

# Diary of Major James McCarroll – 1916 – Sinai.

Transcribed by Steve Butler for the New Zealand Mounted Rifles Association – 2007. Note: Transcribers comments: Notes or alterations are inserted between straight brackets [note] these comments are my definitions and are not those of or written by James McCarroll. I have automatically changed old English spellings and abbreviations where appropriate, examples such as “wet” for “wett” and “Colonel” for “Col”, “Australia” for “A” or “Aus”, “Advanced Guard” for “A G”. I have copied spellings of place names as they were written – these spellings change in the diary as the New Zealanders settle on a common spelling of these names that were probably written differently by previous soldiers and noted on old explorers maps. Where the Colonel has written place names in capital letters I have copied his format. This Diary continues on from his 1915 Gallipoli Diary. The New Zealand Mounted Rifles Brigade is now in training in Egypt.

**JANUARY** 1916, Saturday 1<sup>st</sup>

Went out training for half a day.

Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup>

Short service. Troop training from 1000

Monday 3<sup>rd</sup>

Troop training. Paid £2-15-0 for uniform case.

Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup>

Troop training came home via ~~Eskander Shakri~~ and plantation and Canal. Went to Cairo in the evening. [James McCarroll strikes through the above place names, but enters them again two days later.]

Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup>

Troop training etc.

Thursday 6<sup>th</sup>

Troop training home via Eskander Shakri and plantation.

Friday 7<sup>th</sup>

Troop training. Bleak cold weather.

Saturday 8<sup>th</sup>

Mobilization parade of Brigade. ~~Lent T Me 200 PJ~~ Repaid

1 x M[Machine] Gun horse killed.

Paid Jack and Roberts 10/- [ten shillings] each. Very cold weather.

Sunday 9<sup>th</sup>

Went N. Z. Hospital. Dinner with Tommy at Continental [Hotel, Cairo].

Monday 11<sup>th</sup>

Mobilization of Brigade. Got Brigade and Regimental photograph. Went to Cairo with Colonel M [Mackesy].

Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup>

Troop and Squadron training. Lecture by Colonel M [Mackesy].

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup>

Squadron training. Sent parcel to Mary. Sent parcel to Janie.

Thursday 13<sup>th</sup>

Went out with M Guns [machine guns] training. Squadron training continued.

Friday 14<sup>th</sup>

Training on the desert and route march. Colonel M, Major Wyman and self took 4 sisters to dinner including Sister Sutherland. Met Sister Moore who told me about Gwen.

Saturday 15<sup>th</sup>

Mobilized the whole Brigade and Admin Column – fine turn out. Sent parcels of feathers etc home.

Sunday 16<sup>th</sup>

Church Parade. Went to Cairo with R. Williams.

Monday 17<sup>th</sup>

Mobilization and inspection. Colonel Rhodes present.

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup>

Went out towards number three tower. Training.

Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup>

Training on desert. Went to N.Z. Convalescent Home where 78 men are. Had dinner with the staff also Colonel M.

Thursday 20<sup>th</sup>

Went to Cairo to get box sent to Hospital thence by Lieutenant Blaithwayte to Janie. Went to dinner with Mr. Fletcher Matarich.

Friday 21<sup>st</sup>

Half day training. Packing up.

Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup>

Final packing, sent base kits to Base Depot. Orders to leave for Canal Zone. This is about 7 days trek.

Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup>

Left at 0900 for NAWA. Wet night for here. Good trip. AMR leading men 501 25 officers. 556 Horses, 67 Draughts, 10 Mules, 5 wagons for kits, no transports with us and no M Guns – these went in the train.

Strength of Brigade 112 officers, 2345 men, with 3 officers and 114 men near party. 2679 Horses.

Monday 24<sup>th</sup>

Left NAWA 0800. Sent Boyes home with injured knee. Lieutenant Bigg-Withers' horse rolled on him – sent home from Kantara Station to Cairo. Arrived BELBEIS 1630.

ASC [Army Service Corps] late with rations. Wagon got stuck in sand. Light rain and cold wind at night. Horses got tired Bivouacked on same ground as Cavalry in 1882.

Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup>

Left Belbeis at 0806 through fine country – arrived ABU HAMED 1400.

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup>

Left Abu Hamed at 0830, some good country some desert arrived EL KASSIEN 1700. During march a horse fell into a canal taking the rider with him, who stuck to his horse and reached the other bank. Passed over the battlefield of JEL EL KEBIR saw the old trenches. Big Camp of A.I.F.

Thursday 27<sup>th</sup>

Left Belbeis at 0806 through fine country arrived Abou Hamid 1400 – chance for a clean up.

Left at 830 arrived at Abu Suer. Saw General G [Godley], good trip along the desert all the way arrived 1200. Wet night, running down desert slopes.

Friday 28<sup>th</sup>

Left Abu Suer at 0830 arrived Bir Niefshef 1245 over desert all the way, passed through N.Z. Infantry lines camped near ISMALEAH. Early morning very wet, many got their kits wet. Had dinner with Colonel Plugge.

Saturday 29<sup>th</sup>

Left Nefish 0830 A.I.F. band played us out, also N.Z. Infantry band. Beautiful weather, fine trip through Ismalia, crossing the canal there. Thence parallel to Suez Canal to camp at SERAPEUM. Good situation in sight of Canal and on ancient city site. Tents already.

Sunday 30<sup>th</sup>

Church Parade and bathing parade in the afternoon in Suez Canal. Beautiful weather.

Monday 31<sup>st</sup>

Training by Squadrons. Went for a tour W [west] in the desert, saw some bitter lakes and Bedouins. Weather very nice.

**FEBRUARY**, Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup>

Squadron training. Went 15 miles S [south] in desert. Climbed SHUBRAWIT HILL – Colonel and self. Splendid view of lake and desert. Saw warships ready for action.

Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup>

Training in the morning, bathing in the afternoon. Choir practice at night. Train loads of stores arriving.

Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup>

Duty Regiment today. Training near Camp. Weather splendid.

Friday 4<sup>th</sup>

Training Regiment. Went to Ismalia got 1x pair of Field Glasses to replace my lost ones. Number 5679 Lemaire 8x FAB' Paris

Saturday 5<sup>th</sup>

Training. Went about 10 miles due West into the desert – fine training area. Lieutenant Allsopp and 12 men went to A.I.F. over the Canal.

Sunday 6<sup>th</sup>

Church Parade. Inspected by General Birdwood and Godley, they seemed pleased. Horses very lively.

Monday 7<sup>th</sup>

Training by Squadron. Rest of the 11<sup>th</sup> Squadron went across the Canal, over pontoon bridge. T. Ransead and Captain Smith went to Suez.

Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup>

Training in South area. 9<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements went past here.

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup>

Training in the morning – regimental attack.

Thursday 10<sup>th</sup>

Training and information etc. Australian troops passed through.

Friday 11<sup>th</sup>

Duty today – about Camp exercising horses.

Saturday 12<sup>th</sup>

Training near Canal. Sent cable home. Big Camel Corps passed about 6.00. T. Ranstead came back.

Sunday 13<sup>th</sup>

Church Parade. Hot today- in Camp all day.

Monday 14<sup>th</sup>

Training in Camp – all day reconnaissance. Formed a [pace left blank] Society for the excavation of the ruins of SERAPEUM.

Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup>

Duty Regiment today. Went to Oasis 10 miles N.W. all desert, found sweet water there, put in two hours digging at the S ruins.

Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup>

Training in morning, bathing in afternoon. Big Camel Corp passed South.

Thursday 17<sup>th</sup>

Sham fight with Australian and N.Z. Division and our Brigade – poor work by Division – seemed lost- and we mowed them down. I umpired for CMR [Canterbury Mounted Rifles].

Friday 18<sup>th</sup>

Attack practice of Regiment.

Saturday 19<sup>th</sup>

Went to front trenches, saw line of Turkish advance gun positions – place where boats were launched and graves of German and Turks.

Sunday 20<sup>th</sup>

Church Service.

Monday 21<sup>st</sup>

Training South. T. Ramstead returned with name of Captain that I handed over to on “Knight of the Garter” [troopship that brought James and his men from Gallipoli].

Captain Harnett 17<sup>th</sup> Battalion A.I.F.

Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup>

Training.

Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup>

Staff Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade came to select Camp site – A.L.H. [Australian Light Horse]. Brigadier went to Cairo.

Thursday 24<sup>th</sup>

Training North. ALH arriving. Camel Corp passed.

Friday 25<sup>th</sup>

Attack practice. Colonel M on leave. Signallers did good work.

Saturday 26<sup>th</sup>

Duty Regiment today. 3<sup>RD</sup> Squadron went on patrol. Front trenches.

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup>

Church Parade. 4<sup>th</sup> Squadron went on patrol with 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Monday 28<sup>th</sup>

Squadron work for 11<sup>th</sup> Squadron. Colonel Mackesy returned. Light Horse arriving.

Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup>

Work about Camp. Light Horse arriving. Colonel Munro arrived, stayed all night.

**MARCH**, Wednesday 1st

Left for Cairo on duty.

Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup>

Went to Zietoun. Drew £10 for A.P. Office.

Friday 3<sup>rd</sup>

About Cairo – went pyramids. Sister M. Sutherland and Lieutenant Bruce to dinner – got box from Cooks [travel Company] and sent it home with Captain Greenbough.

Saturday 4<sup>th</sup>

At Cairo, went to races. Colonel Meldrum at dinner with me.

Sunday 5<sup>th</sup>

Received wire at 1.30 am to rejoin Regiment. Left Cairo at 1100 arrived Serapeium 1530, left Serapeium 1700 for front trenches arriving 2130.

Monday 6<sup>th</sup>

Took over trenches from Brigade A.I.F. – these very nearly full of sand, Patrols sent out.

Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup>

Sent patrols out from each Squadron.

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup>

Patrolling 6 miles to the front – sand hills all the way and for miles to the front.

Thursday 9<sup>th</sup>

Patrols went well out. Starting to dig out the trenches. Got our machine guns into position.

Friday 10<sup>th</sup>

Patrols sent out from each Squadron.

Saturday 11<sup>th</sup>

Went into Moascar 54 men for the Brigade. Very bad sandstorm on. Came home and found storm had shifted things in tent.

Sunday 12<sup>th</sup>

Three Church Services owing to Regiment being scattered.

Monday 13<sup>th</sup>

Established post 6 miles out known as AKLD Hill. Cleaning up trenches. Mail arrived.

Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup>

General Russell inspecting trenches. Digging trenches etc.

Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup>

Rebuilding trenches – inspecting wire entanglements.

Thursday 16<sup>th</sup>

Good work being done in trenches – making a plan of tunnels etc.

Friday 17<sup>th</sup>

Hard at trenches and wire.

Saturday 18<sup>th</sup>

Trenching and entanglements wire along our whole front.

Sunday 19<sup>th</sup>

There were to be three services today – one had to be cut out.

Monday 20<sup>th</sup>

Cold weather. So did some good work in the trenches.

Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup>

H.R.H. the Prince of Wales came to the front trenches but did not visit our lines.

Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup>

Trenching – feel some concern for our left flank. The 43<sup>rd</sup> Brigade seem indifferent about it.

Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup>

Trenching and entanglements. General Birdwood and Godley here, the former to say goodbye, we are not in his command now.

Friday 24<sup>th</sup>

Started to do some training and shooting.

Saturday 25<sup>th</sup>

Went to Ismailia, very pleasant town. Under the trees is splendid, gardens fine.

Sunday 26<sup>th</sup>

Three services today. Resting.

Monday 27<sup>th</sup>

Started Musketry all round. Water service temporarily stopped.

Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup>

Musketry. Visited CMR.

Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup>

Musketry shooting, very good all. Machine guns in good working order.

Thursday 30<sup>th</sup>

Musketry stopped by heavy Khamseen. {Egyptian hot sandstorm}. Very Hot.

Friday 31<sup>st</sup>

Orders to move. Received by 31<sup>st</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> Battalions A.I.F. Went to railhead – stay here for the night.

**APRIL** 1916, Saturday 1st

Left railhead for SERAPEUM 200 Camel transport arrived 1130, transport 1 hour later.

Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup>

Brigade Church Service. Men enjoyed a swim.

Monday 3<sup>rd</sup>

Started training in early morning to miss the heat of the day.

Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup>

Went to Ismalia, saw Maori Haka of welcome to General Murray. Saw several Auckland Officers.

Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup>

Light work. Orders for move somewhere.

Thursday 6<sup>th</sup>

Left Serapeum and bivouacked at Moascar.

Friday 7<sup>th</sup>

Left 4 am for 22 mile march across very loose sand, arrived Sallbia 12.30.

Saturday 8<sup>th</sup>

Pitching Camp etc – old camp site laid out by Yeomanry, don't like it much. Colonel Mackesy left for Cairo 12.00.

Sunday 9<sup>th</sup>

Church Service by Chaplain Gregg of CMR.

Monday 10<sup>th</sup>

Making ourselves comfortable. Our boys brought plenty of timber, sandbags etc.

Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup>

Drew up Syllabus of training, work in the morning mostly.

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup>

Light training – not using our horses much.

Thursday 13<sup>th</sup>

Light training.

Friday 14<sup>th</sup>

Dismounted work.

Saturday 15<sup>th</sup>

Lent Bigg-W £2. Cleaning up generally.

Sunday 16<sup>th</sup>

Service by ourselves. Band went to H.Q.

Monday 17<sup>th</sup>

Mounted work in the morning, night reconnaissance by our O [officers] and N.C.O's.



Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup>

Training as usual. Colonel came back last night.

Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup>

Training mounted. Went to Kantara to investigate a case of assault.

Thursday 20<sup>th</sup>

Training.

Friday 21<sup>st</sup> Good Friday

Church Services. Musketry in the afternoon.

Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup>

Training mounted.

Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> Easter Day.

Service in the morning. Got orders to move at 4 pm to stand by, and again at 6 pm to leave at 8 pm. Just heard the Turks are advancing.

Easter Monday 24<sup>th</sup>

Travelled all night, arrived Kantara 6 am - fed up. Arrived Hill 70 9 am. Bivouacked here tonight.

Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup>

At Hill 70 – pitched camp. War matters quiet.

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup>

Fixing up our camp – one regiment gone forward.

Thursday 27<sup>th</sup>

Went to Kantara – some excellent canteens.

Friday 28<sup>th</sup>

About camp all day.

Saturday 29<sup>th</sup>

Went to DUEIDAR – saw the Turks had attacked, rode 10 miles North struck railhead, returned to Camp.

Sunday 30<sup>th</sup>

Church Parade – attended voluntary service tonight.

**MAY**, Monday 1<sup>st</sup>

Had competition for the best equipped section – Corporal Cathie- (4<sup>th</sup> Waikato) 1<sup>st</sup>, Corporal Donaldson (11<sup>th</sup> North Auckland) 2<sup>nd</sup>, Lance Corporal Haswell (11<sup>th</sup> North Auckland) 3<sup>rd</sup>, Trooper Burgess best in Regiment

Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup>

About lines cleaning up.

Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup>

Weather hot, Colonel went North in search of ruins.

Thursday 4<sup>th</sup>

About Camp all day.

Friday 5<sup>th</sup>

On Court Martial all day, serious cases. Colonel came back.

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup>

Sketching outpost line in morning. Went to Kantara to get sand scoops made.

Sunday 7<sup>th</sup>

Left at 1000 with the Division on reconnaissance to Bir el Abd. Bivouacked at ROMANI held South and East of outpost line.

Monday 8<sup>th</sup>

Left Bivouac and returned to Hill 70.

Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup>

Went to Tel El Kebir, saw Jack H. and others.

Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup>

About Camp cleaning up.

Thursday 11<sup>th</sup>

Packing up. We are to move on tomorrow very light.

Friday 12<sup>th</sup>

Left Hill 70 at 5 am we are A.G. [advance guard] with 90 Camels for transport. Arrived at Hod el Maler at 1100. Camels about 4 pm.

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup>

Went on reconnaissance to beach at Mohamididia – beautiful beach for swimming.

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup>

Left at 4.30 for Hod el Sagia and Umm Asia to collect some Natives – only got 2. Heat fearful, very hot wind burnt our faces. Too much for one day.

Monday 15<sup>th</sup>

CMR went to Hod Pababis, the heat is something dreadful. The wind burns everything it touches, our horses suffered very much.

Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup>

Still very hot, horses suffering for the want of water. CMR returned very much done up.

Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup>

On outpost work. WMR left for East, very hot.

Thursday 18<sup>th</sup>

WMR returned 1730. We were on outpost today.

Friday 19<sup>th</sup>

We went East and to the beach. Regiment on duty day and night.

Saturday 20<sup>th</sup>

Went round outposts. Saw a large sized Arab village. These are used to harbour spies so we have to clean them up.

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup>

Church Service to day at 8 am. Auckland and Wellington Mounted Rifles.

Monday 22<sup>nd</sup>

With Australian Light Horse on a reconnaissance to Hod el Gidaidia – encountered small patrol.

Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup>

Returned home via Katia.

Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup>

Resting in Camp. Colonel went to Cairo.

Thursday 25<sup>th</sup>

Outpost work and patrols. Numerous Generals out in front. Conference of O.-Co [Company Officers?] B.W. returned.

Friday 26<sup>th</sup>

Bathing and washing, overhauling gear.

Saturday 27<sup>th</sup>

Cleaning up gear. Aeroplane dropped message.

Sunday 28<sup>th</sup>

Services.

Monday 29<sup>th</sup>

Left on reconnaissance at 10 pm.

Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup>

Arrived at Hod de Babis 0400. Left again at 9 pm.

Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup>

Arrived at Hod Salaman – engaged the enemy. Accounting for 17 in a very small affair.

**JUNE**, Thursday 1<sup>st</sup>

Aeroplane raid on Romani. General Chaytor went to hospital.

Friday 2<sup>nd</sup>

Sent 3 troops well digging at Oghratina.

Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup>

Resting in Camp.

Sunday 4<sup>th</sup>

Outpost and patrolling.

Monday 5<sup>th</sup>

Went to Bir el Abd on reconnaissance. Bivouacked at Oghratina.

Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup>

Went on at 0300 to Bir el Abd, saw nothing and returned to Camp.

Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup>

Left for Port Said, arrived 11.20 pm.

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup>

At Port Said, saw General Chaytor.

Friday 9<sup>th</sup>

Port Said. Sent parcels to Aunt Nancy, Mrs. Mawhinney, Gwen and Audrey.

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup>

Port Said. Sent parcels to Janie Mary and Bruce.

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup>

Returned Kantara.

Monday 12<sup>th</sup>

Arrived in camp 11.30 am.

Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup>

Regiment resting in Camp.

Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup>

Duty Regiment and outpost duty.

Thursday 15<sup>th</sup>

Left on reconnaissance arrive at 0400 for KATIA where we stayed all day.

Friday 16<sup>th</sup>

At Katia all morning, returned to Bir et Maler 1400 to 1600.

Saturday 17<sup>th</sup>

Resting in Camp.

Sunday 18<sup>th</sup>

Church Parade 0830. Very hot. 9 Aeroplanes flew East this morning.

Monday 19<sup>th</sup>  
Resting in Camp.

Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup>  
Outposts. WMR went with ALH.

Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup>  
Resting in Camp.

Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup>  
Nothing doing. Outposts. WMR returned.

Friday 23<sup>rd</sup>  
Outposts. CMR left for Hill 70.

Saturday 24<sup>th</sup>  
ALH arriving. Left Bir et Maler 10 pm.

Sunday 25<sup>th</sup>  
Arrived 0430 at Hill 70. Found camp clean. Plenty of fresh water.

Monday 26<sup>th</sup>  
Pitching Camp on new ground. Colonel Mackesy went to Cairo.

Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup>  
Cleaning up old camp. Building stables.

Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup>  
Nothing much doing. German Taube flew over us at a great height. Two of ours tackled it – one of ours fell.

Thursday 29<sup>th</sup>  
3<sup>rd</sup> Squadron left for Kantara rest camp. Warrick Yeomanry arrived. Lieutenant Colonel M returned from Cairo.

Friday 30<sup>th</sup>  
In rest camp.

**JULY**, Saturday 1<sup>st</sup>.  
In rest camp.

Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Resting.

Monday 3<sup>rd</sup>  
In command of composite Regiment – 2 Squadrons CMR, 1 AMR went in support 5 ALH. Left 0100 returned 1610.

Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup>  
In camp. Sent Sergeant Evans away on leave.

Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup>

In Camp (rest). Brigadier returned.

Thursday 6<sup>th</sup>

In rest camp.

Friday 7<sup>th</sup>

3<sup>rd</sup> returned and 4<sup>th</sup> went to KANTARA.

Saturday 8<sup>th</sup>

11<sup>th</sup> troop returned. Mail in.

Sunday 9<sup>th</sup>

Service 8.45.

Monday 10<sup>th</sup>

Rest Camp.

Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup>

Rest Camp

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup>

In Rest Camp.

Thursday 13<sup>th</sup>

Rest Camp. Jack Hueston arrived in camp.

Friday 14<sup>th</sup>

Rest Camp. Inspected by General Churchill. Lent J.H. £2.

Saturday 15<sup>th</sup>

4<sup>th</sup> returned and 11<sup>th</sup> went to rest camp Kantara. General Chauvel, Colonel Browne and Colonel Powles at dinner. Went to see ruins at Pelusium.

Sunday 16<sup>th</sup>

In Camp.

Monday 17<sup>th</sup>

In rest camp.

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup>

In rest camp.

Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup>

General Chaytor went out on aeroplane located several Turks.

Thursday 20<sup>th</sup>

News of Turks approaching. Engaged by 6<sup>th</sup> Light Horse. Estimated 2,000.

Friday 21<sup>st</sup>

11<sup>th</sup> Squadron came back. Waiting in reserve for Turks coming eastwards 10,000.

Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup>

Turk aeroplane scared us out this morning, no bombs. Turks strengthening their position at OGHRAITINA. MAGEIBRA. We are part of a section Mounted Troops.

Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup>

Turks still strengthening their position. Various units have joined us. We are intending to move via DU [blank]

Monday 24<sup>th</sup>

Situation unchanged. Still awaiting developments.

Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup>

Fritz flew over us this morning.

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup>

Situation slightly changed.

Thursday 27<sup>th</sup>

Turks tried an advance but were only allowed to come a certain distance. Aeroplanes active this afternoon. Out Artillery doing good work.

Friday 28<sup>th</sup>

Situation unchanged. Turks tried an advance on Qatea [Katia], WMR engaged then drove them back.

Saturday 29<sup>th</sup>

Turks endeavoring to get Katia. Slight skirmish with our patrols.

Sunday 30<sup>th</sup>

Very quiet all morning. Considerable activity towards evening.

Monday 31<sup>st</sup>

ROMANIA bombed this morning. Orders to move out as enemy were reported advancing. Later orders canceled as forward forces were able to deal with the enemy.

**AUGUST**, Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup>

Situation slightly changed, reinforcements to O C T. Great activity making trenches.

Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup>

Considerable forward movement, enemy very active – holding line W [West] of RABAH and QATIA and NAGID. Something should happen soon.

Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup>

Turks movements very decided. Massing at three points, this is obvious. Orders to move at 2230 for DUEIDAR.

Friday 4<sup>th</sup>

Arrived at DUIDAR 0130, hear guns about 0300 continuous firing until 0930 when we left for Garth Hill. We attacked about 1200 on Mt. Royston. Advance slow. #rd attacked with [space left for name not filled in]. I took one troop and M Gs [Machine Guns] and attacked [Green] Hill 1645. In gaining hill Turks surrounded in big numbers. Brought in one batch of 8 Officers and 150 men.

Bivouacked at PELUSIUM. 2 K. [two killed.]

Saturday 5<sup>th</sup>

Left 0500 for Bir el Nuss. Found 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade there. Left at 1200 in force. 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade South East and our Brigade East and attacked QATIA from the South. 5<sup>th</sup> Light Horse on our left, they [fight] bayonets and come under machine gun fire. We dismounted and opened fire as we advanced – Dismounted we took three prisoners. Turks retired to new position, we pulled out at 1930. Bivouacked at Romani.

Sunday 6<sup>th</sup>

Left Romani 0600 for Katia we [are] Advance Guard – found all clear, advanced along road came in touch, heavily shelled at 1630 and again at 1800. Bivouacked at EL RABAH. Lieutenant Reid [or perhaps Rud] got 8 prisoners. Martin covering advance of [perhaps 52<sup>nd</sup>?] Brigade.

Monday 7<sup>th</sup>

Left 4.30 CMR A G [Canterbury Mounted Rifles Advance Guard] we in the rear, shelled at 0700. Remained in touch all day, heavily shelled at 1800 – 1900. Battery (Somerset) alongside doing some good shooting. Bivouacked at EL RABA. Sent patrol North and one South. I got one prisoner. The planes very active.

Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup>

Left 0430. 5<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Advance Guard, AMR next, sent patrol to Hill 102. Advanced on OHGRATINA found Turks gone, moved on to DE BABAIS camped for the afternoon and night. Patrol found a-came on a HOD with the mark “Cholera Ground”.

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup>

Advanced on BIR EL ABD encountered Turks near the South West in force, we were Advance Guard and endeavoured to drive his posts in. This we did and found him in a very strong position. Lieutenant Johnston killed about 1130. Martin W [surname not written] about 1030. Very heavy fighting all day.

In charge of right flank and retirement of same. [I] got the wounded out – 5 in one cart. [We] got clear about 1900. Bivouacked at OGH RATINA .

Our battery fired 700 rounds – Turks fired 3 to 1 with marvelous rapidity.

3<sup>rd</sup> B[rigade] on R [Right] but did not get in touch. 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Bde [Brigade] on left. 5<sup>th</sup> Bde in reserve.

9 K 21 W 2 M [9 killed, 21 wounded, 2 missing].

Thursday 10<sup>th</sup>

Left OGH 0630 for DE BABIS. Our Advance Guard gained touch with the Turk.

Sent patrols out who reported Turks leaving BIR el ABD in large numbers.

Turk still holding ABD preventing us burying our dead.



One patrol found Arabs stripping the dead and shot them.  
Retired by CMR who put out a line of outposts. Unable to do anything with our dead.

Friday 11<sup>th</sup>

Early a Taube got within 20 yards of one of our planes, wounding pilot and observer – the latter died at 1400.

I went out and found the plane but two Light Horsemen had been [before me] and found one of the men..

We remained in touch with the enemy all day.. They fired on and shelled our patrols out looking for the dead.

Caught two goats, so we will have fresh meat tomorrow. Returned to De BABIS.

Saturday 12<sup>th</sup>

About 0800 Fritz visited us, dropped three bombs. One taking effect – 3 Killed, 6 wounded. One killed [was] ours [11<sup>th</sup> or AMR?].

I went out with party under Lieutenant Reid to bury our dead – we found 11. This accounts for all ours, we buried them at about 1 mile South-West of Bir el ABD.

We advanced and occupied the high ground East of ABD. CMR reaching to South of el NANA . Fritz flew over us no bombs – our planes bombed the enemy.

We bivouacked at DE BABIS. Left the 5<sup>th</sup> Light Horse to hold ABD.

Colonel Mackesy Officer Commanding Brigade.

[Myself] Temporary Officer Commanding Regiment.

Sunday 13<sup>th</sup>

Remained in Bivouac and under orders to retire to OGH RATINA. Fritz visited us no bombs.

Got orders to relieve the 5<sup>th</sup> Light Horse at Bir el ABD – put out outposts for the night by 3<sup>rd</sup> Squadron.

Turks left message that Cholera was about – issued orders accordingly.

Fritz flew over us late in the evening.

Monday 14<sup>th</sup>

No sign of enemy through the night, sent out five patrols, got one prisoner. Flies very bad, ground very foul. Evidence of considerable casualties.

Fritz flew over. Shifted camp onto clean ground.

11<sup>th</sup> Squadron found patrols. 4<sup>th</sup> Squadron went and Bivouacked at HISHA. 11<sup>th</sup> to BADA. 3<sup>rd</sup> remained with RHA [Royal Horse Artillery] at Bir EL ABD.

Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup>

Sent patrols out 5 miles East – all clear. Visit from Fritz.

The flies very bad.

Each squadron sent patrols 5 miles East, rested 4<sup>th</sup> at Camp.

Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup>

Patrols out as usual, no sign of enemy.

Visited 11<sup>th</sup> Camp which is very good, beautiful palms.

Heard Dale – Taylor Died of Wounds.

Thursday 17<sup>th</sup>

Each Squadron sent out patrols. Visited 4<sup>th</sup> in Camp. Sanitary Officer visited us.

Friday 18<sup>th</sup>

~~Fritz flew over this morning, dropped bombs West of us.~~

Visited 11<sup>th</sup> in Camp, Visited Brigade H.Q. reported Camel patrol at GANADIL. 5<sup>th</sup> Light Horse went through 0320

Saturday 19<sup>th</sup>

Fritz flew over us dropped bombs West of us. Came back over us but did no harm. 5<sup>th</sup> Light Horse collected 65 prisoners in a famished condition. They had to be brought in on camels, carts and horses.

Sunday 20<sup>th</sup>

CMR arrived 0630 to relieve us, they took over and we retired to a small Hod North of AMARA. Clean ground but millions of flies came with us.

Voluntary service to night – strange sight to see a few gathered in such surroundings.

Monday 21<sup>st</sup>

Duty Regiment. Sent out two Officers patrols North to find a suitable road to [the] coast. Reported acres of Water Melons and suitable road.

Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup>

Duties in Bivouac.

Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup>

Duties in Bivouac. Weather not so hot.

Thursday 24<sup>th</sup>

Usual duties in Bivouac.

Friday 25<sup>th</sup>

Went with Brigade to reconnoiter EL GLASS found good road, acres of Water-melons. No sign of enemy.

One of our planes landed near EL GLASS and opened fire on Lieutenant Manners on his approach.

Saturday 26<sup>th</sup>

56 reinforcements, old men came up 63 horses.

Major Cameron at Dinner.

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup>

Fritz and his brother visited us, dropped 3 bombs no result.

Voluntary [Church] Service at 5.30. P M [afternoon service] postponed owing to delay watering horses – held at 7.30 good attendance.

Monday 28<sup>th</sup>

Resting in Bivouac.

Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup>

Resting in Bivouac HOD AMARA. Major Schofield went to hospital.

Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup>

Paid Bigg – W 300 P T.

200 on loan.

Major Munro went to hospital.

Thursday 31<sup>st</sup>

General Chauvel inspected us this evening.

Lieutenant Carr went to hospital.

**SEPTEMBER**, Friday 1<sup>st</sup>

Four Fritz planes flew over us this morning.

Major Whitehorn went to hospital.

Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup>

~~Voluntary service at night.~~ [note: this entry proves that James did not make entries every day but sometimes made entries at one time covering more than one day – as he enters here references to a Church Parade that obviously followed on the next diary page.]

Outpost Duties.

Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup>

Fritz and brother visited us this morn.

Voluntary service to night.

.

Monday 4<sup>th</sup>

Resting in Bivouac HOD AMARA.

Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup>

Duties about Bivouac.

Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup>

Duties about Bivouac.

Thursday 7<sup>th</sup>

Went over to Ambulance to see Jack H but found he had been evacuated.

Air planes bombed Mazar.

Friday 8<sup>th</sup>

Went with the Colonel to HOD el METIANA saw some ruins and Turkish positions.

Saturday 9<sup>th</sup>

Duties about Bivouac.

Sunday 10<sup>th</sup>

About Bivouac. Voluntary Service tonight.

Monday 11<sup>th</sup>

Left HOD AMARA for BIRETNALER camped same place.

Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup>

Fixing Camp up. Shifted horses out of HOD.

Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup>

In Camp. P V O visited here.

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup>

Duties about Camp. Promoted to Temporary rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

Friday 15<sup>th</sup>

Major Bennet and Lieutenants Averill, Wade, Cheesman arrived tonight in Camp. Visited Roman Battlefield.

Saturday 16<sup>th</sup>

Over Roman Battlefield. Duties about Camp. Leave begins. Lent J.R.H. £4

Sunday 17<sup>th</sup>

Church parade.

Monday 18<sup>th</sup>

Patrolling and duties about Camp. Leave begins.

Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup>

About Camp.

Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup>

On board of enquiry of water supply to 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade. Regiment left for Alex-

Thursday 21<sup>st</sup>

On board of Inquiry re; shortage of water. Mazar.

Friday 22<sup>nd</sup>

Finished board of inquiry.

Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup>

Left 10-20 train for Romani for Cairo – country looks fine.

Sunday 24<sup>th</sup>

In Cairo visiting the hospitals. [unknown word] from Canteen account £7-10-0 for payment for Dale Taylor.

Monday 25<sup>th</sup>

Went to ALEX 9-30. Went to SIDI BISHR.

Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup>

About hospitals in Alex.

Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup>

Left Alex 4 PM for Cairo.

Thursday 28<sup>th</sup>  
In Cairo.

Friday 29<sup>th</sup>  
In Cairo.

Saturday 30<sup>th</sup>  
Returned to Camp.

**OCTOBER**, Sunday 1<sup>st</sup>  
At BIR ET MALER.

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup>  
In Camp Bir et Maler.

Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup>  
In Camp Bir et Maler.

Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup>  
In Camp Bir et Maler.

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup>  
In Camp.

Friday 6<sup>th</sup>  
In Camp. Rest party returned from SIDI BISHR.

Saturday 7<sup>th</sup>  
About Camp.

Sunday 8<sup>th</sup>  
In Camp. Rest party returned.

Monday 9<sup>th</sup>  
About Camp. Colonel and I visited Pelusium ruins saw old fort in good state of preservation.

Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup>  
About Camp.

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup>  
About Camp. Mobilization parade.

Thursday 12<sup>th</sup>  
Bir et Maler. Parade of Regiment to test new men.

Friday 13<sup>th</sup>  
About Camp. Map reading etc.

Saturday 14<sup>th</sup>

General E. Chaytor returned. Map reading.

Sunday 15<sup>th</sup>

Voluntary Service.

Monday 16<sup>th</sup>

Light work for horses. Mobilization parade for new men's benefit.

Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup>

Light training.

Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup>

Light training. Majors Munro and Whitehorn, lieutenant Carr went to M.board.

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup>

Training about Camp.

Friday 20<sup>th</sup>

Training about Camp.

Saturday 21<sup>st</sup>

About Camp. Majors Munro and Whitehorn returned. Carr remained behind.

Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup>

Camp Bir el Maler.

Monday 23<sup>rd</sup>

Left for Ganadil, bivouacked at ABD. Munro left for Training Regiment. Hemphill left for Camel Corps.

Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup>

Left Bir el ABD. Arrived Ganadil 0915.

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup>

Patrolled KASSEIBA 157- MOSEI FIG GANADIL.

Thursday 26<sup>th</sup>

Ay Ganadil. Patrols sent out.

Friday 27<sup>th</sup>

Left GANADIL 0800 arrived KASSEIBA 1230. No water good HOD. Field troops did not arrive.

Saturday 28<sup>th</sup>

Field troops 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Light Horse got wells down. Watered horses 0230. Sent patrols out East South and North.

Sunday 29<sup>th</sup>

Getting water arrangements completed. Patrol to ARNUSSI covering advance of WMR. Brought in 42 Bedouins.

Monday 30<sup>th</sup>

At Kasseiba. Patrols brought in Bedouins and camels.

Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup>

Patrols to ZOABADIA finding water.

**NOVEMBER**, Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup>

Patrols East, South and South East – all clear.

Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup>

Special patrol to ABU LIBD very good work by patrol.

Friday 3<sup>rd</sup>

Patrols five miles radius.

Saturday 4<sup>th</sup>

Usual patrols. Special for water South.

Sunday 5<sup>th</sup>

Usual patrols. Special for water South.

Monday 6<sup>th</sup>

Visit from Fritz who fired on us using copper bullets.

Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup>

Patrols all out.

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup>

Patrols all out.

Thursday 9<sup>th</sup>

Mail arrived. Patrolling.

Friday 10<sup>th</sup>

Patrolling all round.

Saturday 11<sup>th</sup>

Big lot of our planes (12) flew over. Paid J.T. a visit, heard he bombed El Saba. Fritz paid us a visit.

Sunday 12<sup>th</sup>

Very good day. Very light duties.

Monday 13<sup>th</sup>

Moved to EL MAZAR arrived 1130. Bivouacked. I arrived at Brigade H.Q. at CMR. Took over portion of [Pline.?)

Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup>

Sent out patrols and outposts.

Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup>

Went on reconnaissance North. Found ancient ruins EL KHUINAT no good. EL FLUSIAT very good. What seems to have been a Monastery with [James draws here a small Maltese cross similar proportion to German Iron cross.] cut in stones. Ruins of Church, signs of Christian origin in many pillars about 100 feet by 50 feet.

Thursday 16<sup>th</sup>

About Camp. Found escort for General Doubell.

Friday 17<sup>th</sup>

Patrols and outposts.

Saturday 18<sup>th</sup>

Patrols and outposts.

Sunday 19<sup>th</sup>

Church Parade this morning 1000. Quiet day.

Monday 20<sup>th</sup>

Ordinary duties. Three big explosions East last night 1840 –2330 and early morning.

Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup>

Patrols and duties near Camp.

Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup>

Patrols out.

Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup>

Rifle found near ABULIBD, French No. A.C.97978  
MEE 1874. Sent to Brigade H.Q.

Friday 24<sup>th</sup>

Big force arrived Mazar.

Saturday 25<sup>th</sup>

Moved East. Turkish patrols near (report).

Monday 27<sup>th</sup>

Special patrol to Bir EL MASMI. Captain Finlayson and Lieutenant Johnson 8 men.

Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup>

Patrol returned successfully. Went to Mazar.

Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup>

Patrols about camp and North and East.



Thursday 30<sup>th</sup>

Fritz visited us today, chased by our planes and Archibald [anti-aircraft fire = AA].  
Special patrol East.

**DECEMBER** Friday 1st

Usual patrols.

Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup>

Usual patrols.

Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup>

Fitz paid us a visit coming from the West. Bombed Mazar, fired on by our AA,  
chased by our machines and brought down.  
Special escort to C in C. [Commander in Chief].

Monday 4<sup>th</sup>

Usual patrols. Staff ride with Signal section.

Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup>

Fritz came from the East but kept off by our AA. Usual patrols.

Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup>

Usual patrols. Sent home £100. Sent Mary £10. Sent Aunt N. £5 = £115

Thursday 7<sup>th</sup>

Usual patrols and outposts.

Friday 8<sup>th</sup>

Patrols and outposts.

Saturday 9<sup>th</sup>

Sent patrols North. Forgot J.T. for post cards.

Sunday 10<sup>th</sup>

Resting. Voluntary Service.

Monday 11<sup>th</sup>

Exercising 2 hours per day. Horses very fit.

Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup>

Usual patrols and outposts.

Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup>

Usual patrols and outposts.

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup>

Took Regiment to Giverat and on return was bombed by Fritz – no damage.

Friday 15<sup>th</sup>

Lieutenant General Chetwood visited our lines.

Saturday 16<sup>th</sup>

Fritz came to see us.

Sunday 17<sup>th</sup>

Fritz visited us.

Monday 18<sup>th</sup>

Duties about Camp.

Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup>

Usual Duties about bivouac. Colonel Mackesy returned to Regiment. Fritz bombed Camp, one casualty.

Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup>

Left Mustagida trekked for NZ Valley to Bivouac for a few days. Orders altered and proceeded by night march to BIR EL MASMI. Resumed rank of Major.

Thursday 21<sup>st</sup>

Arrived EL ARISH clean place, about 1000 inhabitants – No Turks.

Friday 22<sup>nd</sup>

Left BIR EL MASMI at 1800 for wadi EL ARISH, drew our rations there and left for MAGDABAH night march.

Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup>

Arrived at Dawn at 3 miles North West of Magdabah. Formed in four columns and advanced and came in contact about 8 AM. AMR in reserve, had a fine view of the fight. Seeing all the troops advance. The enemy surrendered at 4 PM about. Bivouacked at Magdabah.

Sunday 24<sup>th</sup>

Cleaning up battle field. Buried 72 Turks dead, Aus 1. [Aus could represent Australian or Austrian?], CMR 1.

Collected 365 rifles, [plus] ammunition. Guns 4, Buggies 1, Carts 2.

Left at 1445 for MASMI got lost at 2100.

Monday 25<sup>th</sup>

Lost on Xmas morn at dawn reconnoitered and found direction. Arrived Bivouac 0830 Bir EL Masmi.

Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup>

About Bivouac.

Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup>

Left for EL ARISH beach camp.

Thursday 28<sup>th</sup>

Rest Camp EL ARISH.

Friday 29<sup>th</sup>

Rest Camp EL ARISH. Sir Chetwood visited and addressed us, complementing us on our work. He said “It was the first time in History that Mounted Troops had reconnoitered, attacked assaulted and carried a position” and he was proud to command such a force.

Saturday 30<sup>th</sup>

Very stormy. Mine Sweeper came ashore. Some tried to swim out with a rope, eventually they came ashore on the wreckage.

Sunday 31<sup>st</sup>

About Camp.

This ends James McCarroll’s 1916 personal pocket Diary. The only other entries are pay and expenses notes in the last few pages allowed for by the Diary printers. James continues to keep Diary accounts until the end of the war, these accounts are able to be viewed at <http://www.nzmr.org>



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