

# WITH HORSE AND MORSE IN MESOPOTAMIA

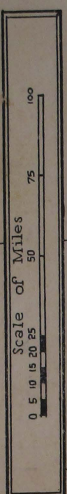
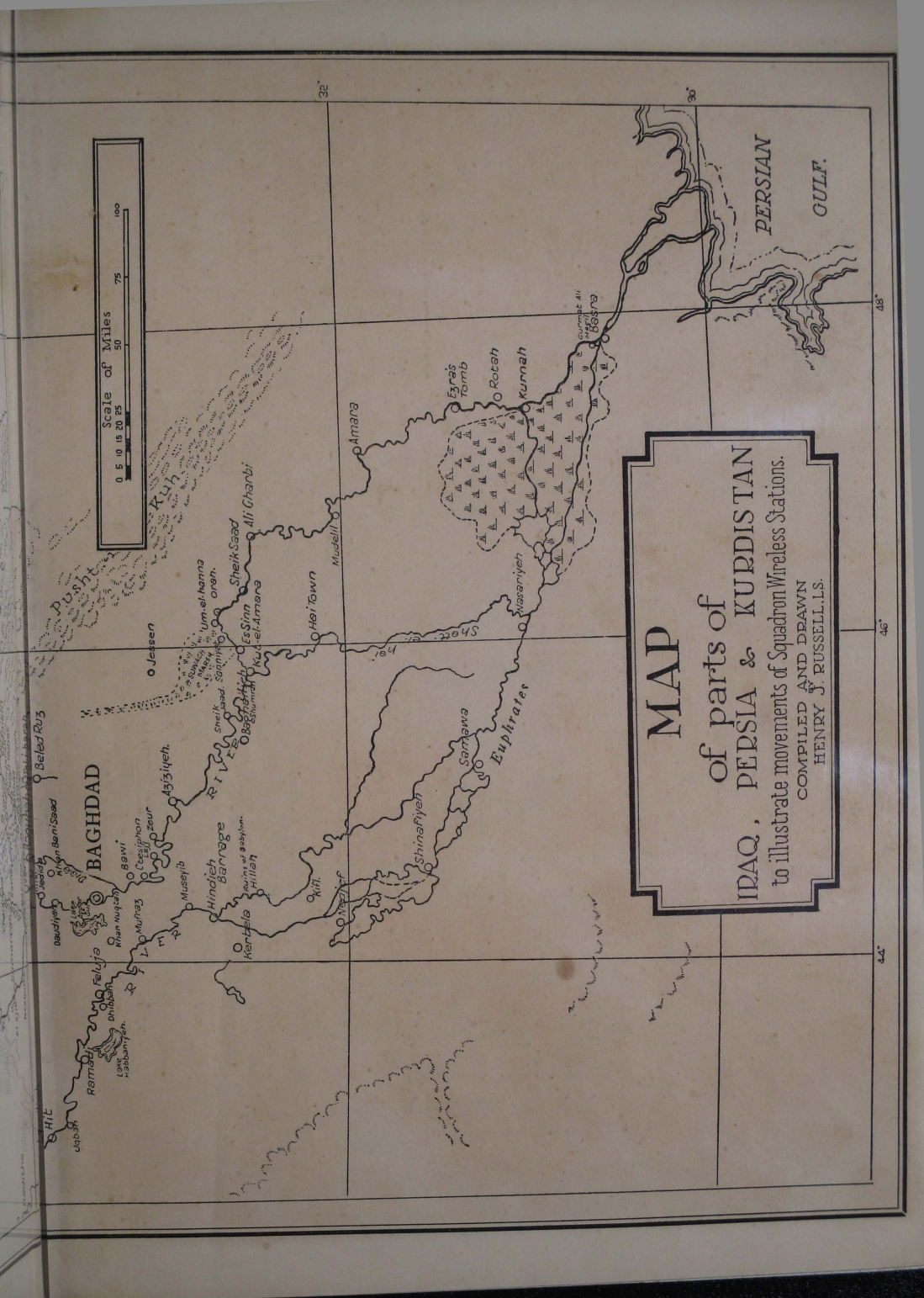


EDITED BY  
KEAST BURKE









MAP  
of parts of  
IRAQ, PERSIA & KURDISTAN  
to illustrate movements of Squadron Wireless Stations.  
COMPILED AND DRAWN  
HENRY J. RUSSELL, I.S.







WITH HORSE  
AND MORSE  
IN MESOPOTAMIA

PAGE 197

*Ex Libris*



Presented to the Engineer Corps  
Memorial Centre

By MRS. E. BURDEN

On 4 APRIL 2019

Received by [Signature]

On behalf of the RNZE Corps Memorial Centre

RNZECT

ECMC 9663





## DEDICATION

### THE FIRST HALF-FLIGHT, A.F.C.

Lieut. W. W. A. Burn (N.Z.)	Air Mechanic J. Munro
Lieutenant G. P. Merz	Air Mechanic W. C. Rayment
Air Mechanic F. L. Adams	Air Mechanic T. Soley
Air Mechanic D. Curran	Air Mechanic L. T. Williams
Air Mechanic W. H. Lord	

### THE AUSTRALIAN PACK TROOP

Sergeant Allen, Cecil Frederick	Died (Enteric), Hamadan, 5/8/18.
Driver Bowen, William Exon	Died (Dysentery), Makina Masus, 1/7/16
Sapper Hamilton, James Leslie	Drowned, River Somme, 22/8/18.
Driver Martyn, Bert Clayton	Died (Dysentery), Nasiriyeh, 16/8/16.

### THE NEW ZEALAND PACK TROOP

2nd-Lieut. Clarke, William Robinson Henry	Sapper Burke, Harold Herbert
Sgt. Croucher, Richard	Sapper McMillan, Llewellyn John
Sapper Bruce, William Charles	Sapper Partridge, Harry Arthur

### THE AUSTRALIAN WIRELESS SQUADRON

Sapper Courtney, Lawrence Marquess	Died (Smallpox), Ramadie, 6/12/17.
Lance-Corporal Elias, Leonard Charles	Died (Typhus), Amara, 29/4/17.
Lance-Cpl. Fowler, Darrell Elwyn H.	Died (Smallpox), Baghdad, 22/1/18.
Sapper Gluyas, Alfred William	Died (Meningitis), Basra, 26/9/18.
Driver Maycock, Jack	Died (Cholera), Basra, 20/7/16.
Staff-Sergeant-Major Newman, Albert	Died (Myocarditis), Basra 7/10/16.
Driver Pike, Frederick George	Died (Cholera), Baghdad, 15/11/17.

### THE CAVALRY DIVISIONAL SIGNAL SQUADRON

Captain Payne, William Henry	Died (Smallpox), Sadiyeh, 10/12/17.
Corporal Cocks, Edmund Clarence	Died (Heatstroke), Baghdad, 5/8/17.
Sapper Evans, Frank Henry	Died (Volvulus), Baghdad, 14/5/18.

### DUNSTERFORCE

Captain Nicol, Robert Kenneth, M.C. (N.Z.)  
Captain Rutherford, Thomas Wyrille Leonard, M.C., M.I.D. (N.Z.)  
Sergeant Blyth, Andrew Jackson (N.Z.)  
Sergeant Davis, D.C.M., M.M.  
Sergeant Weld, John Edward (N.Z.)

### AUSTRALIAN ARMY NURSING SERVICE

Sister A. O'Grady	Sister L. C. Moreton
Sister K. M. Power	Sister E. Clare





# WITH HORSE AND MORSE IN MESOPOTAMIA

## *The Story of Anzacs in Asia*

The following pages contain the histories of the 1st Australian Pack Wireless Signal Troop, the N.Z. Wireless Signal Troop, the 1st Australian and New Zealand Wireless Signal Squadron, the 1st Cavalry Divisional Signal Squadron, the Light Motor Wireless Sections, the Australians of "Dunsterforce" (Persia and Russia), the Australian Nurses in India and the Australian Representative at Bombay. There is also included a nominal roll of all Australians who served in the Middle East.

*Editor :*

KEAST BURKE

*Chairman of Committee :*

Hon. C. W. C. MARR, D.S.O., M.C., M.P.

1927



# FOREWORD

My daughter has most unfortunately mislaid and overlooked the letter you wrote her, and she is infinitely distressed at having just found it among some other papers relating to Mesopotamia.

I should be only too glad to help in the scheme you wrote of—but I much fear that it is probably too late now. If, however, there is still time and you will write by return, I shall be only too glad to go through Sir Stanley's papers and diaries and look for what you need, and possibly even communicate with some of the Headquarters Staff about your Squadron. I know the General would never wish any of those gallant men who helped him in his campaign to have their work or fame ignored—so please write again if it is still of use.

CECILE MAUDE.

It is indeed a pleasure to hear that a Committee has been formed for the purpose of publishing the History of the Australian and New Zealand Wireless Unit which served in Mesopotamia during the Great War. I value the honour of being asked to contribute a foreword very highly, and have much pleasure in complying with your request.

As you will readily understand, after a lapse of some ten years, the names, numbers and certain details of organisation have escaped my memory; these items however will doubtless appear in your publication.

The work of the Anzac Squadron was throughout beyond praise. Their discipline was excellent, and no unit in the force was so free from crime. No matter the difficulties to be overcome, in spite of atrocious climatic and other adverse conditions, to say nothing of being constantly harried by the enemy, the work of the Squadron never slackened. The grit and determination of the personnel coupled with their mechanical skill was wonderful. I believe that I am absolutely correct in stating that no single instance occurred in which there was failure to transmit, without loss of time, any message entrusted for despatch. Especially was this the case early in 1917 during the operations which preceded General Maude's final advance on Baghdad in March of that year, while the work of the unit during the actual advance was admirable.

When G.H.Q. moved up the Tigris in the P.5, the Anzac Squadron supplied the operators for the wireless set on board, and these were the men who at 11 a.m. on the 11th March, 1917, despatched a cipher message to the War Office from General Maude which resulted in the latter receiving at 8 p.m. on the same day a gracious message of congratulation from His Majesty the King on the capture of Baghdad.

I hope that you will pardon the short delay which has occurred in sending you this letter, but I have of necessity been compelled to refresh my memory by looking up certain references and also by communicating with our mutual friend, Colonel Queripel, who asked me to send you his very best wishes.

H. R. HOPWOOD,  
(Late C.G.S. to Sir Stanley Maude in Mesopotamia.)

My first acquaintance with Australian and New Zealand troops during the Great War was in the Spring of 1915, shortly after the landing in Gallipoli.

Two Brigades of the Anzac Corps had been brought round to Helles for the purpose of assisting the 29th Division to make good the coveted position on Achi Baba.

The resulting operation was a glorious failure; but what mortal men could do these magnificent men from Anzac did. Again and again, after being brought to a standstill by a very inferno of fire, they pushed forward in spite of losses which would have daunted the very bravest.

Ever after this my admiration for Australians and New Zealanders knew no bounds.

It was, therefore, a special source of pride to have under my command in Mesopotamia an Australian and New Zealand Wireless Unit. I knew that whatever they put their hands to they would do "with all their heart, all their soul and all their might," and—they did!!

During their four years' service with the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force they were distinguished by efficiency in the technical part of their work and by the grit and unflinching cheerfulness which were characteristic of all ranks in carrying out their duties. I know what a high opinion my distinguished predecessor (Sir Stanley Maude) entertained of this unit, and I am proud to endorse the opinion of that great soldier.

WM. RAINE MARSHALL



# FOREWORD

It is common in war as in life in general that the most arduous task successfully performed often fails to secure recognition. This is especially the case in small units in a big campaign and in all the units of a small campaign.

Among the units in Mesopotamia that fall within this unfortunate category, the hardest case of all is that of the Anzac Wireless Squadron. The Signal Service generally, while helping more than most to "win the war," are taken so much for granted that I think that their claims to recognition have been more frequently overlooked than any of the other special branches in the Eastern theatre of the First World War.

I personally owe this particular unit a humble apology for my lack of reference to them in the short narrative of events connected with the force under my command in Persia and Baku in 1918, which I published. The truth of the matter is that that book was written in an Indian June, in a period of terrific heat, and was pushed through at top speed. I was commanding a Brigade at the time and my leisure for writing was very limited. As, in writing a book of that nature, one is confined to certain dimensions, and as the story to be told was a long one to compress into the compass of one volume, a good deal of detail had to be omitted, and it was not till after the publication, when I had the time to read my own book at leisure, that I was able to perceive my numerous shortcomings.

I have dwelt in my book on the splendid services rendered by my Intelligence Staff, but it is obvious that intelligence work is very largely dependent on the Signal Service, and in the Signal Service the Wireless is of paramount importance. Had it not been for the work of the various Anzac stations during the early days of our penetration in to Persia, we should have been entirely cut off from communication with the outer world, and the success of the expedition would have been still further jeopardised.

There were never more than fifty or sixty men of the Anzac Wireless in North Persia, and they certainly deserve to rob the Royal Artillery of their proud motto of "Ubique," as they managed to make themselves literally ubiquitous. Most of all do I remember the difficult task of working the Russian stations at Kasvin and Enzeli side by side with the "Liberty-Equality-Fraternity" brethren of the Revolution; those three dope-words resolving themselves into "Nobody need work if they don't want to, and nothing matters anyway."

Throughout the operations their work was carried out so efficiently and unobtrusively that the Command and Staff rather took them for granted. Had they given me endless trouble and worry they would have been ever present in my mind, but their sheer efficiency kept them from the prominence they merited. One might moralise a good deal on that text, but I will leave it to those who read, to observe analogous situations in life in general, and the only conclusion that we are likely to come to is the old and ever true one that "Virtue is its own reward," and there is nothing so warming to the heart as the subconscious feeling that one has done one's best and never failed in an emergency.

Writing this letter three years after the events referred to, but with those events still very fresh in my mind, I am glad to have this opportunity of cancelling my debt of obligation by this brief reference to the services of the Anzac Wireless Squadron, and I trust that the gallant members of the unit will realise that, though omitted in print, the recollection of their work is ever present in my mind, and to all of them who may read these words I send a message of gratitude and my best wishes for success in the future as in the past.

L. C. DUNSTERVILLE.

I have been asked to write a foreword to this interesting story of the services and adventures of the 1st Australian Wireless Signal Squadron, during the eventful years in which it formed a portion of the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force.

I have not had the advantage of reading the book before writing this foreword, so I am unable to allude to its contents, but as the last General Officer Commanding-in-Chief in Mesopotamia under whom "D" Troop of this unit finished its service after the great war, I am well able to testify to their excellent service throughout the campaign, and especially to the disciplined cheerfulness with which they accepted the trying duty of serving on till late in 1919 at a time when all around them demobilisation was in progress.

During this year Mesopotamia was in the midst of trying frontier hostilities, and the services of this squadron were invaluable to me, while the despatches of the commanders of the earlier years have born tribute to the manner in which the Squadron upheld in the country of the Tigris and Euphrates the credit of the Commonwealth, through heat indescribable and cold unbearable.

I was happy in being able to inspect the troop under the "Tree of Knowledge" at Qurna on their way back to Australia and present on behalf of His Majesty well earned decorations to various individuals, and I take this opportunity once again of wishing all peace and happiness hereafter, to members of the squadron, and pleasant memories of their share in the war in the country "Between the Rivers."

G. F. MACMUNN.





Arabs of high degree smoking narghiles outside a coffee-shop, Baghdad.

## P R E F A C E

Here is our book, the story of the work of certain comparatively small units of the A.I.F. in the Middle East, whose adventures have hitherto found no chronicler.\* For the long delay, no apology need be made; the job was one that had to be done—no matter how long it took. The story had to be put into permanent form—first, so that it might take its place among the existing records of the A.I.F., secondly, for the information of our men themselves, who, in most cases, knew very little of the military significance of their own work, and practically nothing of what their comrades were doing elsewhere.

The first step was the collection of material; the next was to keep the manuscript within bounds—there seemed to be so many claims for inclusion. The geography, ethnology, and history of the ancient lands of Babylonia all called for representation, but these had to be denied all but the inclusion of a few sidelights. Likewise, it has been hard to refrain from describing in detail the military side of the campaign, and the reader must turn elsewhere to read of the gallantry of the British and Indian troops who bombed and bayoneted every yard of the long stretch from the Gulf to Mosul.

So here it is, at last—the book we never thought would reach the press, never thought would be as complete as it is—the memory book of our great adventure.

The Committee's chief and most cordial acknowledgment must, of course, be made to the

Editor, Mr. Keast Burke, with whom the volume has been a seven years' labour of love. It is not too much to say that without his keen and unflagging enthusiasm this book would never have appeared. Every detail has been his work—the writing and revision of the manuscript, the collection and preparation of the photographs, the greater part of the pen-and-ink work, the make-up of the pages, and the final publishing.

We are also deeply grateful to scores of our own men who contributed narratives, diaries and individual stories.

In regard to the photographic side of the work, our thanks are due to almost every member who carried a camera, and especially for the enthusiasm that made possible such fine technical work, despite the scarcity of photographic supplies and the difficulty of carrying them when kits were reduced to a minimum, as well as the absence for months at a time of facilities for developing and printing. The best of the available material was selected, enlarged, trimmed, and pasted upon cards so that it would reduce to the uniform size of 8 in. deep by 4 in. wide. Where the original negatives had been lost, prints on self-toning paper (made in the field and posted home) were copied and enlarged, the work being skilfully handled by Kodak (Australasia) Pty. Ltd., Mr. Sidney Riley, and Mr. Charles W. Bridge. For practical assistance on all points relating to printing and engraving, we are also indebted both to Mr. Bridge and especially to Mr. Walter Burke, who, in addition, afforded darkroom and office facilities throughout.

In the matter of art-work, Messrs. John Moore, C. B. Dellitt, C. R. Hall, F. L. McFarlane, P. A.

\*An exception to this statement is the 1st Half-Flight, A.F.C., which saw service in Mesopotamia in the early years of the war, and whose story has already been told in Vol. VIII. of the Official History, *The Australian Flying Corps*, by F. M. Cutlack. The achievements of the Australian members of the "Dunsterforce" have also been recorded in Savage's "Stalky's Forlorn Hope."



Cameron, and F. E. Elliott contributed original sketches. The remainder (and by far the greater number) were transferred into line from interesting photographs which were of insufficient military importance to be included on the half-tone pages. Generous treatment was accorded us by the firms of John Sands, Limited, and Barrell Bros., in the preparation of the line and half-tone blocks, and reference must also be made to the ready co-operation of our printers, Messrs. Arthur McQuitty & Co. For the loan of blocks, we are under an obligation to Kodak (Australasia) Pty. Ltd. (The Australasian Photo Review), and to the late Mr. Chilton Young (The New Nation).

We are deeply grateful for the generous financial assistance readily given by the Trustees of the Anzac Book Fund under their "Unit Histories" scheme. Our thanks are also due to Mr. C. E. W. Bean and Mr. A. W. Bazley for their careful reading of the manuscript and proofs, as well as to Mr. A. J. Withers of the Defence Department, Major J. L. Treloar (Director of the Australian War Memorial), Matron G. E. Davis, Lieutenant-Colonel S. G. Savage, Captain W. H. Lord, and the Officer-in-Charge of the Base Records Office, A.I.F., for their practical interest in the work.

Mr. Bean also compiled the very interesting narrative, "The Australian Nurses in India," without which the volume would necessarily have been incomplete.

The glossary has been kindly revised by the Reverend G. W. Thatcher, an authority on oriental languages, while an article on present-day

travel was willingly contributed by Major Sandford-Morgan.

The map has been specially and carefully compiled for the volume by Mr. H. J. Russell.

Among the more important books consulted have been:—The official despatches of Generals Maude and Marshall; *The Times History of the War*; *The Long Road to Baghdad*, by Edmund Candler; *With the Persian Expedition*, by Major Martin Donohue; *The Adventures of Dunsterforce*, by Major-General Dunsterville; *Nineveh and Babylon*, by Austen Layard; *Myths of Babylonia and Assyria*, by Donald Mackenzie; *The Caliphate*, by Sir William Muir; *Amurath to Amurath*, by Miss Gertrude Bell; *Persia, Past and Present*, by Williams-Jackson; *Whitehall to the Caspian*, by French; and *Hadji Ali*, by James Morier.

In conclusion the Committee hopes that the volume will serve as a constant reminder to our men to retain touch with one another through the years; to this end the Editor has undertaken to keep a list of latest addresses and to re-direct communications. Ex-members of the Wireless Squadron are therefore invited to forward their addresses to him (at Box 864G, G.P.O., Sydney) for record purposes.

#### THE COMMITTEE,

A. & N. Z. Wireless Signal Squadron History.

Sydney, August 1, 1927.

[†Later appointed Dame of the British Empire for her work; her death in hospital in Baghdad, in the present year, was a heavy loss to Britain.]

Souvenir menu of No. 12 Station's Christmas Dinner, 1918.





# INDEX

Figures in ordinary type refer to the letterpress pages; those in black face to the half-tone illustrations.

The schedules in the Appendix, commencing on page 182, will be found useful if the name or number of a station, a date or a place-name is already known.

## Page 1. THE PACK TROOP.

Formation, 1, **3**, **7**. Arrival in Mesopotamia, 2, **9**. N.Z. Pack Troop, Khamisiyah Station 5, Nasiriyah Station 6.

## Page 11. SQUADRON H.Q. AND "A" TROOP.

Formation and Embarkation 11, **3**, **7**. In Camp at Basrah 12, **9**. Mobilisation of Stations, 15.

## Page 16. OPERATIONS ROUND KUT.

Re-organisation of the Force. Advance to the Hai, 16, **19**, **23**. Other Cavalry Operations, Arab Raids, 17. Hai-Town and The Wadi Stunts, 18, **19**.

## Page 21. THE ADVANCE.

Crossing at Shumran, 21, **24**, Work of the Stations, 22, **24**. Arrival in Baghdad, Pack Narrative, 27, **26**. Wagon Narrative, 28, **25**.

## Page 31. CONSOLIDATING BAGHDAD'S DEFENCES.

Beyond Baghdad, Feluja, Khalis Canal and the Adhaim, 31, **29**. Samarra, 32, **33**. Interception, Diala and towards Persia, 37, **47**, **59**. The Russians 38, **35**.

## Page 41. SUMMER (1917) IN THE FIELD.

Hindiyeh Barrage, sundry operations, 41, **29**. Ramadie, Sharoban, 42.

## Page 43. LIFE IN BAGHDAD

The Billet, The Horselines 43, **45**, **91**. Baghdad's ancient days, 44. Features of the city 49, **56**, **190**. Reinforcements, Indian Leave, 51, **7**, **53**.

## Page 61. AUTUMN, 1917. OPERATIONS RECOMMENCE.

Mandali, Ramadie, 61, **60**. Hit, 63, **73**.

## Page 64. RECONSTRUCTION OF THE CAVALRY DIVISION.

Tekrit and Daur, Death of General Maude, 64, 82, **86**.

## Page 65. QARAH TAPPEH AND KIFRI.

Chai Khana, Kifri, 67, **77**. Partisanski, return of "AA" Station, 66, **75**, **35**. General Dunsterville, 67, 93, 104, **97**.

## Page 68. KHAN BAGHDADI.

Khan Baghdadi, Anah, 68, **73**. Rescue of British Officers, War Diary Extract, 71.

## Page 72. KUPA.

Lower Euphrates, Moharram, 72. Babylon, **142**, **179**.

## Page 77. TUZ—TAUQ—KIRKUK.

Outline of Operations, 77, **76**, **85**, **92**. Squadron Diary, 78. Kirkuk, 79, **76**, **87**, **144**.

## Page 80. THE WIRELESS TRAINING SCHOOL, SYDNEY.

## Page 81. CAVALRY DIVISIONAL SIGNAL SQUADRON.

Formation and Embarkation, 80, 81. Ramadie, 62, **86**. Tekrit, Chai Khana, 82, **86**. Sadiyeh, Death of its O.C., 83. Kirkuk, Unit absorbed by A.W.S., 84, **87**, **144**.

## Page 89. SUMMER, 1918.

New Units, Disposition of Stations, Baqubah, 89, **88**, **91**, **102**.

## Page 90. EVENTS IN PERSIA AND RUSSIA.

Kermanshah, 90, **95**, **101**. Dunsterforce at Kasvin, Squadron men at Hamadan, 93, **96**, **144**. Advance to the Caspian, 99. Urmieh, Baku, 100, **98**. Lenkoran Party, late events in Persia, 103, **101**.

## Page 104. THE AUSTRALIANS OF DUNSTERFORCE.

Birth of the Force, Persian Situation, 104, **97**. Outposts at Zinjan and Senna. Advance to the Caspian, Urmieh, and Bijar, **106**. Baku, 107, **98**. Evacuation, 108.

## Page 109. KALAT SHERGAT OFFENSIVE.

Altun Kupri, Suleimaniyah, 109, **92**. General outline, 109, **113**, No. 13 Station, 110, No. 14 Station, No. 7 Station, 111. No. 10 Stn., 112. Arrival at Mosul, Ilyas, 121. Tel Afar, 122, **117**. Notes on Mosul, 122, **117**.

## Page 123. DEMOBILISATION.

Demobilisation, 123, **119**.

## Page 124. AUSTRALIAN NURSES IN INDIA, 1916-1919.

General Narrative, 124, **143**.

## Page 130. "HORSEFERRY ROAD." BOMBAY.

The Australian Representative, 130.

## Page 131. "D" TROOP IN KURDISTAN.

Kurdistan, 131. Amadia, Suwara, 132, **137**. Zacho, 133, **137**. Nightcol and Lumbcol, 134. Nos. 24, 16 and 15 Stations, 146, **88**, **102**, **117**, **137**, **138**.

## Page 147. DEMOBILISATION OF "D" TROOP.

Demobilisation, 147, **141**.

## Page 149. CONTRIBUTIONS SECTION.

## Page 177. PRESENT DAY TRAVEL.

## Page 182. APPENDIX.

DISTRIBUTION OF SQUADRON STATIONS 182. GLOSSARY, 191, NOMINAL ROLLS, 193.





## EARLY DAYS — THE PACK TROOP

November, 1915, in the far-off Land of the Rivers. Optimism at its height. Townshend and his gallant 6th Division, unchecked at any point in a two hundred and fifty mile advance into enemy country—Townshend at Ctesiphon—Townshend all but in Baghdad—and politicians at home setting off the new victory against the disaster of Gallipoli. Optimism in Mesopotamia, vague optimism in India, vaguer optimism at the War Office. A single depleted division, without communications, advancing to the capture of the second capital of an Empire that could put three-quarters of a million men into the field.

December in Australia and New Zealand. An urgent cable from India asking for the loan of men to eke out the scanty technical services of her Expeditionary Force "D."

Both countries responded to the request, and offered to supply and maintain complete units in the field. New Zealand drew upon her telegraphic service for operators, mechanics and linesmen. Australia already had at hand the material for a composite unit—operators undergoing training at the Marconi School at Sydney, and drivers and signallers undergoing training respectively at the A.S.C., Artillery and Signal Depots. Later on the Signal Depots, Moore Park and Broadmeadows, were extended for the concentration of all recruits likely to be of use in the "signal" service—wireless operators and mechanics, instrument repairers, visual signallers, etc. From these camps went the signallers for the whole of the A.I.F. abroad; the drafts were usually small, and rumours were always plentiful. Sometimes it was a new Signal Company, sometimes it was an opportunity to rejoin old pals in some favoured Brigade. But in January an astonishing rumour came along and one that was true. All reinforcements ready to sail were to be posted to a new unit for a new and surprising destination—the 1st Pack Wireless Signal Troop bound for India and Mesopotamia.

Details were confirmed. It was announced that the establishment would consist of an officer and 54 other ranks, comprising 2 staff-sergeant mechanics, 28 operators and mechanics, and 24 drivers. It was also announced that N.S.W. and Victoria would each supply half the ranks. N.S.W. found her operators by gaining 14 volunteers from the Marconi School, Sydney;

Victoria, from the Signal Depot at Broadmeadows. As regards drivers, N.S.W. detailed men from the A.S.C. Camp, Moore Park; Victoria, from the Artillery School.

### THE PACK TROOP EMBARKS.

The N.S.W. party reached Broadmeadows on the 10th January. Final leave was granted on the 20th. Lieut. S. J. White was appointed to command.

On February 5th, 1916, the actual date having been kept a close secret, the party left Broadmeadows for Port Melbourne to embark on the s.s. "Saldanah," known as the "A12", and well laden with wheat for Genoa. In fact, the unit more than filled the whole of the accommodation, the staff-sergeants having to follow on the "Khyber." The Chief of the General Staff, General Foster, also made the troopship inspection. He complimented them on their smart turnout, gave them a brief lecture on Indian Army methods, and impressed upon them the necessity of upholding the traditions of the A.I.F.

General Foster also made the Troopship inspection. Everybody seemed content with their first glimpse of their quarters—then came farewells to friends as the "A12" moved away on the journey.

Heavy seas were met with and two cases of sickness had to be landed at Fremantle, so the unit suffered its first casualties unexpectedly early.

Drill, lectures, submarine look-outs, wireless reliefs and concerts filled in the time to Colombo, where the troop was entertained at lunch and tea by the local garrison. Here the unit sadly transhipped to the "Sardinia"—sadly because though accommodation—second class—improved, rations did not.

Ten days were spent in Colaba Barracks, Bombay; then, on March 10th, the unit was once more on the high seas—the "Teesta" bound for the Gulf. This stay had been a happy enough one, but a wrangle or so with high authority remained in the memory of the boys. The chief was concerned with messing—always to remain a sore point in India. Tommies in India get 3½d. a day and so did the members of the unit while they were there. Then it was decided that the Australians and New Zealanders did not get it, and a refund was demanded.

The new embarkation appeared somewhat in the light of a relief—at least if the quarters and rations





A glimpse of the Shatt-el-Arab, the vast river that carries the mingled waters of the Tigris and the Euphrates down to the Persian Gulf. It is navigable for the greater part of the distance by ocean-going steamers of medium size. In war-time its waters were ploughed by native and military craft of every conceivable description.

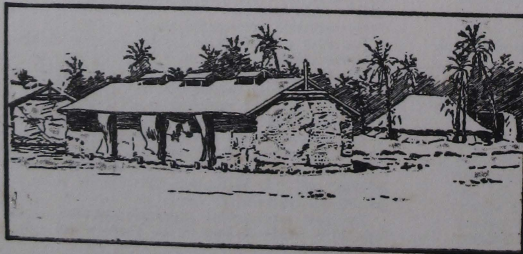
were up to standard. A first inspection showed that they were, but the troops did not know the first meal was specially supplied by S. & T. Bombay. Poor rats on the Gulf steamships remained a standing complaint for years and relief came to us only when Bombay Comfort Funds placed substantial contributions on board at the embarkation point.

## OUR ARRIVAL IN MESOPOTAMIA.

March 19th—the "Teesta" plowing muddy waters—low alluvial flats—date palms far off. Soon the banks of Shatt-el-Arab enclose her; the Abadan Refinery—seventy miles of palms as far as Ashar. Off on to barges—towed to a landing stage—a precarious disembarkation over a half finished pier—a sea of odorous mud—and not even a red-tab or a single pip to welcome the wireless to their adopted land.

The usual two-hour wait (inseparable from any military movement)—then a march through the ragged streets of Ashar (with a welcome cup of tea and biscuits at the Y.M.C.A.), and out across the great mud plains of Makina.

The inevitable disembarkation *contretemps* follows. First to one camp, then to another, then to a third, and a fourth and a fifth, till the unit, still dragging its belongings behind it, collapses thankfully into a hut recently vacated by some Indians, but not by their tiny bedfellows. Kerosene became greatly in demand.



At the Signal Depot, Magil—military huts made of mud and chopped straw and with roofing of matting woven from swamp reeds. They looked a good deal better than they were.

The Pack Troop was soon on the job. Next morning commenced their first experience at ration drawing, which involved some 12 miles' journey in all, behind gharis, walking all the way—dry rations from one dump, meat from another, firewood somewhere else, and camp equipment and field stores from the other side of beyond.

The seriousness of war begins to dawn upon the unit. To draw anything means chits from someone and orders from someone else. But it was soon discovered that with a bold front and a team of horses one could get away with even a G.S. waggon, as well as any lesser commodities the Q.M.'s soul might hanker after. Other units might go short of horses, but somehow the wireless did not!

A week of this and the pack sets arrived. They were mounted on hand carts and had to be converted.

## WE DRAW OUR HORSES.

Serious work began on April 1st (admirably chosen date), when the remount depot handed over 74 Australian horses, all specially picked and splendid animals, but mostly quite unbroken. The depot had realised that the fortunate arrival of a "gang of Australian bushmen" had given them a chance of getting rid of some very rough stuff. The horses were so wild that nosebags could only be placed on them with difficulty. However, the men stuck to it and after a whole chapter of humorous, strenuous and plucky endeavours, got their teams into workmanlike shape. Incidentally, it was the turning point in their careers. Once they had believed themselves a distinguished technical unit; but now, disillusioned, they found themselves horse-trainers, stable hands, jockeys and grooms. We pass lightly over the daily task of taking the brutes to water, through the best mud Mesopotamia could produce. But there was one alleviation—the vocabulary of many was poor at the beginning, but at the end all were equipped with a rich store of appropriate adjectives, ready on the tip of the tongue for any eventuality.

Riding School was ordered for those whose equitation was not up to standard. Under three instructors from the 13th Hussars out on the desert, "Trot" and "Gallop" were the words of the day—and no one cared whether you stuck on or came off three times in ten minutes, or whether you were on board or not when your mount bolted for the far horizon. A particular source of aggravation to the horses was the rifle bucket—a leather case strapped to the offside of the saddle. The rifle had to be removed every time the rider dismounted. To do this one had to seize the weapon with the right hand, draw it out of the bucket and pass it over the horse's neck to the left. Somehow the horses strongly objected to having rifles passed over their necks and usually took fright.

By this time a decision had been arrived at regarding the details of Wireless organisation. Each Station was to comprise 7 operators and 6 drivers, including



# MOORE PARK AND BROADMEADOWS



May, 1917—Private parade ground of the Wireless Training School at Moore Park, Sydney. Note the Morse flags for visual training and the long dungarees (which often concealed a real uniform beneath).



May, 1917: Horse-lines at the old Zoo site, Moore Park. We did not expect to find ourselves again grooming horses beneath palms.

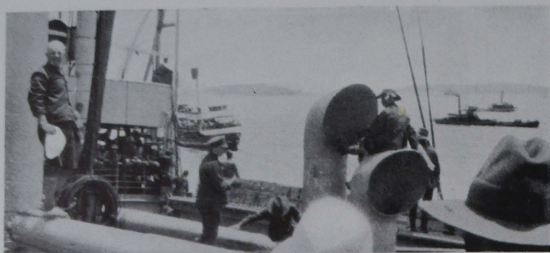


February, 1916: Broadmeadows, Victoria. Members of the Pack Troop stencilling kit-bags prior to embarkation.



May, 1916: Broadmeadows, Victoria. An equestrian parade of S.H.Q. and "A" Troop men.

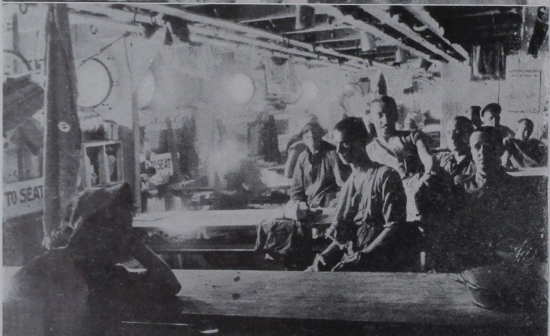
# LIFE ON A TROOPSHIP



December, 1917: Transport "Ulysses" steaming down Sydney Harbor. Note the list on the Manly boat, also the dredge "Triton" going out to work.



February, 1916: A group of Pack Troop men on the "Khyber."



December, 1917: Transport "Ulysses"—"H" Troop Deck, port side, showing men of the L.M.W.S. ("D" Troop). See the hammocks and hammock hooks, racks for kit and mess gear, and the familiar inscription, "TO SEAT 16."



December, 1917: Forecabin on the "Ulysses." This vessel carried nearly two thousand troops, including reinforcements for nearly every A.I.F. unit—consequently there was barely resting room on the decks for all the men at once.



N.C.O.'s; all were to be mounted—making with the pack-horses a total of 13 other ranks and 18 horses. We were also to be called "C" Troop of the 1st Wireless Squadron, the other two troops being English. "A" