

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 1st

Went out training for half a day.

Sunday 2nd

Short service. Troop training from 1000

Monday 3rd

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

Tuesday 4th

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 5th

Troop training etc.

Thursday 6th

Troop training home via Eskander Shakri and plantation.

Friday 7th

Troop training. Bleak cold weather.

Saturday 8th

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 9th

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

Monday 11th

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

Tuesday 11th

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

Wednesday 12th

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

Thursday 13th

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

Friday 14th

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 15th

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

Sunday 16th

Church Parade. Went to Cairo with R. Williams.

Monday 17th

Mobilization and inspection. Colonel Rhodes present.

Tuesday 18th

Went out towards number three tower. Training.

Wednesday 19th

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

Thursday 20th

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

Friday 21st

Half day training. Packing up.

Saturday 22nd

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

Sunday 23rd

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 24th

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 25th

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

Wednesday 26th

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 27th

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 28th

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 29th

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 30th

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

Monday 31st

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

FEBRUARY, Tuesday 1st

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 2nd

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

Thursday 3rd

Duty Regiment today. Training near Camp. Weather splendid.

Friday 4th

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

Saturday 5th

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 6th

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

Monday 7th

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

Tuesday 8th

Training in South area. 9th Reinforcements went past here.

Wednesday 9th

Training in the morning – regimental attack.

Thursday 10th

Training and information etc. Australian troops passed through.

Friday 11th

Duty today – about Camp exercising horses.

Saturday 12th

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

Sunday 13th

Church Parade. Hot today- in Camp all day.

Monday 14th

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

Tuesday 15th

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 16th

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

Thursday 17th

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 18th

Attack practice of Regiment.

Saturday 19th

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

Sunday 20th

Church Service.

Monday 21st

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 17th Battalion A.I.F.

Tuesday 22nd

Training.

Wednesday 23rd

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

Thursday 24th

Training North. ALH arriving. Camel Corp passed.

Friday 25th

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

Saturday 26th

Duty Regiment today. 3RD Squadron went on patrol. Front trenches.

Sunday 27th

Church Parade. 4th Squadron went on patrol with 3rd.

Monday 28th

Squadron work for 11th Squadron. Colonel Mackesy returned. Light Horse arriving.

Tuesday 29th

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

MARCH, Wednesday 1st

Left for Cairo on duty.

Thursday 2nd

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

Friday 3rd

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 4th

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

Sunday 5th

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 6th

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

Tuesday 7th

Sent patrols out from each Squadron.

Wednesday 8th

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

Thursday 9th

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

Friday 10th

Patrols sent out from each Squadron.

Saturday 11th

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

Sunday 12th

Three Church Services owing to Regiment being scattered.

Monday 13th

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

Tuesday 14th

General Russell inspecting trenches. Digging trenches etc.

Wednesday 15th

Rebuilding trenches – inspecting wire entanglements.

Thursday 16th

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

Friday 17th

Hard at trenches and wire.

Saturday 18th

Trenching and entanglements wire along our whole front.

Sunday 19th

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

Monday 20th

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

Tuesday 21st

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

Wednesday 22nd

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

Thursday 23rd

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

Friday 24th

Started to do some training and shooting.

Saturday 25th

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

Sunday 26th

Three services today. Resting.

Monday 27th

Started Musketry all round. Water service temporarily stopped.

Tuesday 28th

Musketry. Visited CMR.

Wednesday 29th

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

Thursday 30th

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

Friday 31st

Orders to move. Received by 31st and 32nd 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 2nd

Brigade Church Service. Men enjoyed a swim.

Monday 3rd

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

Tuesday 4th

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

Wednesday 5th

Light work. Orders for move somewhere.

Thursday 6th

Left Serapeum and bivouacked at Moascar.

Friday 7th

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

Saturday 8th

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

Sunday 9th

Church Service by Chaplain Gregg of CMR.

Monday 10th

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

Tuesday 11th

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

Wednesday 12th

Light training – not using our horses much.

Thursday 13th

Light training.

Friday 14th

Dismounted work.

Saturday 15th

Lent Bigg-W £2. Cleaning up generally.

