

"A " SQUADRON DIARY

THE "A" SQUADRON DIARY OFFICIAL WAR HISTORY OF THE 6 DIVISION CAVALRY REGIMENT

FROM 3 NOVEMBER 1939 - 31 JANUARY 1942.

Some years ago, whilst visiting the late Tom Mills in Queensland, he presented me with a relic of our wartime days together in the AIF. This was in the form of the old "A" Squadron Diary, which Tom thought I as editor of "Cav News" could perhaps put to good use. The diary is old and battered but still quite legible, so I intend to print certain portions of it in this and future issues of this paper, as I feel that many will find these old pages of interest.Fred Wilkins

The Diary is headed thus: Until the time of embarkation it seemed necessary to treat this diary as a Regimental Diary owing to the transfer and exchange of personnel that was taking place from time to time in the various squadrons and units. No detailed diary was kept when the Regiment was first formed. The entries in the early part of the diary were obtained from whatever source available. On embarkation the Squadron was for the first time detached from the Regiment. The various troops and crews had been established and from this time onwards the diary deals solely with "A" Squadron.

3 November 1939 Ingleburn At 10.30 hrs 45 enlistments marched into camp at Ingleburn, in charge of Sgt EC hennessy, late Light Horse Regiment, and formerly RSM of Australian Coronation Contingent. During the day an additional 49 Recruits marched in. Captain D Macarthur-Onslow marched into camp with the position of Administrative command New South Wales Details Reconnaissance Regiment, Lieut, FH Brown, Lieut FJ Mullally, Lieut J Dent marched in. Camp conditions - Supply of rations and clothing inadequate.

4 November 1939, Ingleburn After a night disturbed for many by the rain beating in through the windows of the huts, which were then unfinished, the day was commenced with Squad Drill at 1330 hrs. Medical parade was held. The MO commented favourably on the physique of the men. 12 troopers from 2/3 Btn and 14 from the 16 MG Regt marched in.

7 November, 1939 Lieut T Mills from 12 Light Horse marched in. First hospital case occurred when Trooper DF Shepherd was admitted to the Prince of Wales Hospital, Randwick, suffering from Influenza. There were many cases of a milder degree in the same camp, and the facilities for dealing with such cases were quite inadequate, there being no MO or RAP. The first elementary vehicle fighting drill (dismounted) commenced.

9 November, 1939 Captain JE Abbott, late 16 LHM Regiment marched in. 24 troopers marched in. Lieut. TP Willsallen marched in.

10 November, 1939 Training continued. AFV drill and signals mounted. First days pay was made today. 150.4.6d was distributed amongst 107 men. Many men were not included in the pay roll because they had not been issued with pay books. These men arrived from the country with no attestation forms, no pay identification forms and no medical history sheet. It would appear that the country recruiting centres did not know what forms were required.

13 November, 1939 The CO Lt-Col Fergusson inspected and addressed the morning parade. The Regts first delivery of technical equipment arrived. All the equipment was new and consisted of 5 Hotchkiss MG's, 50 rifles and 50 pistols.

14th November, 1939, Ingleburn Lt-Col Fergusson inspected and addressed the morning parade and during the day interviewed candidates for NCO rank. Lieut. Phillips addressed the men and explained the signalling method that would be used by the Regiment.

15 November, 1939 First route march was carried out this morning, when Capt. Abbott led the NSW detail through the surrounding district. Hotchkiss guns were used for the first time, for instructional purposes. Although the guns were new two were found to be out of order and had to be returned for repairs.

21 November, 1939 To allow for organised Crew Drill personnel were arranged on a new footing H.Q. and "A" Sqn.

22 November, 1939 Lieut. C.H. Finlay and Lieut. Phillips marched in from the Southern command with their 19 troopers. 6 troopers from 2/2 Btn marched in. 16 troopers from Southern command are specialist operators.

23 Nov, 1939 Lieut. Phillips took the first P.T. parade this morning. During the day the entire camp was inspected by Lt. Gen. Sir Thomas Blamey and the Reconnaissance Regiment led the march past.

24 November, 1939 The South Australian Contingent consisting of 3 officers and 63 OR's arrived at 0930 hrs. These men formed the nucleus of what became later "C" Sqn. They also caused considerable interest in as much as they possessed the new uniform, including the beret.

27 November, 1939 The Hotchkiss guns were used for the first time at Long Bay rifle range and the result of the shoot was very satisfactory. Lt. E.D. Mills and 12 OR's marched in from Tasmania and joined "C" Sqn. 6 Norton M/C's were delivered today. Lieut, Roberts I.O. marched in.

30 November, 1939 Specialist Operators were allotted to their Sqs and will in future train with them. Lieut. D.D. Glasgow and 36 OR's marched in from the Northern Command. These troops complete the personnel of "A" Sqn.

1 December 1939 A special squad proceeded to Sydney and took part in the march for the Lord Mayors appeal fund. True to the traditions of the AIF the march was of a very high standard and reflected great credit on the RSM and the men who participated in this march. First issue of Uniforms which were received with great pleasure amongst those who received them. The first issue from the Comforts fund consisting of sox, soap and towels.

3 December, 1939 General Leave.

9 December, 1939 General training in map reading, morse, Hotchkiss gun. During the afternoon a cricket match was played at Camden Park. It is a pleasure to note the increased friendliness between the Queenslanders and the NSW men, which was somewhat strained for the first few weeks.

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9 Jan 1940 Ingleburn Reveille 0430 hrs. Returned stores. Breakfast 0530. Marched to Ingleburn station at 0630 hrs to entrain at Pyrmont wharf for embarkation overseas. The remainder of the Regiment turned out to cheer the squadron, as we were the first to leave, and would be during the voyage detached from the remainder of the Regiment. During the train journey to Pyrmont the route was lined with people cheering and waving flags, and what with the shrieking of whistles, etc, our embarkment was not secret. Arrived Pyrmont 1000 hrs and embarked on transport U 2 (Orcades). The men were somewhat disappointed to find that their accomodation was improvised cabins in the aft hold, Deck H Hatch 6. This was soon named "The Propellor Suite". Our first meal was had on trip down the harbour, and was above usual military standard. Was to remain so for the whole voyage.

18 Jan 1940 U 2 at sea Morning spent in map reading

and Lewis gun instruction, but as land was expected to be seen at any time the horizon was being closely watched. Rottneest Island sighted at 1300 hrs. Afternoon spent watching Freemantle come into view. We berthed at 1900 hrs, and general leave was granted till midnight, greatly appreciated by the troops. 20 Jan 1940 U 2 at sea Cloudy morning. Tropical type clouds. Life boat drill is now regular as we are many miles away from land. A wet canteen is now functioning, and beer is sold at 2 1/2d per 1/2 pint. Many parties held. Each man allowed to draw one pound from his paybook. Clocks have been set back one hour, making us 3 hrs behind Eastern Standard Time. 31 Jan 1940 U 2 at Colombo Leave granted till 1600 hrs. Left ship 0900 hrs marched to the barracks and dismissed. Behaviour of troops excellent and there were no AWL's. 6 Feb 1940 U 2 at sea Arrived at El Kantara at 0230 hrs. Disembarkment commenced at once. The Ships Captain shook hands with every man as he left the ship. Breakfast was served by the NAAFI at El Kantara railway station where we entrained in goods trucks. After crossing the border from Egypt to Palestine the country changed from barren sand dunes to fertile black soil plains. Arrived at El Majdal, detrained 1400 hrs. Embussed and arrived Qastina at 1500 hrs. Tents were already erected. An issue of blankets, bedding, and bed boards was made to each man. Four blankets were issued and needed. A meal was served at 1600 hrs. 18 Feb 1940 Qastina First pay parade in Palestine. No leave has yet been granted. A football team is being formed. Sanitary conditions and showers are crude and unsatisfactory. 21 Feb 1940 Qastina Regt. Parade address by CO. Comment on behaviour of men in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Most of misbehaviour traced to men of this Regiment, and a stricter discipline would be enforced if this conduct did not cease. Later Capt Brown enlarged on the CO's address to the effect that most of the offenders were "A" Squadron men guilty of AWL, the closing of a hotel in Jerusalem, and the theft of a camera from a hawk. An issue of pistols, belts, holsters, cartridges, pouches was made today. HQA issued with rifles. 20 April 1940 Deir Suneid Elementary training Bren gun. Drivers maintenance. Afternoon off. Party went to Rehovot for sports meeting. Capl Palmer secured second place in 800 metre. Swim parade. 25 April 1940 Anzac Day Beersheba. Arrive at 0910 hrs. Marched into cemetery, and formed up around shrine. Service consisted hymns, last post, Reveille, 2 mins silence. Major Macarthur-Onslow placed a wreath on the shrine. Wreath made by troopers Bow, Bourne and Lean. 12 June 1940 Qastina Routine orders stated today that the name of the Regiment in future would be 6 Australian division Cavalry Regiment, instead of 6 Australian division Reconnaissance Regiment. Fine and warm. 1 July 1940 Qastina Standing orders by Lieutenant General Blamey were read. General training occupied the day. Major General I.C. Mackay CMG, SSO, VD, GOC 6 Aust Div visited the camp. 5 July 1940 Qastina Training on vickers gun. Drivers maintenance vehicles. Haifa raided by Italian planes. As some of our personnel were in Haifa that day, they were the first men in the Regiment to come under enemy fire. Fine and hot. Wind west. 22 July 1940 Qastina Reveille 0200 hrs. Left camp, arrive Al Faluja, onto Juseir. Dismounted and marched to Railway bridge on old Turkish railway. RAE demonstrated the demolition of a pylon of this bridge with 50 lb gelignite charge. Return camp 0700 hrs. Lieut. Hennessy transferred from HQ Sqn to "A" Sqn took up duties today. Fine, hot and muggy. 22 August 1940 Qastina An issue of colour patches made today. Brown, red, green, grey background. 6 Sept 1940 Helwan General maintenance, settling in. ARP trenches Arrival of new Universal carriers, Australian built. Fine and warm. Wind NW. 1 Oct 1940 Helwan Party of 16 personnel to Abbassia to take delivery of tanks. 2130 hrs rec 6 Light tanks Mk 11 1932 in very bad order. Trouble experienced in getting them back. 4 December 1940 Burgel Arab Div Area (Training) Reveille 0400 hrs. Start 0500 hrs. Move to ridge. Enemy movement observed. Enemy holding strong line. 0800. Lt Willsallen replaced Lt Mulally at 2 I/C, the later becoming a casualty. Lieut Willsallen becomes ACT O C "A" Sqn. 115 hrs. Conference prior to attack on enemy position. 1230 hrs attacked enemy position 7 minutes too soon. Attack failed 1230 hrs. Carrier troops led infantry attack successfully and took ridge. 1530 hrs. 1540 hrs Withdrew Regiment to Div Area. Cloudy and overcast. 19 Dec 1940 Amiriya Kit bags packed, sent to Alexandria kit store. Prepare to move. Christmas Day (celebrated early). Turkey, plum puddings etc. Cool, cloudy, wind west. 25 Dec 1940 Sidi Hanish Christmas Day. Day off. Bully beef stew and biscuits. Mail arrived. Overcast, cool, wind west. 29 Dec 1940 Matruh Sheet. 0800 hrs Start time. Moved west along main road SIDI BARANNI - SOLLUM to a point 15 miles west of SIDI BARANNI. Sqn lager for the night. Sgt Earl casualty... wounded by an Italian booby trap. 30 Dec 1940 Moved West to Hell Fire Pass, and then south west to an area SE of Fort Capuzzo. Settling in occupied the remainder of the day. Lieut T Mills returned to Matruh fortress for arms equipment, as at this time the squadrons equipment was as follows: 19 Carriers L.P. and British. 7 Morris CS8 15 cwt Trucks. 1 Ford 12 cwt. 2 Morris 30 cwt. 13 Bren LMG's. 4 Boys A/T Rifles, 54 .303 rifles. 47 .45 pistols. .303 Ammunition ample. .55 AP rounds. .455 Pistol 250 rounds. 16 No. 11 wireless sets. 3 Jan 1941 Main assembly area reached at 0645 hrs. The Sqn advanced east 2,500 yards east to the start line through heavy artillery fire from guns inside the perimeter. The advance was made behind the 2/3 Aust Inf Bn. The axis of advance was as follows:

- Left flank - No 3 Troop. No 2 Troop.
- Centre - HQF No 5 Troop
- Right flank - No 4 troop. No 1 troop. From post 45 on the Bardia sheet south the 2/1 Aust Inf Bn was on the left flank, and the 2/3 Aust Inf Bn was on the right flank. Up until this time the Sqn had one casualty, Tpr K Lewald, who was wounded by HE. The carrier was not put out of action, but did not rejoin the Sqn that day. The advance on the inside was continued through a heavy barrage. Hull down positions were occupied along the ridge North and South of Rd Junction.... Bardia south sheet. One carrier No 4 troop on the right flank had advanced 1000 yards forward of Rd Junction and came under direct fire from a medium battery. The first hit on the carrier killed Tpr GD Burns, injured Cpl W Walters, and set fire to the vehicle. Tpr C L McCarthy, who had left the carrier, went back and extricated GD Burns, and in doing so was injured by a second direct hit on the carrier. Whilst this arty was active on the right flank, 7 M13 tanks came in on the left flank, forcing this flank onto the axis of advance. These tanks were soon put out of action by No 1 Section 16 Anti-tank Coy, AIF, armed with Vickers Armstrong 2 pounders mounted on lorries.

4 Jan 1941 RV Post 45 Sqn under command 16 Aust Inf Bn Infantry attacked down the escarpment under covering fire

from some of the squadron MG's. During this time a recce was made from Trig 169 by Major D Macarthur-Onslow, Lieut EC Hennessy, and Cpl J N Rea of the area to be covered during the day. This position offered an excellent OP and troop leaders were given an opportunity to view the position as it stood at the time. Whilst advancing the Sqn came under Anti-tank and LMG fire from the hospital and the northside of the road. Here contact was made with the Infantry who were held up by MG fire. The Sqn led their advance on to the hospital and the ridge behind, which surrendered when the infantry reached the gun positions. Two carriers under Major D McArthur-Onslow and Sgt GM Mills became detached, and moved to the hospital, whilst the remainder of the Sqn advanced towards BARDIA. On the road the Sqn contacted three I tanks. The Sqn less no 2 troop, led by the 2 i/c entered the town under supporting and covering fire from the I tanks, and No 2 troop, and were thus the first AUSTRALIAN troops to enter BARDIA township. Numerous prisoners were taken, and the area in and around the town mopped up. An Italian general, and his staff were among the prisoners taken. The two detached carriers on leaving the hospital covered the area west of the town, and collected between 800 and 1000 prisoners, as well as the main supply point. The Sqn food and cigarette supply benefited greatly by the acquisition of these stores. On leaving Bardia town an enemy bomber dropped its load among the Sqn carriers, but without casualties. The casualties for the day were WO 2 Baldock RD and Trooper Osborne. DM, the latter man being injured by fragments of bullets ricocheting off the armour plate of the carrier. During the night enemy aircraft were active. 5 Jan 1941 Sqn under command of 19 Aust Inf Bde. 0930 hrs. Sqn moved forward with a unit of Anti tank J battery RHA under command this sqn. Moving east across the main BARDIA-CAPUZZO road to the coast, thus protecting the left flank of 2/11 Inf Bn. This protection necessitated the mopping up of MG posts. The silencing of the whole of the enemy defences was completed by 100 hrs. 15 enemy bombers dropped sticks of bombs along the line of defence, but without any casualties to the Sqn. Particular praise is to be given to Sgt VD McQuillan in the approaches and handling of his troop during this operation. Lieut T Mills action was also worthy of note as some of these posts were strong held and well defended. Casualties for the day - Nil. Assistance was lent the enemy wounded, and conveyance back to the ADS was provided for them. A British Morris truck was recaptured during the day, and retained by the Sqn. The return to the RV at post 45 was made by 1700 hrs, and maintenance to vehicles and guns was carried out. The weather throughout the battle was clear and cool, nights cold. The fearless untiring work of the OC Major D Macarthur-Onslow was admired by all. At a later date it was found that the awards for the Sqn were listed as follows:

- Major D Macarthur-Onslow - DSO
- Lieut T Mills - MC
- Lieut EC Hennessy - MC
- Sgt VD McQuillan - DCM
- Tpr CL McCarthy - MM
- Tpr CA Amos - MM

6 Jan 1941. Post 45A thorough maintenance of all vehicles and arms was carried out. Three Universal carriers arrive from workshops, brings Sqn number to 21. Reallotment of personnel made for the advance to Tobrough. Temporary arrangement only. Sgt Cramp appointed acting SSM. Lieut EC Hennessy represented the Sqn in recce party with 19 Bde and advanced along main Bardia-Tobrough Road. Made contact with 7 Armed Div on eastern side of Tobrough. 9 Jan 1941. Tobrough Sheet. Moved this area yesterday. All precautions against enemy aircraft were observed. Party under Lieut Mulally returned to Sidi Baranni to collect and bring forward captured Italian M11 tanks. A number of Italians were observed along the beach and below the escarpment north of the camp. No 3 troop under Sgt G Mills spent the day cleaning this area out. 40 prisoners taken and handed over to provost corps. Enemy aircraft active at night, and dropped Thermos bombs in area south of Div HQ. 10 Jan 1941 Tobrough sheet. General maintenance vehicles and guns. Party under Lieut Willsallen returned to Bardia to collect captured M13 Italian tanks. One carrier under Major D Macarthur-Onslow with Tpr Byrnes and Tpr Bow assisted the RAE's in cleaning up under the Thermos bombs in the area south of Div HQ. Tpr Bow was wounded in the ankle with bomb fragments, returned to hospital. 12 to 17 Jan 1941. Tobrough Sheet. During this period the Sqn was reorganised. Party sent to Workshops to assist and put in running order M11 and M13 Italian tanks. Large white Kangaroos were painted on these tanks for identification purposes. Difficulty experienced in obtaining spare parts especially bogie wheels for carriers. Capt Frank Hurley, Official Photographer 6 Aust Div spent morning taking photos and films of Sqn activities and captured tanks. Shortage of water made living conditions hard. One service waterbottle per man per day allowed. Remainder to cookhouse. 21 Hab. Ref 41554123 Sqn divided into two groups, half to 16 Bde, remainder to 19 Bde. At 0850 hrs the Sqn advanced with the 2/8th battalion, and swung to the right of the start line behind a heavy barrage from our artillery. First obstacle encountered was a minefield, when was then cleared before moving up to the crossroads. enemy LMG and rifle fire encountered. Also dug in M11 tanks, but their 47/32 mm guns, having a small arc of fire, could not engage us as we advanced. Here our last captured Italian tank fell out with oil trouble, after firing a few shots, the others having fallen out previously. One of our carriers contacted a mine field and was a complete loss, but no casualties resulted. during this phase of the attack 4 troops of carriers under Lieut T Mills protected the right flank of the 2/4 Btn in its advance north and down the escarpment. This accomplished, the party drove to the high ground overlooking the harbour where it came under fire from the harbour defences and the cruiser San Giorgio at anchor in the harbour. The carriers were forced to withdraw some 400 yds out of sight of the town. 2/4 Btn then swung and advanced in direction of Fort Palistrino, supported by covering fire from the carriers. In this action Cpl MH Vause was wounded in the elbow and taken back to hospital. At nightfall Sqn r/vd 19 Bd HQ, where B Echelon brought up a hot meal. 25 Jan 1941. Maturba. On this day many instances occurred where enemy Arty singled out one vehicle and concentrated their fire on it. German aircraft active during the day. In an attack by Italian aircraft Cpl CW Holmes and Cpl HG Quail were wounded by MG fire. 27 Jan 1941. Maturba sheet. Advance troop observed enemy movement near camouflaged weapon pits, and on approaching them were fired on by LMG and A/T. Our fire returned. Enemy Arty brought to bear on carriers from concealed positions on the high ground north of Wadi Derna, and on returning to cover Sgt V McQuillan's carrier contracted a minefield and

became a complete loss. At this time the 2 i/c was at Btn HQ, but on receipt of news from Tpr Matchett, who was in the leading carrier, moved forward to the damaged carrier. Wireless communication was restricted owing to shortage of batteries and lack of facilities for charging them. Sqn RAP moved forward to dress and shift the wounded men, when LMG fire was brought to bear on their vehicle, forcing them to ground. The Italians under a white flag later left their forward positions and collected the wounded and prisoners. The 2 i/c Lieut T Mills, made a recce on foot later, but was forced back by LMG fire. Later on, noticing movement near the damaged vehicle he advanced in his carrier and rescued Pte James (attached) from the Fd Amb to the RAP. James seemingly had been overlooked by the Italians. The Sqn now in a scattered formation was recalled to the Wadi south of these positions. The 2 i/c with No 4 Tp made an attack, but was forced to retire by enemy A/T and Arty. The 2 i/c was again recalled to Bde HQ and left a picquet, Tpr Dennis to prevent others from approaching the danger area. Lieut E Hennessy advancing down the East west road missed the picquet and crossed over the minefield without exploding any of the mines, and moving further out, picked up Tpr W Logan, stretcher bearer, who had also been overlooked by the Italians. Sgt Mills was less fortunate, and on contacting the minefield, his carrier became a total loss. At nightfall this ambush was still held by the Italians. The other carrier to contact the minefield was under Sgt V McQuillan, who was seriously wounded, taken prisoner, and died within the next few days. His grave was later found at Giovanni Berta. Cpl EC Fergusson who was driving the carrier was killed outright. Cpl N Teece the wireless operator was taken prisoner. The other carrier under Sgt Mills who was killed in action was driven by Cpl WH Tonswend, who left the vehicle when it was put out of action and during his run to cover was killed by MG fire. Tpr TA Murray the wireless operator lay low, and left the spot during the night. He was lost for 4 days, till picked up by another unit and returned to hospital. The RAP personnel Sgt WO Martin, together with his driver Tpr Aitken was taken prisoner. Tpr W Logan, stretcher bearer, was rescued by Lieut Hennessy, while Lt T Mills picked up the 4th member of the team and took him back to cover.

4 Feb 1941 El Ghebab The Sqn less No 3 and 4 tps attached to 16 Bde No 3 and 4 tps were attached to 19 Bde and led the advance of the Bde along the southern road. Mines were laid along these roads at various points. During a period when the carriers stopped to refuel, armoured cars of the 11th Hussars went to the front and ran into an ambush with loss of both personnel and vehicles. This ambush was situated about 8 miles from BARCE. Defensive positions were taken up and held during the night while the infantry cleared the positions. The Sqn next day moved north to the crossroads, then west to Wadi Cuff. At LUIGI RAZZA the Italian rearguard was overtaken, 800 prisoners being captured. Wadi Cuff was totally impassable and on returning it was found that trouble was brewing between the Italian civilians and the SENOUSI in and around Luigi Razza. No 1 and 2 Tps remained in this village to prevent further looting.

5 Feb 1941 CIRENE The two detached troops moved to BARCE and thence led the advance along the road which follows the railway line, Barce-Benghazi to EL ABIAR where they spent the night.

6 Feb 1941 Banghazi sheet The detached troops left EL AB AIR advanced west and entered Benghazi. Major D Macarthur-Onslow under a flag of truce was the first to enter the town and demand its surrender. On finding the Italian troops had evacuated the town these troops moved four miles south along the main road to GHEMINES.

7 Feb 1941 Barce Aerodrome The detached troops had advanced as far south as SOLUCH where 7A D were contacted during the cutting off of Italian troops retreating from Benghazi. Part of the Squadron RV'd at LETTE 8 miles from Benghazi for the night, and were visited by Lt Col Fergusson. The M13 tank which was attached from TOBROUGH with Cpl D. Glasgow in charge finally broke down and had to be abandoned. It was intended this tank be taken through to Benghazi.

9 Feb 1941 EL BERCA AERODROME, BENGHAZI The accommodation in the hangers provided excellent opportunities for the overhauling of carriers and guns. Permission was obtained from division to remain in the hangers which resulted in general cleaning and establishment of a cookhouse.

11 Feb 1941 Aerodrome General maintenance guns, vehicles. The Prime Minister of Australia, Mr R.G. Menzies arrived at the drome by plane, but did not inspect "A" Squadron. German aircraft again active.

12 Feb 1941 Aerodrome Maintenance and Sqn drill occupied the day. Cavalry reinforcements arrived from Palestine. German aircraft appeared at 2100 hrs and were active throughout the night.

17 Feb 1941 Benghazi Sheet During the collection of M13 tanks, German aircraft machine gunned the personnel at work without casualties.

20 Feb 1941 Ref 3718 Enemy air activity during the night. Capt Frank Hurley, official photographer 6 Aust Div took motion pictures of the Sqn tanks and captured A/A guns in action.

22 Feb 1941 Ref 0778 The carriers were loaded on Italian trucks and commenced move to new RV. During the loading 5 German aircraft appeared. All guns went into action and the aircraft did not retaliate. B Echelon moved with this convoy.

25 Feb 1941 Ref 3718 Lieut Willsallen as liaison went to help 7 AD Workshops. A recce was made by Lt T Mills and Cpl JN Rea for an alternative route through MARUA for the possible withdrawal of 6 Aust Div who were situated at SLOUCH.

26 Feb 1941 Ref 3718 Lt DD Glasgow and party detached from Sqn to collect Mk 6 tanks and carriers then at workshops MADELENA with a view to transferring them to TOBROUGH. Party returned from Div road recce. Sgt Cramp evacuated to hospital, due to an accident in loading tanks.

4 March 1941 Ref 8726 Overhauling of vehicles and guns. 9 Aust Div have commenced to relieve 6 Aust Div in this area.

7 March REF 8726 Vehicles returned from workshops. Muster parade. Working parties detailed. Movement orders. Sqn to move to TOBROUGH area by 16 March. All vehicles to be taken. Recce made of road to Wadi Cuff. COUNTER ORDER - RASC to float all carriers and tanks at rate of 19 per day.

8 March 1941 Ref 8726 Lt Willsallen to relieve Lt Dent at training depot, GAZA. Vehicles loaded on RASC trucks. Lt Hennessy in charge of advance parties to TOBROUGH.

20 March 1941 AMIRIYA General settling in and erection of tents. Fine and warm. Half the Sqn given leave to Cairo and Alexandria for 6 days. Reinforcements from Special Tank Group arrive.

21 March 1941 Amiriya Inspected by Lieutenant General Mackay

30 March 1941 Amiriya Regiment joins squadron from Siwa

8 April 1941 Helwan Medical inspection. Dental Parade. Syllabus of training started today. Troop personnel have been reallocated. Personnel took truck to Tell El Kibira. Schools at Abbasia for drivers and operators. Fine and warm. Wind NW.

13 April 1941 Helwan Party left with tanks and Carriers. Loaded on trucks at Helwan siding. Trucks left in rear party. Remainder of Sqn left by train at 1000 hrs and proceeded to Mersa. The Tanks, MK6 Light were obtained from 7 Aust Div Cav Regt. Fine and warm.

22 April 1941 Ref. 7153450500 hrs Reveille. 0545 start time. Moved west

along the main road Matruh-Sidi Baranni to Charing Cross and then south to Birel Hukuma, arriving 0745 hrs. A Flight of 10 Blenheim Bombers heading west. 25 April 1941 Ref 715345 Anzac Day. A No 6 troop patrolling main Matruh-Sidi Baranni road, west of camp. A Medical parade 1000 hrs. A 2 minutes silence observed at 1100 hrs. A Air raid Matruh 1800 hrs. 5 May 1941 Ref 71883382 One troop on road patrol. A Remainder in camp had tank shoot from vehicle. A Hot and sultry. A Dry wind. A Giarabub party moved 0600 start time, taking northern route to come into the fort through Gap. A Contacted A.H.O.T.I. A long distance patrol at Knox Pimple under peculiar circumstances. A Entered fort area and collected all 20mm ammunition and 40mm ammunition and put in central dump. A Fired it along with trucks, tractors. A Blew all wells. A Returned for the night along wire to a point south of Knox's Pimple, arriving 2000 hrs. A Sandflies won the night. 6 May 1941 Ref 71883382 Road patrol, tank shoot. A Giarabub party again entered Fort and completed job. A Waited on "White" truck from Siwa to pick up water tanks and ammunition. A A Fierce sand storm. A Left fort 1930 hrs to a point north of Knox's Pimple arriving 2030 hrs. A Again contacted HOTI long range patrol which we mistook for enemy column. A No shots exchanged. 15 May 1941 Ref 628330 Moved to North along track, "A" Sqn in reserve, to road junction, then north to post 38. A Contacted 6 enemy tanks, medium. A Withdraw and rejoin Regiment west of post 40. A Moved in reserve to Sidi Azazi. A 1800 hrs A Sent to intercept enemy convoy. A Contacted A/T position. A Lieutenant Mulally's tank is hit. A Crew clamber out and are picked up by carriers. A Tank is abandoned. A Capt Mills tank is also hit. A Sqn withdraw, rejoin Regiment at sundown. A Casualties: A Cpl Petterson. A C.H. shell splinters in hands, since returned to Australia. A Capt Mills. A Slight shell splinter wound in elbow, was not evacuated. A Fine and warm. 22 May 1941 Ref 706345 General maintenance guns and vehicles. A On 12 hrs notice to move. A Issue of beer, 2 bottles per man, 6 piastres each. A Swimming occupied the day. A Fine and warm. A wind N to NW. 26 May 1941 Arrived Kantara West 1500 hrs. A Leave at night. A Most of night spent ferrying across Suez Canal. 29 May 1941 Hadera Biv Area 0800 hrs start time. A Travelled 25 miles to Ginegar. A Arrive 1200 hrs. A bivouaced in grove of Eucalypts 1 mile south of Jewish settlement of Ginegar. A Settling in. A Making sure vehicles are hidden from air observation. A Tracks to grove obliterated. 31 May 1941 Ginegar. A Further maintenance to guns, vehicles. A wireless sets checked by "C" Section sigs. A Troops relish fresh milk, tomatoes, eggs, after the hard fare of the desert. A Fine with cool breeze. A 3 June 1941 Squadron and maintenance and checking of vehicles, wireless sets, weapons, etc. A Hospitality of inhabitants of Finegar in granting troops free use of shower greatly appreciated! 5 June 1941 2030 hours. A Squadron ready to move. A Squadron moved westward along road to main HIFA-NAZARETH road. A 2200 Hours. A Squadron arrived vicinity. A SHA'AR'HA AMAQIM (HAIFA SHEET) and took up concealed position along track. A One light tank from 2 Troop fell out with a burnt out clutch and was towed into the Squadron bivouac area. 8 June 1941 0200 hrs. A Carrier troops cross start line to KA'FR BIR'IN. A 0600 hrs. A Passed through cut in frontier wire and moved to GRAIL. A Frontier force of SPAHIS engaged here and dispersed. A Moved north to TIBNINE. A where MG and small arms fire was met. A 0830 hrs. A Enemy cavalry advance along coast road meeting very little resistance. A 1400 hrs. A Column advance towards SAIDA. A 1430 hrs; 2 kilometres north of TYRE, Spahis encountered and were forced to the hills. A Some POW's taken. A Advance continues to River LITANI, where 25mm anti-tank and mortar fire was encountered. A Carriers took up hull down position on east of road overlooking River Litani. A Enemy fire coming from fortified high ground on northern side of river. A Carriers, less Lieutenant Dent's carrier, moved south 4 kilometres along the coast road to RV area. A Lieutenant Dent's carrier unable to move owing to enemy fire, but eventually arrived back 2350 hours, less Tpr N Jubb, who had previously been sent on foot to contact the other carrier troops, and failed to rejoin Squadron (later found to have been taken prisoner by Senegalese scouts). A 1400 hrs; Reveille for 6 Light Tank force. A Tanks moved west with advance elements of MOTOOL, and then north to road junction. A 0610 start time, tanks move towards frontier. A 0635 hrs; Cross frontier. A 0715 hrs, arrived NAKOURA. A 0830 hrs, three road blocks in area. A Blocks consisted of stone barrier 3 feet high by 2 feet thick, manned by dismounted Spahis Cavalry with Hotkiss and Bofor Anti-Tank. A 20 POW's taken. A No lack of food and wine at the border post! A Light tanks stayed in area, whilst Engineers cleared the road. A 2200 hours, arrive in RV area. A Maintenance carried out before bivouacing for the night. 9 June 1941 0400 hrs, Reveille. A Tank and carrier troops move forward together to high ground overlooking the river Litani, take up hull down positions. A 0930 hrs, two French destroyers shelled our area; no damage, no casualties. A 1100 hrs, Squadron petrol truck (2 ton Ford) drove past bivouac area, and was damaged by enemy. A HE Tpr Currie slightly wounded by shell splinters. A 1930 hrs, withdraw to RV, maintenance carried out. A Squadron bivouaced for the night. CASUALTIES Lt E Roberts - A mortar bomb splinters in jaw Tpr W Currie - A H.E. Splinters Cpl. W Morris - A shell shock Tpr N Jubb - A missing Tpr McCormack - A Dysentery, fever, shellshock, later returned to Australia Tpr D Cambridge - Dysentery, fever, shellshock, later returned to Australia Tpr P Byrnes - A Dysentery, fever, shellshock, later returned to Australia. Sgt YB Donald - A Malaria Tpr A Arentz - A Appendicitis. 10 June 1941 0330 hours. A Reveille. A Moved forward to pontoon bridge. A Carrier troops crossed bridge and moved northwards. A LMG and sniper fire encountered from the hills. A Mortar fire met from hills south of ADLOUN. A Squadron dispersed towards the coast, whilst No 5 Troop moved east. A No 3 Troop moved along the road with Sgt Cramp's carrier forward. A Sgt Cramp's carrier engaged a troop of Spahi cavalry, followed by some 50 native troops with mules and LMG's on tracks. A Lieutenant Hennessy's carrier moved to the left flank, and Cpl Quail's to the right flank. A Enemy force driven into hills after casualties inflicted on men and beasts. A Sgt Cramp then encountered 3 MG posts, and put them out of action as he moved down the road. Lieutenant Hennessy's carrier moved back to establish observation. A Sgt Cramp's carrier was attacked by two armoured cars, which were engaged and driven off by boy's rifle fire. A No 5 Troop moved east towards IMSAR, contacted retreating enemy infantry, and forced them to seek cover in wadis, which were inaccessible to carriers. A 0730 hours, tank troops crossed pontoon bridge and moved along road towards Squadron. A One tank out of action in anti-tank ditch. A 1000 hours. A Squadron ordered to advance. A Moved along the beach. A Contact established with Navy by semaphore. A Navy replied with Lucas lamp. A Lieut Hennessy's troop moved forward to building on outskirts of ADLOUN, but were forced to retire when Navy commenced shelling village. A No 4 Troop moved forward along coast, due west of ADLOUN, then east towards the enemy position. A Corporal Simpson's

carrier was knocked out by anti-tank fire, and then came under heavier fire, estimated to be 75mm. Corporal Simpson and Trooper G Fyfe were killed and the other occupant of the carrier, Trooper K McCallum, missing, believed POW. The remainder of the troop moved back and occupied a hull down position. The Navy shelled an advancing column of AFVs on coast road. Enemy retreated, leaving damaged vehicles. 1930 hours, Squadron retired to RV. Maintenance, servicing vehicles carried out. A barrage from our Army commencing at midnight prevented the troops from enjoying a night's rest.

11 June 19410330 Reveille. 0430 Start Time. Moved northward along main road. 0804 Road block. 1150 cleared area, taking 50 P.W., 2 Mortars, 2 A/T Guns and 5 LMG's. 1230 Mortar fire from near vicinity. Hull Down position taken up. A forward OP was with the Sqn at this stage. Wireless Communication was established with the navy. The Sqn moved forward and contacted fire from the forward defences of Saida in the Wadi NAHH EZ NAHRANI. The defences consisted of LMG and A/T fire and the position was held by the Foreign Legion. The Sqn withdrew to R V position. Hull down positions were held until nightfall when Sqn withdrew to R V area arriving there at 2030 hrs. Maintenance and servicing were carried out. Casualties: Sgt EJ Earl... Exhaustion and shell shock. Tpr MC McCormack... Septic sores

12 June 19410430 hrs. Moved out to bridge at road junction. enemy minefield located in this area, between the coast road and the beach. The light tanks of little use in this type of country, and were withdrawn into the reserve area. A/T and LMG fire encountered from the village and hills east of the road. Villages of Rhaziye and Dare Es Sim were entered, no defensive positions to be found, patrol moved back to hull down position west of Dare Es Sim. (Amendment to A Sqn War Diary 11 June '41, to be inserted between 0430 and 1200 yrs.) 0400. encountered road block. No 3 troop leading Cpl Quail's Carrier forward. Saw four enemy tanks well camouflaged with straw. No 3 troop withdrew to hull down position on right flank. Remainder of Sqn came forward and adapted hull down positions. Lieut Hennessy, Sgt Cramp and his gunner went to high ground with Bren gun to try and silence the 3 enemy a/T guns, but were forced to evacuate owing to SA and A/T fire. OC came forward with Sgt Cramp and Tpr Killen. Made a forward recce accounting for a sniper on the way forward. By this time enemy snipers had moved forward and occupied high ground on right flank. OC sent forward Bren gunner to silence these snipers. During this move our Arty was shelling the enemy positions in an effort to dislodge the enemy tanks. This shelling succeeded in dislodging the enemy from the area around the tanks and fire was brought to bear on the retreating enemy by OC, Sgt Cramp and Tpr Killen. Sgt Edwards with Boys rifle engaged the enemy A/T gun. One man was shot and the enemy A/T gunners dislodged. Our Arty fire now forced the enemy tanks to retreat and they withdrew along the road with one A/T gun in tow leaving 2 still dug in east of the road. Our S A fire and Boys rifle forced the gun crews to abandon the guns and take cover in the road cutting. The Sqn Leader with a party carrying LMG and Thompson Sub Machine guns then worked down the ridge from the east and outflanked the enemy infantry. Approx 40 PO's 2 A/T guns, two 6" Mortars, 5 LMG's and heavy Hotchkiss MG's were captured. The whole area was found to be heavily mined. No 3 Troop then continued as forward troop.

13 June 1941 (portion thereof) 0430 Sqn moved off to road junction. Light tanks in reserve. No 3 Troop (Lt Hennessy) entered the outskirts of Saida, but withdrew on contacting enemy AFV's to Sqn position. Hull down positions held till 1600 hrs. Sqn gave covering fire to infantry, and assisted them to extricate themselves from enemy encircling tank attack in area North of Dare Es Sim. The carriers assisted AMC personnel in evacuating casualties from the field. Sqn light tanks bombed at low level by French aircraft. No damage to vehicles, but casualties were Cpl C Amos MM bomb splinters in the hand, and Cpl F O'Donnel, shell shock. Sqn returned to R V area and were relieved by A Sqn 9 Aust Div Cav Regt. Maintenance and servicing carried out.

14 June 19410500 hrs. Stand to OC Lieut T Mills MC proceeded with "A" Sqn 9 Aust Div Cav Regt to forward areas. 0900 hrs. Sqn moved back to rest area. Vehicles dispersed. Maintenance of vehicles and guns. Swimming enjoyed. This campaign following so closely upon the desert warfare in the Capuzza area told severely upon the men mentally and physically. Numerous casualties evacuated suffering from shell shock, fatigue and fever.

15 June 1941 Sqn in rest area. Conveyance available transport personnel to Litani River for swimming and washing of clothes.

16 June 19410630. Machine gunned by French bomber. Tpr G Sadd killed. Sqn rested. 1600 hrs No 1 and 3 Tps patrolled road leading east from Abour El Assould. Fine and warm NW wind.

19 June 19410500 hrs. Reveille. Maintenance occupied the morning. 1430 hrs Sqn moved North along main road Tyr-Saida. One carrier returned to workshops. Sqn now has 2 light tanks and 8 carriers. Sqn took over 4 French tanks, 11 tonners. Sqn reverted from 7 Aust Div Command to 21 Bde. Lt Dent transferred RHQ, subsequently evacuated to hospital. Fine and warm NW wind.

20 June 19410400 hrs. Reveille. 4 and 6 tps patrolled roads leading East to Kafr maya. No enemy sighted. 3 and 5 Tps patrol main coast road leading North to Ras Nebi Younes. Constructed road block 1 and 2 Tps now with French tanks. 2 MK 6 Light tanks sent back to workshops near Acre. 1830 Patrols retire to RV in palms. Maintenance, servicing of guns carried out.

23 June 19410400 hrs. Reveille. Four carriers under Lt Mulally patrolling road from coast observed enemy movements. 1900 hrs. Return to RV French tanks and personnel on loan to B Sqn. Left RV 1700 hrs via Saida-Mardjayun road. Fine and warm NW wind. Casualties... Tpr A Croll, Pneumonia.

25 June 19410400 hrs. Reveille. Carrier patrol observed enemy movement on road leading East to Mazoura. 0815, fired on by enemy MG's in position at Kazraat El Dahr. Sqn observed positions until 1745, then opened fire with Brens. Enemy retaliated. 1800 hrs retired to RV.

27 June 19410330 hrs. Reveille. 0400 hrs start time. No 3 Tp with 3 carriers moved East from road to Mazouora. No 2 and 2 Tps in position at Qassouba. 0800 hrs. Observed enemy position, engaged with Vickers. Observed enemy throughout day. Opened fire again towards sundown. Fire returned at extreme range. Return to RV. Sgt Coyle with Sqn as Sg Sgt classes commence for reinforcements. Weather cloudy with hot NW wind.

30 June 19410400 hrs. Reveille. 3 and 5 Tps moved out. Positions held by enemy on previous day seen to be unoccupied. Tps pushed on. Occupied Mazraat El Dahr. One tank at road block at Karacol... 1100 hrs. Positions around Mazraat El Dahr shelled by 75mm. 2000 hrs. Returned to Rv. Weather cloudy, hot and calm.

1 July 1941 Beyrouthe sheet. 0400 hrs Reveille. 0430 hrs no 3 and 4 tps, six carriers on road block at Mazraat Ed Dahr. Fired on by 75mm and machine guns. 1800 hrs returned to RV, 4 Tp stayed at Infantry road block for night. Paravane reported on beach at Saida.

3 July 1941 One French tank, No 1 Tp at

tank block at Karacol.Â This tank is mobile A/T Gun.Â Returns to camp at night when Infantry takes over.Â Start time 0500 hrs.Â No 3 tp move out, contact No 5 Tp at Mazraat Ed Dahr at 0600 hrs.Â Col Monaghan 2/2 Pioneers and 2 A/T guns from 2/2 A/T Regt made an attack on El Jleiliye, under covering fire from No 5 Tps dismounted Vickers guns.Â One A/T gun used as light artillery at enemy LMG positions.Â Drew heavy 75mm fire.Â Previous to the attack by the Pioneers, Lieut Hennessy with 2 carriers proceeded along road, this area, after dismounting from carriers and making a foot reconnaissance was fired on by LMG's, firing from an elevated position.Â Lt Hennessy's carriers forced to withdraw, back to Mazraat Ed Dahr.Â Sqn OC accompanied by Sgt Coyle arrived during the battle, and OC's truck was used during the night to maintain communication by W/T to Bde HQ.Â Guard maintained during the night, Snipers active, weather fine.4 July 1941One French tank No 2 Tp on road block at Karacol.Â 5 Tp again dismounted their vickers this time loading them onto mules, and moving across country to El Jleiliye, and covered the advance of the Pioneers.Â 0900 hrs Cpl Britten in carrier set out with infantry ration trucks following, to try and get supplies to men.Â One A/T gun still operating forced this party back.Â 1400 Hrs Cpl Britten again tried this road, and after removing various road blocks reported road clear.Â Remainder of vehicles then proceeded up.Â No 3 and 5 Tp carriers returned to El Jleiliye at sundown when relieved by pioneers.Â One 5 Tp carrier remained at road block all night.Â W/T communications maintained at night with Bde HQ.6 July 1941No 5 Tp advanced in darkness to stone fort (Map ref) dismounted and set up Vickers guns at first light.Â These guns laid down covering fire on Banana grove on bank of river Damour.Â They were then heavily shelled by 75mm.Â Meanwhile remainder of Sqn in hull down positions at Yarouti, and were shelled intermittently all day by long range coastal guns from Beyrouth.Â Things wee not going as they might.Â Infantry and Engineers unable to bridge river today.Â At nightfall Sqn returned to bivouac area.Â No 4 Tp relieved by "B" Sqn Tp rejoins Sqn.Casualties - Cpl Callaghan...spraind ankle.Â Tpr Moloney...exhaustion and shell shock.Â Tpr Bassett....Missing for some time, later returned.7 July 1941No 5 Tp take up position at Stone fort, await bridging of river.Â During the morning, one French tank, Sgt D Glasgow joins No 5 Tp.Â Remainder of Sqn in hull down positions of previous day.Â 1600 hrs.Â Engineers report bridge built and ready for crossing.Â Lieut Glasgow in his carrier crosses river Damour.Â First vehicle to do so.Â Took up position at cross roads on outskirts of town.Â Wirelessly through for remainder of Sqn.Â Remainder 5 Tp next came across followed by No 1 and 2 Tank troops (French tanks).Â formed road block, and spent night there.Â Fine and warm.8 July 19410700 hrs.Â No 6 Tp, Lieut Boyd relieves No 5 Tp at Damour.Â No 6 Tp with two tank troops covering Infantry advance, advances towards centre of town.Â Leading tank turned corner and took three direct hits with 75mm shells at 150 yds range.Â First one stopped it, and crew Sgt G Glasgow and Tpr Johson, after firing several shots, evacuated the tank.Â Tank set on fire and became total loss.Â Advance held up for rest of the day.Â Our aircraft very active this day, our fighters strafing enemy troops.Â No 6 Tp pulled out at sundown, took up position on other side of Damour River.Â Tanks pulled back short distance and formed road block for night.Â Remainder of Sqn returned to bivouac area.Â fine and hot.12 July 1941Maintenance to vehicles and guns 1/2 hrs notice to move.Â General Dentz has asked for terms.Â Fine and warm.July 13 1941Maintenance vehicles, guns.Â News that Armistice agreement has been initialed.15 July 19410800 hrs.Â Sqn moves northwards and form up with 21 Brigade for Victory March through Beyrouth.Â Lieutenant Hennessy No 3 Troop leads this march.Â No 4 Troop moved to Khalde wireless station and occupied same.Â No 5 Troop to Beir Hassan Aerodrome with Sqn HQ.Â No 6 Troop moved to guard shore battery half a mile from the centre of the town.Â Fine and warm.16 July 1941Sqn shift to Stade Municipale, Beyrouth, and occupy buildings in two grand stands.17 July 1941Stade Municipale, Beyrouth.Â General settling in by Sqn HQ.Â Other troops still out guarding various positions.Â Fine and warm.18 July 1941Stade Municipale, Beyrouth.Â Timetable has been drawn up to enable one troop to remain with Sqn HQ for purpose of leave, cleaning up etc, whilst remainder guard positions.Â Tpr KJ McCallum returns to Sqn from POW camp.19 July 1941Guard still continuing.Â Tpr N Jubb returns to Sqn from POW camp.20 July 1941Troops still guarding certain areas.Â Sunday afternoon 50% of the Sqn who were with Sqn HQ were given leave to attend the local races.23 July 1941Guard duties continue.Â Men enjoying themselves.Â Guard duties not severe as all post guards are duplicated by French.Â Fine and warm.29 July 1941Stade Municipale, Beyrouth.Â A/Cpl J Wright critically injured in accident with vehicle.30 July 1941A/Cpl J Wright died in hospital.Â Sqn attended funeral in afternoon.2 August 1941Nos 1 and 2 tank troops and Cpl Roberts carrier covering Bty of 75 mm CD type guns and transmitter stn for aerodrome.Â No 3 Troop covering ammunition dump and transformer station.7 Aug 1941Sgt Edwards composite Troop covering ammunition dump and transformer station.Â Lt Mulally transferred to RHQ as Adjutant.Â Sgt Coyle returns to RHQ as acting Sig officer.Â Fine and warm.Â SW wind.8 Aug 19410900 hrs.Â No 2 Tp takes over ammunitions dump from Vichy French forces at Hadet.13 Aug 19411 and 2 tank troops covering wireless stn near drome.Â Two carriers from Sgt Edwards troop recalled to Sqn HQ.Â OC evacuated to hospital.Â Lt Hennessy acting OC.Â Pay parade.Â Levy for Sqn comfort fund at a rate according to pay.Â Fine and hot.Â Wind SW14 Aug 19411400 hrs.Â 1 and 2 Tank troops hand over to Free French force and rejoin Sqn.16 August 1941Lt D Glasgow acting OC.Â General maintenance to carrier guns in preparation to handing over to 7 Aust Div Cav Regt.17 Aug 1941"A" Sqn 7 Div Cav take over carriers and french tanks.Â Personnel assist new personnel inways of their new vehicles, especially French Tanks.18 AugustHanding in of all gear except personal.Â .45 pistols handed in.Â rifles retained.Â No ammo.19 Aug 19410400 hrs.Â Reveille.Â 0600 hrs Breakfast.0800 start time.Â Sqn on four civilian trucks.Â Moved to Palestine.Â 1500 hrs.Â Arrived at Sumeiriya.Â Camp and spend night there.20 August 1941Continued journey to Julis Camp, Gaza area.Â Arrive 1430 hrs.Â No arrangements seem to have been made.Â Tents to erect and usual fatigue parties.Â Few clouds, muggy, wind SW.21 August 1941Monash lines.Â Julis camp.Â 0900 hrs.Â Regimental Parade.Â CCO's talk.Â Major General Allen regretted not having inspected Regiment while under command of 7 Aust Div Regt.Â Earned name of hard fighting men.Â Liberal leave to Egypt and Palestine.Â Set a standard superior to other units in appearance, etc.Â We are the senior unit and should set example, improved behaviour, less orderly rooms.Â 0940 hrs.Â Check of rifles.Â Money changed from Syrian to Palestinian.Â Sqn supply Regt Guard.

26 August 1941.Â Monash Lines.Â Julis Camp.0800 hrs.Â First parade, regimental parade ground.Â 0830 General Herring

arrived to inspect Regiment. After inspection Regiment formed Hollow square and were addressed by the General. Welcomed Regt back to 6 Aust Div Command. Regretted that during Libyan campaign only one Sqn was with 6 Aust Div. Said whilst 6 Aust Div Cav were in the desert fighting the Hun, other units were fighting the same enemy in Greece and Crete. The Hun is a formidable foe, but he is not unbeatable. The only way to beat him is to be fully trained at all times. Other units have been training here without equipment. It has given them the chance to do many things they could not do with Equipment. 6 Aust Cav could do likewise. Complimented the Regiment on its steadiness and soldierlike bearing. Looked to 6 Div Cav to set example for the AIF as we have a distinctive type of head dress we will be noticed whilst on leave. By maintaining soldierlike bearing, we could give Australian troops a good name. Kits arrive back from Q Store. 3 members of Sqn on leave to Egypt, 4 to Jerusalem, 20 to Tel Aviv. 29 August 1941. Julis Camp 0830. Morning parade. Sqn went for one hour route march, finished up with swim in camp pool. General training in afternoon. Fine and Hot. Wind SSW. 1 September 1941 Morning Parade 0830. Sqn Sports Day. Tank personnel play Carrier personnel cricket. Carrier personnel won by 70 runs. 5 Sept 1941. Monash Lines. Julis Camp Overcast till 0930 hrs. Slit trenches dug around Sqn tenets. WO 2 Baldock RG appointed Lieutenant. Sgt Cramp RT appointed Lieutenant. Lt Burchall seconded from Sqn for 9 months. fine Cool. Wind SW. 7 Sept 1941 0900 hrs. Regimental Church Parade. Major Brown in charge. After service parade marched past Lt Col Dougherty CO 2/4 Btn. Regiment cricket match with 2/4 Btn. Match won by us. 11 Sept 1941 Julis Camp Regimental parade 2.30 hrs. Regiment inspected by Lt Gen Blamey. Troops addressed. Followed by march past. Hot. Few clouds. Wind SW. 15 Sept Commencement of Regt cadre. Following personnel were instructors Cpl Smith TW, Cpl Bow, Sgt Crombie J, Cpl Rea J, Cpl Woodhouse N, Cpl Morris W, Sgt Ripper J, Cpl Martin EH. This was the most intensive and comprehensive training cadre ever carried out by the Regiment and was an endeavour to bring reinforcements up to Regimental standard. Sqn supply Regt Guard. 2 Oct 1941. Monash Lines. Julis Camp Cadre continues. Remittance for leave paid to troops. No beer in canteen. Warm. SW Wind. 5 Oct 1941 Julis Camp Church parade. Sgts D and G Glasgow receive the Kings Commission. 7 Oct 1941 Cadre continues. Cpl Forster D promoted to Sergeant. Sgt Quail acting SSM. Fine and cool. 18 Oct 1941 Julis Camp Reveille 0530 hrs. Sqn moved per foot to new site. Marten Lines. Khassa. Transport provided for gear. 0900 hrs. Sqn settling in new lines. 23 Oct 1941 Marten Lines Khassa Camp Sqn cadre in morning. Daptain Frank Hurley. Official photographer to 6 Aust Div AIF took moving pictures of the Regiment, also stationary and on the march. Reunion of men from Roseberry Camp. Fine and warm. 27 Oct 1941 Khassa Camp 0600 Reveille. Mount vehicles 0855 hrs. Supplied by ASC. Moved 930 hrs arrived bivouac area 1600 hrs. Affula. Leave granted. 28 Oct 1941 Affula 0530 Reveille. 0730 moved. 1700 arrive transit camp. Damascus. Leave granted. No 3 troop town picquet. 29 Oct 1941 Transit Camp Damascus 0500 hrs Reveille. Move 0700. Arrive Bivouac area, Homs 1500 hrs. No leave granted. Cool and fine. 30 October 1941 Homs 0430 Reveille. Move 0600. Arrive Aleppo Aerodrome 1530 hrs. Billited in huts. 1730 hrs meal supplied by 9 Aust Div Cav. Cool with rain. 31 Oct 1941 Aleppo Aerodrome 1700 Reveille. 0930 took over equipment from 9 Aust Div Cav Regt. Sqn mounted guard. Cool, Cloudy, windy. During this trip most of the squadron saw snow for the first time on the Lebanon ranges.

MISSING CAV NEWS 38 HEREMISSING CAV NEWS 39 HERE 2 Dec 1941. Laboe Snow fell overnight. Three inches of snow covering the ground. New experience for Squadron. No 3 Tp returned to camp. Two carriers reced separate tracks leading to Brelge. Conditions difficult owing to snow and thick fog. Personnel of Household Cavalry Regt (British) arrived last night. It is considered a great honour that 6 Aust Div Cav should be chosen to train members of England's crack Cavalry Regiment - the King's personal bodyguard, in their change from horses to mechanised vehicles. 3 carriers, Capt Mills, Cpl Bow reced tracks around Lebanon, Syrian Border. Cpl Waldron in 30 cwt truck reced tracks towards Nebeck. This vehicle did not return to Laboue that night. Fine and cold. 5 Dec 1941 Capt Hennessy set out to look for Cpl Waldron's vehicle. Returned 2000 hrs. Cpl Waldron vehicle returned 1030 hrs. Cpl Waldron vehicle was snowed up and he decided to bivouac where he was for the night. Lt G Glasgow left to take up appointment as ADC to Gen Herring 6 Div. 8 Dec 1941 Sqn training. Promotions Cpl Britten CB to L/Sgt. Household cavalry training course. Instructors supplied by Sqn, Sgt Holmes, Cpl E Martin, Tpr N Jubb. JAPAN DECLARED WAR. Fine, cold. 9 Dec 1941 0700 hrs. Tents struck, packed in carriers. Q Store and Tech tore left standing. Rain falling all the time. Moved 7 miles into hills to point known as Mount Buffalo. Positions are to be dug here in the Djeide Defence Scheme. One mile from nw area. Struck bad patch in road. Some of the vehicles were bogged. Snow fell and gale blowing all night. 11 Dec 1941 Tent pitching and settling down. Party of men working on road, and bringing up vehicles which could not get through on the previous day. Fine and cold. Strong SW Wind. 12 Dec 1941 Sqn still settling in. Digging drains etc, 2 tents per troop. Double EPIP tent for mess. 17 Dec 1941 Still digging LMG positions. Sgt Holmes leaves for CSM school in Palestine. Very cold. 19 Dec 1941 Mount Buffalo Hot showers at El Aine on Baalbeck-Homs road. Sqn marched down and were driven back. Tank personnel return from 16 Inf Bde. Tanks left at RHQ to be camouflaged. 21 Dec 1941 During the past week work in area has somewhat been held up owing to the fact personnel responsible for sighting of positions are unable to make a decision. During afternoon, Capt E Hennessy demonstrates the art of erecting double apron wire. Strong wind blowing. 22 Dec 1941 Wiring commences. Wire taken to defensive positions by a detachment of Cypriots with mules. Sgt Edwards OC Mules. Wind now reached velocity of gale, snow still falling. 23 Dec 1941 Whole area covered with 3 inches of snow. Work continues. Very cold. 25 Dec 1941 Christmas Day. Blizzard raging. Filthy day. Excellent meal cooked by cooks under extremely difficult conditions. Turkey, pork, sweets, fruit etc. By 1700 hrs most of the sqn have retired to bed. 2100 hrs. Sergeants tent collapses under weight of snow. 26 Dec 1941 Wind still blowing but snow has stopped falling. Sgts tent now covered with 7 feet of snow is dug out. Party working on the road. All communications with RHQ have ceased except for W/T. 27 Dec 1941 Mount Buffalo Men are suffering from bad feet due to intense cold. Sqn's issue of rubber boots is fifteen pair. Gale still raging, tents blown down overnight. 29 Dec 1941 Mt Buffalo. Wiring, etc. Visit from Colonel Macarthur-Onslow DSO back from Western Desert. 1800 hrs lecture by Capt T Mills MC, Subject: Role of Divisional Cavalry Regiment. 30 Dec 1941 Wiring and road work. Gale blowing. 31 Dec 1941

Mount Buffalo. Following is summary of work done on defensive positions up to this date. 12 dummy posts completed. 10 LMG posts 70% completed. 200 yards of double apron wire erected. 1500 yards of wire sighted. The weather again during the past week played a big part in holding up operations on the field works, however a great deal of time was spent working on the road which is progressing favourably. 1800 hrs. Debate between HQF and Tank troops. Subject: "The Bayonet is an obsolete weapon of modern warfare" won by HWF who spoke in favour of the Bayonet. Gale blowing. Snow threatened any moment. Very few of the Sqn are up to see the new Year in. 1 January 1942. Mount Buffalo. (Laboue Sheet) 3 carriers leave for RHQ for fitting of new engines. Day free. During night snow and gale from SW. five tents collapsed including OC's. 2 Jan 1942 OC Capt T Mills decides to evacuate camp as the storm is very severe and shows no sign of abating. Carriers leave at 1100 hours with complete crews and arrive at huts. (Laboue Sheet. Message sent by W/T to RHQ trucks to come up to shift gear and remainder of personnel. Road pronounced impassable by Regimental Transport Sergeant. Our ration truck, however, made the journey without undue difficulty. Gale snow still falling. 3 January 1942 HQ trucks are frozen and no not leave RHQ till 1400 hrs. They then move off with working party to clear the road. One 3 ton truck to Sqn area. OC Sqn decides that no time must be lost in getting out. All bedding and personal gear is loaded on 3 ton truck and Sqn move off on foot at approx 1800 hrs. Sqn SM Stewart, Sgt Perry, Sgt Forster, A/Sgt Woodhouse, Tpr Manly are left as guard on area. By 1900 hrs snow has stopped falling and night is very clear. Party after much digging and hauling eventually reach huts at 0130 hrs following morning. Men are completely done in. A hot meal is ready and party are soon bedded down. 4 Jan 1942 Huts Laboue Sheet 5. Two feet of snow over whole area. 1000 hrs Lieut Burchass and nine OR's leave for Mount Buffalo and return 1400 hrs with one of the stranded 30 cwt trucks. Remainder of Sqn rest. Clear and cold. 5 Jan 1942 Huts Laboue SH 5. 0900 hrs Lieut McKinnon with 12 OR's leave in 30 cwt truck to bring back gear from Mount Buffalo, and also 30 cwt truck still in snow drift. 1100 hrs pay parade. 1300 hrs 12 OR's are instructed in the art of erecting Nissen huts. 1600 hrs Mt Buffalo party returns with truck and mostly cookhouse gear. Clear and cold. 6 Jan 1941 Huts Laboue SH 5. Working party erecting Nissen huts. All carriers with drivers working on them are at LAD where engines are being removed for re-conditioning. Lieut D Glasgow with 24 ORs and 3 ton 30 cwt truck at mt Bufflao, salvaging gear. 3 ton truck made two trips during day. 30 cwt brings down load of tents. Guard left at Mount Buffalo are having great sport shooting at looting Arabs. Fine and cold, snow is thawing.

MISSING CAV NEWS 42 HERE

19 January 1942 0845 hrs. OC8s inspection of all webbing equipment. 0900 hrs 14 drivers leave for LAD to start putting reconditioned engines back in carriers. 1100 hrs. Pistol drill. Strong SW wind. 20 Jan 1942. Huts Laboue 14 Drivers continue working on carriers. Fife Drill in morning. 1400 hrs TAB injection. Afternoon free. 2100 hrs Officers, Sgts conference re move following day. Clear, strong SW wind. 21 Jan 1942 Laboue. Lieut McDonald and 40 ORs leave for guard duties at Alaya, South of Baalbeck, guarding ammunition dump. Drivers working on carriers. Rest of Sqn cleaning weapons and kits. 23 Jan 1942 Laboue. Shower parade 0945 hrs. Drivers working on carriers. As vehicles are completed they are handed over to "C" Sqn. Rain during early hours of Morning. Cold Strong SW wind. 26 Jan 1942 Laboue Route march. Gas lecture. Issue of new tarpaulins. General cleaning up and packing. Advance party of 5 Northumberland Fusiliers arrive. Clear and calm. 27 Jan 1942. Laboue Cleaning guns etc, 1100 hrs map reading lecture. 1530 hrs five trucks leave for Alaya to bring back personnel on Guard Duty. Cold, foggy, showery. 28 Jan 1942 Laboue General packing and cleaning up of area. 1200 hrs guard party returns. Sqn once again without AFVs. 1900 hrs conference re move. Cold strong SW wind. 29 Jan 1942 Laboue Reveille 0400 hrs. Start time 0600 hrs six three ton trucks from RASC carry Sqn personnel. B Echelon vehicles carry equipment, etc. Route, Baalbeck, Damascus, Safad, Acre, and Haifa. Arrive Haifa transit camp 1930 hrs. Distance covered 215 miles. Refuel, eat, and bed down. Wet and cold. 30 Jan 1942. Haifa Transit Camp Reveille 0500 hrs. Start time 0700. Route via Lydda Airport, Safafand, Qastina. Reached McLachlan lines 1200 hrs. Distance covered 101 miles. Personnel previously travelling in three ton trucks entrain Haifa Station 1400 hrs. Clear and mild. 31 Jan 1942 Qastina McLachlan Lines. 0445 hrs train party arrives. Hot meal. 0845 hrs COs Parade. Talk on Censorship. Day spent in moving into tents vacated by 7 Aust Div Cav Regt. Lieut ED Mills is now 2 i/c Sqn. Clear and mild. Men are very pleased to be back in Palestine and enjoy the warm change. EDITORS NOTE: THIS CONCLUDES THE "A" SQUADRON DIARY, AS AT THIS POINT THE DIARY ENDS, CPL JACK REA HAVING FAITHFULLY RECORDED THE EVENTS THAT THE SQUADRON HAD BEEN ENGAGED IN SINCE 3RD NOVEMBER 1939. WE CAN ASSUME THAT OTHER DIARIES WERE KEPT BY "I" OFFICE PERSONNEL, WHO TOOK OVER THE TASK FROM CORPORAL REA, BUT IF SO, THEY ARE NOT IN OUR POSSESSION.

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