from Report centre, No 3 post and D.H.Q.

Duty of Night posts. These posts will be in position by dusk. At 0445 patrols will be sent out 2 miles - if "all clear" reported, posts will withdraw as soon as dayposts pass through them.

Day Outposts. An outpost line will be held by day from point 300, 1½ miles south-west of KHIRBIT ERK, through point 510, ABU SHAWISH, KHIRBIT KHASIF - BIR EL ESANI. B and D squadrons will move through the wire at 0530 on the 11th instant and take over the outpost line, B squadron finding posts 1 & 2 and D squadron 3 & 4. A post of the strength of 1 troop will be found at the following points:- No 1 post point 300, No 2 post at trees 2 miles east of EL DAMMATH, No 3 post at point 510 ABU SHAWISH, No 4 post west of first "K" in KHIRBET KHASIF. The troop at No 1 post will establish an observation post at least 1,000 "south of the figure "O" in point 280. One company of I.C.C from GHABI works will hold a post ¼ of a mile north of "Z" in GOZ LAKHEILAT, with patrols to line 680 BIR EL ESANI

Duties of Dayposts. (a) The posts will move through the wire at 0530 and will return at dusk when night posts are in position. (b) Patrols will be sent out towards point 630 EL GIRHEIR, point 720 and EL BUGGAR; if necessary supported by reserve troops. If they are unable to approach this line, the O.C. R.G.H. will be informed immediately and sufficient force will be turned out to clear up the situation. (c) All possible information will be obtained as to enemy movements, gun positions, shells, trains as well as locality and capacity of any new wells or cisterns.

3. Communication by day. A line from GOZ EL BASAL to D.H.Q. and thence B.H.Q. visual from GOZ EL BASAL to day posts and I.C.C. Brigade post at GOZ LAKHEILAT.

Communication by night. A line connecting night posts and thence to D.H.Q. Reports as follows:- (1) "all clear" priority wire due B.H.Q. 0515. (2) Situation reports 0600 and 1600, containing report of enemy movements and any important intelligence. The O.C. A squadron will send in "all clear" report and situation report at 0600 on the 11th instant, and thereafter report in person to O.C. R.G.H. at GOL EL BASAL.

4 Supports. At GOL EL GELEIB B squadron less 2 troops, and at GOZ EL BASAL R.H.Q. D squadron less 2 troops. 1 section of machine-gun squadron and 1 bicycle cart.

5 Reserve. At GAMLI 1 squadron and 1 section of machine-gun squadron, 1 battery (camped on east bank of the wadi). After being relieved in the night outpost line, A squadron will rejoin the reserves at GAMLI. Horses will be off-saddled but troops will be ready to turn out at a moments notice. Not more than half the horses will be watered at once. Communications by visual with GOL EL BASAL.

6 Routine. 10th instant A squadron leave camp at 1430 to take up line of night outposts as detailed, having had a hot meal mid-day. 11th instant: reveille and tea at 0230.

0330 - Regiment less A squadron will parade in mass in full marching order with 2 nose bags on saddle north east of the lines facing north east ready to march off. Transport as detailed. Order of march B, D, H.Q's & Signals.

0400 - Water at GAMLI

0445 - Feed near wire.

0530 - Day posts go through the wire.

0830 - Breakfast in support line; A squadron under squadron arrangements.

7 Tools. 2 shovels per troop will be carried.

8 Reports. The O.C. R.G.H. as GOZ EL BASAL from 0600 - 1730. At other times to present camp

E.P. Butler Captain & Adjutant.

Royal Gloucestershire Hussars Yeomanry

All Regiments are now to man the outpost line in rotation for 24-hour periods, with the Gloucesters beginning their first tour at 1800 on the 10th. Relieved on the 11th, the diarist records; nothing of importance happened during the tour of duty and 22 Turks were seen on Hill 630, who retired as soon as operations towards them were undertaken by Captain AHS Howard with one troop of B squadron (Lt, R.G. Anderson) and 1 troop D squadron (Sergeant Insoll) with 1 subsection 16th Machinegun Squadron. Enemy cavalry had been seen on the EL BUGGER ridge, and it is also noted that no posts were shelled.

October 13th Back to the outpost, and as Major C.E. Turner DSO (O.C.) was ill, Captain A.H.S. Howard took command of the line. At 0800 a patrol consisting Corporal Morgan and Privates Smith, Poole and Smart are sent from post 4 to see if point 720 is clear of the enemy. Lured into a trap by a Bedouin they are attacked by 2 troops of Turkish cavalry and Cpl Morgan and Privates Poole and Smith are captured. The diarist does not explain what happened to Private Smart, he is not listed as KIA so we presume he escaped, the diarist concludes Nothing of any importance happened during this tour of duty.

October 15th Lieutenant Col A. J. Palmer DSO returned and resumed command 16th inst.

October 16th The Regiment, less B squadron, (Captain F. A. Mitchell, MC) paraded at 2000 and reached KHASIF 0100. The ambush parties were composed as follows.

At point 720 Lieutenant R.H. Wilson, Sergeant Barton and 11 OR's, with 2 hotchkiss rifles, bombs and sandbags, were in position at 0200 and put the house in a state of defence.

At BEIT-ABU-TAHA Lieutenant L. L. Wilkins with 9 OR's occupied one house, Sergeant Pearce and 7 OR's the other. They were in position by 0300 and put the house in a state of defence. Each house had 1 hotchkiss rifle, bombs and sandbags.

No enemy approached Lieutenant Wilkins at BEIT-ABU-TAHA. At 0500 Lieutenant R.H. Wilson observed an enemy patrol which proceeded to the EL BUGGAR ridge and eventually appeared near point 720 at 0800. The enemy patrol consisted of about 12 men and they were allowed to approach until the leading man was within a few yards of the house. As soon as it was ascertained that he had seen the house was occupied he was shot down, also his horse. The remainder of the patrol turned about and galloped for cover but before they could reach safety, 2 horses were shot down and the remainder of the patrol was heavily fired on by hotchkiss and rifles, but no others were brought down. 2 prisoners were captured (one wounded); the unwounded prisoner formed one of the party that captured Corporal Morgan's patrol on the 14th instant.

All ambush parties were withdrawn at 0845, having suffered no casualties. For this Lieutenant R.H. Wilson was awarded the Military Cross and Sergeant B. O. Barton & Corporal J. W. Lane were awarded the Military Medal.

R.G.H. OPERATIONAL ORDERS

1. The Australian Mounted Division with 7th Mounted Brigade attached, will cover a reconnaissance by Officers of XX Corps, on Thursday 18th October. The following line will be made good by the 5th Mounted Brigade by 1200 point 550, point 510, point 300. The northern slopes of point 630 EL GIRHEIR will be cleared as far as the wadi IMLEIH. Orders for withdrawal later.
2. The Brigade will parade in open column of squadrons in Troop Column at 0900 after watering, with head at "A" of ABU SOSSEIN.
3. R.G.H. will furnish the advance guard (A squadron) and move via north of KARM, across the wadi HANAFISH about 1 mile north of 720, and will hold the line point 770 (exclusive) point 730 to BIR GIRHIER (inclusive) A squadron holding from point 770 (exclusive) to track running north-east "M" in BIR IMLEIH (inclusive). B squadron from this point exclusive to BIR EL GIRHIER inclusive.
Order of march:- A, Signals, B, Machinegun, D, H.Q.
The O.C. A squadron will detail an Officer to report on the water supply in the wadi HANAFISH
4. Signal communication will be arranged by Brigade Signals Officer between B.H.Q. and R.H.Q.
5. An advanced dressing station will be opened by Field Ambulance, 1¼ miles east of KARM HOUSE. 2 sandcarts and 2 bicycle cars will accompany B.H.Q. situated at point 550 1 mile north west of IM SIRA.
6. 2 Nosebags will be carried and unconsumed portion of days rations. The evening meal will be issued on return to camp, no watercarts will be taken
7. O.C. Field Troop, R.E. will arrange for putting up water troughs at one of the KHASIF wells.
8. Practice communications with aeroplanes will be carry on during the day, probably between the hours of 1000 to 1100, 1300 to 1400, and 1530 to 1630. The whole of this contact patrol work is PRACTICE and no messages dealing with the actual situation will be sent. All units will carry their ground signs, situation code, letters and practice flares. Operational flares will not be carried.
If the patrol flies over troops whilst in motion, units will report their identity with the code signs and be prepared to answer the patrol if called upon to do so.

If, when flying over the lines, the contact patrol is attacked by a hostile machine, it will probably descend to 1,000 feet and all troops in the vicinity will be prepared to protect it with rifle and machinegun fire.

9. Reports to O.C., R.G.H. at R.H.Q., which will be situated at KHIRBET IMLEIH, east of wadi HANAFISH, and on the march at head of B Squadron.

E.P. Butler Captain & Adjutant. 17/10/1917

Royal Gloucestershire Hussars Yeomanry

October 23rd On approaching EL BUGGAR ridge, A Squadron, less 1 troop, were opposed by about 1 Squadron enemy cavalry whom they forced to retire south, and made good EL BUGGAR ridge. 1 troop A Squadron, under 2nd Lieutenant P. H. Morgan was sent to occupy point 720. They encountered 1 Squadron of enemy cavalry who charged them, forcing them to retire to KHASIF. In the retirement Private J. Pullin's horse fell and he was made prisoner. The horse followed the troop to KHASIF. Captain A. H. S Howard with three troops D Squadron and 2 machine guns went to KHASIF in support of Lieutenant Morgan's troop. The enemy then retired and took up point 720.

The Warwickshire Yeomanry were in support at GOZ-EL-BASAL at 0600. B Squadron under Captain F. A. Mitchell took up the line points 550-630-IMLEIH ridge. Cotswold troop in position at point 550 and Badminton troop under Lieutenant Anderson occupied point 630. As this troop approached 630 from west slope, 1 Squadron of enemy was reported approaching from east slope. Badminton troop opened fire and enemy retired to WADI HANAFISH, and we made good point 630.

At 0600 Worcester Yeomanry took over point 550, Cotswold troop then sent to support Badminton troop at point 630.

B Squadron and Regtl. H.Gs. on IMLEIH ridge with Berkley troop under 2nd Lieutenant H. P. Ellis 1 mile south-east were heavily pressed by 1 Squadron enemy cavalry. Attacking from the north east covered by machineguns from right rear. By continuous hotchkiss and rifle fire, 2nd Lieutenant Ellis succeeded in checking enemy advance until 1 Squadron Warwickshire Yeomanry arrived in support.

For gallantry in action 2nd Lieutenant Ellis was awarded the Military cross. L/Corporal Harris and Private Witchell the Military Medal. During this action 2nd Lieutenant Ellis and Sergeant J. Ritchins were wounded.

At 0700 enemy heavily shelled at point 630 with shrapnel and H.E. wounding 5 OR's and 1 horse.

At 0705 B battery, H.A.C. shelled point 720. D commenced to attack point 720 with Warwickshire Yeomanry Squadron operating on their left flank.

At 0745, D Squadron occupied point 720, enemy retiring S.E., situation reported "all clear", no casualties.

At 0800, enemy shelled B Squadron and R.H.Qs on IMLEIH ridge, no casualties.

At 1300, all posts taken over by Warwickshire Yeomanry and Regiment remained in support 1 mile N.E. of KARM. Situation normal.

At 1600, the Regiment returned to camp arriving at 1915. Casualties during the day:- 1 Officer wounded, 6 OR's wounded and one OR taken prisoner of war, 1 horse killed and 1 horse wounded.

October 24th At 0345, the Regiment left camp to take over outposts.

A Squadron, under Lieutenant E. T. Cripps (Captain A. G. Wykeham-Musgrave remaining in camp ill) took up right of the line, D Squadron in support.

At 0630, A Squadron in position, with 5th Australian Light Horse on EL BUGGAR ridge, reports "all clear". B Squadron in position reports 2 enemy seen on point 630.

At 0700, B Squadron advanced and took up positions on IMLEIH ridge and point 630.

At 0845, A Squadron advanced on point 720.

At 0920, point 720 occupied by A Squadron, report "all clear"

At 0920, B Squadron reports 100 infantry in WADI IMLEIH advancing on Grotto from north. 2 machineguns sent up to support B Squadron. 100 enemy appeared to form working party at WADIS IMLEIH and HANAFISH.

At 1030, enemy infantry retired north of WADI IMLEIH situation, "all clear".

At 1030, A squadron reported 2 working parties of enemy cavalry- 40 each - seen leaving IRGEIG in the direction of HARREIRA along GAZA-BEERSHEBA road.

At 1230, all posts were relieved by Warwickshire Yeomanry. Regiment retired to KARM in support after watering at KHASIF and IM-SIRI.

At 1530, the Regiment left KARM, arriving at camp at 1830.

3rd Australian Light Horse Brigade took over the out post line.

October 26th Captain A. G. Wykeham-Musgrave was admitted to hospital.

October 27th Expected to turn out in the evening, but were turned out suddenly in the morning. Remained all day near GAMLI ready to reinforce the outpost line. Brigade marched to KHALASSA at 1800, which was reached about 0400. D squadron and one sub-section machinegun (Captain A.H.S. Howard in command) at once went out to where the KHALASSA-BEERSHEBA road crosses the WADI KHAZULI, as a reserve for the day observation points at IBN SAIID (1 Squadron Warwickshire Yeomanry) and point 970 (1 squadron Worcestershire Yeomanry). Also 2 troops of A squadron (Lieutenant E.T. Cripps in command) were sent to point 1000 due east of KHALASSA as a day observation post. The rest of the Regiment bivouacked about 800 yds N.E. of KHALASSA.



Australian Light Horse attack BEERSHEBA

October 28th "All clear" reported at 0645. KHALASSA although marked on the map as a town the same size as BEERSHEBA consists of only 1 house, and is surrounded by undulating ground, covered with scrub.

After morning watering B squadron (Captain F.A. Mitchell in command) relieved D squadron at WADI KHASALI and a troop of A squadron was relieved by another.

A night outpost line was formed by D and A squadrons from point 870 to a point 300 yds west of KHALASSA-BEERSHEBA roads. B squadron sent up men (3 N.C.O.'s and 8 ORs) to do the patrolling at night between the posts and the 3 early morning patrols which went out at 0430 for 2 miles and did not come in until it was fully light. No enemy was seen during to night or by the dawn patrols.

At 1300, Lieutenant P.H. Morgan and 1 troop A squadron were sent to dig at a well near ASLUJ.

October 29th "All clear" reported at 0600. 2 troops of B squadron sent out to IBN SAIID to relieve Warwickshire Yeomanry at 0900. All quiet.

October 30th D squadron went out at 0345 to take up the day outpost line, but later some of the London Yeomanry arrived, so the R.G.H.Y. were withdrawn except 2 sections, 1 at point 910 and the other at point 1000. The Regiment paraded at 1900 and marched to ASLUJ that was reached at 2315. The march being slow on account of the wheels. Halted at ASLUJ until 0200 then proceeded to ISWAWIN via M and N roads arriving at 0900.



October 31st Were in corps all day. In the evening were machine gunned and bombed on the way to water at BIR EL HAMMAM. At 2400 we bivouacked by the viaduct east of BEERSHEBA. B squadron was detached to dig wells at BIR EL ARARA.

Photo of R.G.H.Y. taken by E. C. Price in BEERSHEBA

Strength of Regiment 31/10/17 with unit:	Officers	ORs	Horses	Mules	Donkeys
	22	437	495	45	22
Total strength (including temporary detached) :	Officers	ORs	Horses	Mules	Donkeys
	23	475	500	45	22

November 1917

A spell of unusual activity continues for the first three weeks of November

November 1st Shortly after 0500 we moved and bivouacked north of wadi SABA on the site of a Turkish cavalry camp. This camp had evidently been evacuated hurriedly as it was littered with equipment and saddlery; the latter for the most part being very poor quality leather. B squadron rejoined at 1200.

November 2nd All quiet. Reconnaissance of ground by Officers. At 2300 we got orders to be ready to turn out under order of the ANZAC mounted Division when required.

November 3rd Watered 0800, and turned out under orders of the ANZAC mounted Division thereafter. Strength: Officers 20, OR's 349, 434 horses, 11 mules. A section of the 16th machinegun section accompanied the Regiment, which went northwards along the HEBRON road for 2 miles, then followed a track through RIJIM ABU JERWAN, and ultimately arrived at a point where the track divides, 1½ miles south east of 'H' in AIN KOHLEH, joining Worcestershire Yeomanry at 1200. We were informed that the 53rd Division were operating from AIN KOHLEM towards TEL KHUWEILFEH and that we would be expected to keep touch with them and protect their right flank.

At 1215 the Brigade, less Warwicks, marched (Worcestershire Yeomanry leading) to the entrance of a valley running north and south immediately east of TEL KHUWEILFEH. Formation adopted column of troops, until coming under fire and machinegun fire. As the fire got more intense the pace was increased from a trot to a canter, and a distance of 2 miles was passed without any casualties to the wadi EL SULTAN. A squadron (under Lieutenant E. T. Cripps) and D squadron (under Captain A. H. S. Howard) followed the Worcestershire Yeomanry up the wadi EL SULTAN, B squadron (under Captain F. A. Mitchell, MC) with R.H.Q. remained south of K of KH KHUWEILFEH until 1700, during which period the enemy periodically shelled the wadi, and at which time the R.H.Q. moved to near B.H.Q. on high ground north of wadi EL SULTAN, B & D squadrons being in support.

A squadron prolonged the night outpost line joining up with the left of Worcestershire Yeomanry, and took up the position from high ground by W of WESHSHOMER to E of EL JABRYC, both exclusive, with 3 troops on the line; 1 troop in support. The night passed quietly. Casualties received:- 5 OR's and 11 horses wounded.

November 4th Saddled up about 0430 and moved about 400 yards so as to place the horses in a position where they could not be observed and shelled.

The Regiment less A squadron, and 2 troops of D squadron, who had been ordered out in support of Worcestershire Yeomanry at 0300, proceeded dismounted to take over the line as detailed from the Worcestershire Yeomanry:- A squadron south east of RAS EL NAGB, D squadron east of and B squadron on RAS EL NAGB, with an observation post 500 yards west. "All clear" reports were received and at 0845 A squadron reports in touch with 6th A.L.H. 1½ miles from L of EL JABRYC. At 0750 Major C. E. Turner, DSO, reported a village of ANAB to be held by 200 cavalry and infantry and later at 0820 3 squadrons of calvery were reported advancing on RAS EL NAGB from the west. They remained behind a hill until about 1430 when they debouched in to the plain going east and then swinging to their right, advanced from north north west and occupied ridge 2500 yards to our north and north east. Nothing of importance occurred beyond the following: -

1. 3 motors were reported proceeding from SHEIKH ABU KHARRUBETH towards DHAHERIYEH.
2. What appeared to be an Officer arrived in a car to view the situation from a ruined house. He was fired on by a hotchkiss rifle at 2000 yards.
3. Snipers were reported by A squadron to be holding a stone house 1200 yards distant.
4. Almost continual long range fire on patrols principally towards ANAB.
5. 2 field guns were reported 2 miles distant from RAS EL NAGB on a bearing of 80 degrees.

The Regiment was relieved by the Worcestershire Yeomanry, at 1400 and proceeded back on foot by troops and sections to the led horses, the last squadron completing the journey by 1600. At 1600 orders were received for Regiment, less B squadron, to return mounted towards RAS EL NAGB and assist the Worcesters who were then very heavily pressed by enemy estimated at 1500 (infantry and 3 squadrons cavalry). D squadron supported on the left flank, A squadron on the right. D squadron, accompanied by C.O. proceeded at once at a gallop and reported to Lieutenant-Colonel H.J. Williams, DSO, Worcestershire Yeomanry and the rapid advance of this squadron under Captain Howard materially assisted the Worcester squadron on RAS EL NAGB in checking the Turkish advance. D squadron R.G.H.Y. being disposed on right of Worcestershire Yeomanry, 2 troops on the right facing north and north east and 2 troops facing west.

Of the latter 2 troops, 10 O.R's were detached to support a Worcester post on hill 400 yards west, and later in the day the other troop was sent up to support the Worcester squadron on RAS EL NAGB as the Turkish offensive from the west was practically silenced and the enemy troops were co-operating with the attack from the north.

The other 2 troops, one under 2nd Lieutenant L. L. Wilkins, reinforced the right of RAS EL NAGB: the other under 2nd Lieutenant T. H. Inglis, the left of the same place. Both positions provided good targets at 1000 and 600 yards respectively, but were subjected to heavy rifle and machinegun fire.

Both these Officers were badly wounded during this action, their places being taken by their respective troop Sergeants: 235183 Sergeant Pearce D.C. & 235182 Sergeant R. Insoll who carried on the direction and work of their respective troops in a manner worthy of the highest praise.

At 1600 A squadron proceeded to support Worcestershire Yeomanry on the right flank. 1 troop was in position 400 yards on the right of Worcestershire Yeomanry - 3 troops in support. The first troop did not get into action and the squadron were relieved at 2030 by the N.Z.M.R., and proceeded to BEERSHEBA with 1 squadron Worcestershire Yeomanry arriving there at 0130. The horses of A squadron had been saddled up for 43 hours.

The attack was continued with considerable vigour until darkness prevailed and the enemy withdrew. Owing to large stones and rough ground it was impossible to estimate enemy casualties, which must have been considerable. On the arrival of the N.Z.M.R., D squadron was relieved and steps taken to collect casualties and convey them to first aid post. This work was organised by Lieutenant E. Gilholme most ably assisted by 453155 Lance Corporal Searle, R.A.M.C. and 235326 Corporal M.L. Hambling, who assisted in the removal of casualties – a difficult and tedious work in the dark over rough ground and shortage of stretchers. Parties were detailed to carry wounded down to meet the sandcarts in the valley, and the Regiment withdrew at 2200, under orders of Lieutenant-Colonel H. J. Williams DSO, following the Worcestershire Yeomanry, and reached camp at BEERSHEBA at 0430.

The following casualties occurred during the day: -

Wounded:- Officers 2, O,R's 12 (2 since died of wounds).

Horses:- Killed 2, wounded 14.

I should like to mention that towards dusk difficulty was experienced in keeping the hotchkiss gun in action. These guns, owing to percussion caps being separated from the cartridge preventing proper extraction, caused a jam, the small percussion caps being very difficult to detect in failing light. This can be easily remedied by daylight, but several instances occurred where time was lost owing to the percussion caps getting into the runners and other mechanism of gun.

November 5th Reached camp 0430 after operations just described and remained quiet all day.

November 6th Warned to be ready to move at 1 hours notice after 1200.

November 7th Brigade moved at 0230, Gloucesters leading and went to R of ARAB, which was reached at 0600, and remained in the vicinity of SHERIA all day. At 1600 moved to south of KH BUTEIHAH in hopes of being able to charge, but the enemy did not wait. Watered at SHERIA and bivouacked about 2230.

November 8th Reveillé 0500 and moved to KH ZARA, and thence to vicinity of HUU, where a force of about 1000 Turkish infantry was surprised and routed and 11 guns captured. The Gloucestershire Yeomanry was Regiment in support. Bivouacked on the battlefield, no water for the horses.

November 9th At 0900 all Brigade horses went to water at KH JEMAMETH, and after waiting until 1500 for their turn at the troughs were ordered on to wadi HESY, returning to camp at 2100. The Regiment was ordered to move at 2330

November 10th Arriving at ARAK EL MENSHEYEH, via KH ZEIDAN – TEL EL HESY where we watered and were given a line KH ES SUKRIYEH – KH FATTAHA as a first objective; this was gained without opposition, A squadron doing advanced guard.

We therefore took up an observation line from 29B – H of EL BURJALIYEH, and remained until 1600, when were ordered to B.H.Q. to take part in an attack on SUMMEIL, which did not take place. Bivouacked south west of ARAK EL MENSHEYEH, about 2400.

November 11th Reveillé 0600: took up same line as yesterday with D squadron. A & B squadrons in support, remained in this line until 0330, when Brigade concentrated and proceeded to ARAK EL MENSHEYEH, thence SUMMEIL – BALIN, Gloucestershire Yeomanry, finding advance guard.

November 12th On the morning of the 11th/12th the Regiment was disposed as followed:- A squadron holding night outpost line (as day) from crossroads X 29c – H of EL BURJALIYEH. B & D squadrons in supports at X 32d.

Regiments proceed to Brigade H. Q. near ARAK and owing to breakdown in Echelon (Division) drew half ration only.

At 0720 D squadron sent out patrols under:-

1. Lieutenant F. J. Turner to BERKUSIE to reconnoitre and report if hill still held.
2. Under Lieutenant R. H. Wilson, M. C. proceeded to BALIN for similar purpose.
3. Proceeded to M of SHEMAIYEH to gain touch with 4th A.L.H.

The Regiment with half section of H.A.C. and 1 section machinegun acted as advance guard to Brigade, moving off at 0730 and proceeded via ARAK station to SUMMEIL, report being received from 1 & 2 All clear. Enemy was dropping shells on BALIN from north, but Lieutenant Wilson occupied a hill 695 east of BALIN.

The Regiment picking up Lieutenant Turner's troop proceeded to BALIN at 1000 and took up a defensive position facing north and northeast.

Troops were observed in the direction of ETTINE and patrols sent out report them as hostile. At 1200 it was observed that 3 separate columns were advancing from the north and north east, D squadron holding right of the line: B squadron north of BALIN and A squadron west of railway. Machinegun and hotchkiss guns were employed in the line. H.A.C. guns opened on approaching enemy at 1210.

It was ascertained by this time that the enemy were in considerable numbers (1500 - 2000) with at least 9 guns, and request was made for support. Worcestershire Yeomanry, less 1 squadron, were sent up in support of D squadron, and half a section of H.A.C. opened fire on the railway station north of BALIN at 3000 yards.

The attack from the north appeared to be checked, but enemy reinforced and pressed heavily from northeast. Lieutenant Wilson's troop holding forward salient was forced to withdrawal at 1520, several Turks being killed within 10 yards of his position.

It was realised that the hill he was holding then if occupied by the enemy would cause the hill north of BALIN, occupied by B squadron, machinegun and 1 squadron Worcestershire Yeomanry, to be enfiladed.

Immediately Lieutenant Wilson's troop retired orders were given to B squadron, machinegun and Worcester squadron, to withdrawal to a position south, and after consultation with Colonel Williams DSO, Worcestershire Yeomanry, a 3rd line was taken up and further orders for withdrawal were issued by the Brigade.

The Regiment withdrew to IJSIER at 1930 and bivouacked for the night and at 2000, men were able to fill their water bottles, but no further issue of rations or forage were available. I regret to report that during the action Lieutenant R. G. Anderson was killed and Captain E. J. B. Herbert, R.G.H.Y. attached 16th Machinegun, was reported as having received a gunshot wound in the head, from which he died. I again beg to draw attention to the numerous complaints received of S.A.A. causing the hotchkiss guns to be frequently out of action at critical periods.

Casualties for the day:-

Killed:- 1 Officer, 4 O.R's. Wounded:- 13 O.R's.

Wounded, since died 1 O.R.

Missing 1 O.R. (afterwards ascertained to have been killed)

November 13th Remained at IJSER until 1200, when we removed to HATTE taking the F.A. and horses of B battery H.A.C. On arrival at HATTE rations were drawn and we proceeded to ES SUAFIR ESH SHEMALIYE, which was reached at 1730.

November 14th A squadron went to water shortly after at a well in a Jewish village 1¼ miles east of BEIT DURAS at 0530. This was the first watering for 84 hours, and the horses were in a very poor condition

November 15th Remained in same camp.

November 16th Moved to T. 27 Central (Palestine Sheet 16) and bivouacked on the banks of wadi SUKERIER.

November 17th Moved and took up an outpost line, B.H.Q. at TINEH: R.H.Q. at JULIA. Line held by Regiment:- B squadron EDH DENEBBEH – 030 A exclusive: D squadron O 30 A – KEZAZEH inclusive.

November 18th Regiment detached to XXI Corps had to take over an observation line TEL EL TURMUS – KHEZAZEH. R.H.Q. at ET TINEH railway station.

November 19th Remained at TINEH. B squadron sent to XXI Corps to do prisoners' escort.

November 20th Got orders at 0840 to rejoin Brigade at ENAB. Started at 1030 via DENEBBEH, KEZAZEH and then along the JERUSALEM – JUNCTION STATION road halting to water and feed at LATRON at

1430. 2½ miles east of LATRON we met B.H.Q. and received orders to return to JUNCTION STATION and report to 3rd A.L.H. Brigade sending 1 squadron to do escort duty at Desert Corps H.Q. at RAS DEIRAN. Bivouacked at LATRON, very wet night.



November 21st/22nd The Regiment are bivouacked and are furnishing working parties for the Royal engineers. On the 23rd they ride 17 miles to EL MEJDEL where they bivouac until the 27th, then ride on a further 24 miles to KH DEIRAN. Saddle up at 2300 on the 28th and ride 14 miles to BERFILVA, and the following day continue to EL BURJ "and prepare for dismounted action, sending the horses back to ZENUKAH: 1 man to 4 horses". The strength of this dismounted section is noted as 8 Officers and 120 O.R.'s.

Gloucester Yeomanry Machinegun Section

November 30th Remained in position all day, and the diarist records the Regiments losses for the month as one Officer killed and 2 wounded, eight O.R.'s killed, twenty 4 wounded and 4 missing.

December 1917

December 1st At 0110 on this morning, received orders to stand to ready to support the firing line, and almost immediately were sent out to 8th A.L.H. H.Q's north of EL BURJ, and reached the firing line at 0150. 2nd Lieutenant H. P. Ellis and his troop filled a gap in C squadron, 8th A.L.H., where he was killed very shortly afterwards.

Lieutenant G. V. Hawtrey and Lieutenant E. G. Townsend took their groups to fill a gap between B & C squadrons 8th A.L.H., the whole of the Gloucestershire Yeomanry composite squadron, being under the command of Captain A. G. Wykeham-Musgrove.



Australian Light Horse on the march near Jerusalem

The arrival of the Gloucester Yeomanry detachment of 7 Officers and 42 rifles, 6 H.G. teams, helped to drive back a determined attack by the Turks, and a company of Royal Scots Fusiliers arriving at 0255 further helped us, and the attack was driven off. From this time until 0415 the firing and bombing by both sides were intense. A 2nd company of Royal Scots Fusiliers arrived and was kept in reserve until 0415, when the Turks made another very determined attack which failed completely, and at daylight being so placed it was impossible for them to return they surrendered. Unwounded prisoners consisted of 4 Officers (including Brigade Commander), 2 Cadets, 105 O.R.'s also 19 wounded O.R.'s. Many dead were counted in front of our line, 120 being in front of ground held by 8th A.L.H., Gloucestershire Yeomanry, and Royal Scots Fusiliers.

A prisoner reported they were the 90th Regiment, 1st Company, Storm Troopen Brigade, and had come from GALICIA quite recently, and had also been in GALLIPOLI, and went into action on this front for the

first time the previous day. They appeared well armed and equipped having 1917 Mausers, broom stick bombs, Austrian pattern clothing for the most part and steel helmets.

During the day the Royal Scots Fusiliers were withdrawn and all remained quiet except for occasional shelling. In the evening the Gloucestershire Yeomanry were withdrawn into support and bivouacked just west of the 8th A.L.H.

Casualties:-

Killed in action 2nd Lieutenant H. P. Ellis

Killed in action 235137 Private B. Cox

Wounded in action 235186 Lance Corporal T. Baker (afterwards died)

Wounded in action 235085 Corporal E. W. Williams

Wounded in action 232298 Private P. A. Ponting

December 2nd A quiet day and night.

The days following are noted as being "all quiet", with the Brigade moving forward on the afternoon of the 5th to a line near SHILTA. The R.G.H.Y. are in support positions. Remain in support on the 6th, and then into the line for a 24-hour tour of duty on the 7th, no hostile activities except sniping and machinegun fire.

December 8th Brigade make a rec. of the high ground south of DIEV EL KUDDIS, and approaching the summit come under heavy machinegun fire (no mention of casualties). Very wet and cold on the 9th, the Regiment is relieved by the Worcestershire Yeomanry at 0800.

December 10th Occupy a new sector at 1500, a fairly warm day and troops got the chance to dry their clothes and blankets which had been wet for three days and nights, but in spite of the bad weather sick parades remained extremely small. "All quiet" on the 11th and days following, with the men mainly occupied with building strong points. 4 Turkish deserters come in on the 15th, and another on the 16th. The diarist notes that the strong points are almost complete on the 19th, and that the SAA and bombs (grenades) are being stored in caves which are also housing the garrison in the event of their being shelled.

This quiet spell continues until the 24th when the Regiment is relieved and moves to Divisional reserve positions west of SUFFA. The diarist has little to say on the 25th, rained heavily all day.

December 26th Orders are received to be ready to move at short notice, and on the 27th the Regiment decamps and rides to a position south of SUFFA, remaining there until 1600 when they are ordered to go a further mile west and bivouac down. Stay in reserve on the 28th, and on the 29th move to their new bivouac area again, and furnish a working party of 60 men for road repairs. 90 men are road making on the 30th, and 60 on the 31st. The Brigade is relieved during the afternoon and moves to a camp ½ a mile south of EL BURJ. The Regiments' casualties for the month are recorded as 1 Officer and 20 OR's killed, and 30 OR's wounded.



R.G.H.Y. Memorial at Gloucester Cathedral

The memorial takes the form of a massive cross, which, with its pedestal, stands 35 ft. high, and has been erected on sloping ground just below the west door of the Cathedral. The fine simplicity of its design is in perfect harmony with the surroundings. Three steps lead to the spacious platform on which stands the monument. The lower portion contains 4 low-relief panels in bronze representing outstanding episodes in the campaign in which the Regiment gained so much distinction.

The titles of these panels are:

GALLIPOLI (1915), "Salt Lake to Chocolate Hill" (depicting the scene on August 21, 1915, when the 2nd Mounted Division took part in the second attack on the Turkish lines at SUVLA BAY) :

SINAI (1916), "The Sand of the Desert" (a reproduction from an actual vest-pocket camera snapshot taken as the Regiment descended a sand hill returning from a reconnaissance);

PALESTINE (1917), "Crossing the Jordan" (showing an Officer leading his men across the River Jordan on a bridge of boats);

SYRIA (1918), "Watering Horses" (showing a typical scene of tired and thirsty horses being watered at a well after a long trek through the waterless plains of the country).

Between these are 4 narrower panels bearing the names of the fallen (over 200 in number) in bold raised letters. Above is a super base, on one side of which is carved the Regimental badge, mounted on a round base, as it appears on Imperial Graves Commission headstones. On another the list of territories in which the Regiment was engaged, and on the 4th the inscription: "In memory of the members of the Royal Gloucestershire Hussars Yeomanry who gave up their lives in the Great War, 1914-1918."

Alan Price
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