Sunday 16th

Service by ourselves. Band went to H.Q.

Monday 17th

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

Tuesday 18th

Training as usual. Colonel came back last night.

Wednesday 19th

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

Thursday 20th

Training.

Friday 21st Good Friday

Church Services. Musketry in the afternoon.

Saturday 22nd

Training mounted.

Sunday 23rd 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 24th

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

Tuesday 25th

At Hill 70 – pitched camp. War matters quiet.

Wednesday 26th

Fixing up our camp – one regiment gone forward.

Thursday 27th

Went to Kantara – some excellent canteens.

Friday 28th

About camp all day.

Saturday 29th

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

Sunday 30th

Church Parade – attended voluntary service tonight.

MAY, Monday 1st

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

Tuesday 2nd

About lines cleaning up.

Wednesday 3rd

Weather hot, Colonel went North in search of ruins.

Thursday 4th

About Camp all day.

Friday 5th

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

Saturday 6th

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

Sunday 7th

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

Monday 8th

Left Bivouac and returned to Hill 70.

Tuesday 9th

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

Wednesday 10th

About Camp cleaning up.

Thursday 11th

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

Friday 12th

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 13th

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

Sunday 14th

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 15th

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

Tuesday 16th

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

Wednesday 17th

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

Thursday 18th

WMR returned 1730. We were on outpost today.

Friday 19th

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

Saturday 20th

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

Sunday 21st

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

Monday 22nd

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

Tuesday 23rd

Returned home via Katia.

Wednesday 24th

Resting in Camp. Colonel went to Cairo.

Thursday 25th

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

Friday 26th

Bathing and washing, overhauling gear.

Saturday 27th

Cleaning up gear. Aeroplane dropped message.

Sunday 28th

Services.

Monday 29th

Left on reconnaissance at 10 pm.

Tuesday 30th

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

Wednesday 31st

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

JUNE, Thursday 1st

Aeroplane raid on Romani. General Chaytor went to hospital.

Friday 2nd

Sent 3 troops well digging at Oghratina.

Saturday 3rd

Resting in Camp.

Sunday 4th

Outpost and patrolling.

Monday 5th

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

Tuesday 6th

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

Wednesday 7th

Left for Port Said, arrived 11.20 pm.

Thursday 8th

At Port Said, saw General Chaytor.

Friday 9th

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

Saturday 10th

Port Said. Sent parcels to Janie Mary and Bruce.

Sunday 11th

Returned Kantara.

Monday 12th

Arrived in camp 11.30 am.

Tuesday 13th

Regiment resting in Camp.

Wednesday 14th

Duty Regiment and outpost duty.

Thursday 15th

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

Friday 16th

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

Saturday 17th

Resting in Camp.

Sunday 18th

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

Monday 19th
Resting in Camp.

Tuesday 20th
Outposts. WMR went with ALH.

Wednesday 21st
Resting in Camp.

Thursday 22nd
Nothing doing. Outposts. WMR returned.

Friday 23rd
Outposts. CMR left for Hill 70.

Saturday 24th
ALH arriving. Left Bir et Maler 10 pm.

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

Monday 26th
Pitching Camp on new ground. Colonel Mackesy went to Cairo.

Tuesday 27th
Cleaning up old camp. Building stables.

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

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

Friday 30th
In rest camp.

JULY, Saturday 1st.
In rest camp.

Sunday 2nd
Resting.

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

Tuesday 4th
In camp. Sent Sergeant Evans away on leave.

Wednesday 5th

In Camp (rest). Brigadier returned.

Thursday 6th

In rest camp.

Friday 7th

3rd returned and 4th went to KANTARA.

Saturday 8th

11th troop returned. Mail in.

Sunday 9th

Service 8.45.

Monday 10th

Rest Camp.

Tuesday 11th

Rest Camp

Wednesday 12th

In Rest Camp.

Thursday 13th

Rest Camp. Jack Hueston arrived in camp.

Friday 14th

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

Saturday 15th

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

Sunday 16th

In Camp.

Monday 17th

In rest camp.

Tuesday 18th

In rest camp.

Wednesday 19th

General Chaytor went out on aeroplane located several Turks.

Thursday 20th

News of Turks approaching. Engaged by 6th Light Horse. Estimated 2,000.

Friday 21st

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

Saturday 22nd

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 23rd

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

Monday 24th

Situation unchanged. Still awaiting developments.

Tuesday 25th

Fritz flew over us this morning.

Wednesday 26th

Situation slightly changed.

Thursday 27th

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

Friday 28th

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

Saturday 29th

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

Sunday 30th

Very quiet all morning. Considerable activity towards evening.

Monday 31st

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 1st

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

Wednesday 2nd

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

Thursday 3rd

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

Friday 4th

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 5th

Left 0500 for Bir el Nuss. Found 3rd Brigade there. Left at 1200 in force. 3rd Brigade South East and our Brigade East and attacked QATIA from the South. 5th 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 6th

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 52nd?] Brigade.

Monday 7th

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 8th

Left 0430. 5th 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 9th

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.

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

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

Thursday 10th

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 11th

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 12th

About 0800 Fritz visited us, dropped three bombs. One taking effect – 3 Killed, 6 wounded. One killed [was] ours [11th 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 5th Light Horse to hold ABD.

Colonel Mackesy Officer Commanding Brigade.

[Myself] Temporary Officer Commanding Regiment.

Sunday 13th

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

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

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

Fritz flew over us late in the evening.

Monday 14th

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.

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

Tuesday 15th

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

The flies very bad.

Each squadron sent patrols 5 miles East, rested 4th at Camp.

Wednesday 16th

Patrols out as usual, no sign of enemy.

Visited 11th Camp which is very good, beautiful palms.

Heard Dale – Taylor Died of Wounds.

Thursday 17th

Each Squadron sent out patrols. Visited 4th in Camp. Sanitary Officer visited us.

Friday 18th

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

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

Saturday 19th

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

Sunday 20th

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 21st

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 22nd

Duties in Bivouac.

Wednesday 23rd

Duties in Bivouac. Weather not so hot.

Thursday 24th

Usual duties in Bivouac.

Friday 25th

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 26th

56 reinforcements, old men came up 63 horses.

Major Cameron at Dinner.

Sunday 27th

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 28th

Resting in Bivouac.

Tuesday 29th

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

Wednesday 30th

Paid Bigg – W 300 P T.

200 on loan.

Major Munro went to hospital.

Thursday 31st

General Chauvel inspected us this evening.

Lieutenant Carr went to hospital.

SEPTEMBER, Friday 1st

Four Fritz planes flew over us this morning.

Major Whitehorn went to hospital.

Saturday 2nd

~~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 3rd

Fritz and brother visited us this morn.

Voluntary service to night.

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Monday 4th

Resting in Bivouac HOD AMARA.

Tuesday 5th

Duties about Bivouac.

Wednesday 6th

Duties about Bivouac.

Thursday 7th

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

Air planes bombed Mazar.

Friday 8th

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

Saturday 9th

Duties about Bivouac.

Sunday 10th

About Bivouac. Voluntary Service tonight.

Monday 11th

Left HOD AMARA for BIRETNALER camped same place.

Tuesday 12th

Fixing Camp up. Shifted horses out of HOD.

Wednesday 13th

In Camp. P V O visited here.

Thursday 14th

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

Friday 15th

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

Saturday 16th

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

Sunday 17th

Church parade.

Monday 18th

Patrolling and duties about Camp. Leave begins.

Tuesday 19th

About Camp.

Wednesday 20th

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

Thursday 21st

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

Friday 22nd

Finished board of inquiry.

Saturday 23rd

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

Sunday 24th

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

Monday 25th

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

Tuesday 26th

About hospitals in Alex.

Wednesday 27th

Left Alex 4 PM for Cairo.

Thursday 28th
In Cairo.

Friday 29th
In Cairo.

Saturday 30th
Returned to Camp.

OCTOBER, Sunday 1st
At BIR ET MALER.

Monday 2nd
In Camp Bir et Maler.

Tuesday 3rd
In Camp Bir et Maler.

Wednesday 4th
In Camp Bir et Maler.

Thursday 5th
In Camp.

Friday 6th
In Camp. Rest party returned from SIDI BISHR.

Saturday 7th
About Camp.

Sunday 8th
In Camp. Rest party returned.

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

Tuesday 10th
About Camp.

Wednesday 11th
About Camp. Mobilization parade.

Thursday 12th
Bir et Maler. Parade of Regiment to test new men.

Friday 13th
About Camp. Map reading etc.

Saturday 14th

General E. Chaytor returned. Map reading.

Sunday 15th

Voluntary Service.

Monday 16th

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

Tuesday 17th

Light training.

Wednesday 18th

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

Thursday 19th

Training about Camp.

Friday 20th

Training about Camp.

Saturday 21st

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

Sunday 22nd

Camp Bir el Maler.

Monday 23rd

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

Tuesday 24th

Left Bir el ABD. Arrived Ganadil 0915.

Wednesday 25th

Patrolled KASSEIBA 157- MOSEI FIG GANADIL.

Thursday 26th

Ay Ganadil. Patrols sent out.

Friday 27th

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

Saturday 28th

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

Sunday 29th

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

Monday 30th

At Kasseiba. Patrols brought in Bedouins and camels.

Tuesday 31st

Patrols to ZOABADIA finding water.

NOVEMBER, Wednesday 1st

Patrols East, South and South East – all clear.

Thursday 2nd

Special patrol to ABU LIBD very good work by patrol.

Friday 3rd

Patrols five miles radius.

Saturday 4th

Usual patrols. Special for water South.

Sunday 5th

Usual patrols. Special for water South.

Monday 6th

Visit from Fritz who fired on us using copper bullets.

Tuesday 7th

Patrols all out.

Wednesday 8th

Patrols all out.

Thursday 9th

Mail arrived. Patrolling.

Friday 10th

Patrolling all round.

Saturday 11th

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

Sunday 12th

Very good day. Very light duties.

Monday 13th

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

Tuesday 14th
Sent out patrols and outposts.

Wednesday 15th
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 16th
About Camp. Found escort for General Doubell.

Friday 17th
Patrols and outposts.

Saturday 18th
Patrols and outposts.

Sunday 19th
Church Parade this morning 1000. Quiet day.

Monday 20th
Ordinary duties. Three big explosions East last night 1840 –2330 and early morning.

Tuesday 21st
Patrols and duties near Camp.

Wednesday 22nd
Patrols out.

Thursday 23rd
Rifle found near ABULIBD, French No. A.C.97978
MEE 1874. Sent to Brigade H.Q.

Friday 24th
Big force arrived Mazar.

Saturday 25th
Moved East. Turkish patrols near (report).

Monday 27th
Special patrol to Bir EL MASMI. Captain Finlayson and Lieutenant Johnson 8 men.

Tuesday 28th
Patrol returned successfully. Went to Mazar.

Wednesday 29th
Patrols about camp and North and East.

Thursday 30th

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

DECEMBER Friday 1st

Usual patrols.

Saturday 2nd

Usual patrols.

Sunday 3rd

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 4th

Usual patrols. Staff ride with Signal section.

Tuesday 5th

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

Wednesday 6th

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

Thursday 7th

Usual patrols and outposts.

Friday 8th

Patrols and outposts.

Saturday 9th

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

Sunday 10th

Resting. Voluntary Service.

Monday 11th

Exercising 2 hours per day. Horses very fit.

Tuesday 12th

Usual patrols and outposts.

Wednesday 13th

Usual patrols and outposts.

Thursday 14th

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

Friday 15th

Lieutenant General Chetwood visited our lines.

Saturday 16th

Fritz came to see us.

Sunday 17th

Fritz visited us.

Monday 18th

Duties about Camp.

Tuesday 19th

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

Wednesday 20th

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 21st

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

Friday 22nd

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

Saturday 23rd

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 24th

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 25th

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

Tuesday 26th

About Bivouac.

Wednesday 27th

Left for EL ARISH beach camp.

Thursday 28th

Rest Camp EL ARISH.

Friday 29th

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 30th

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

Sunday 31st

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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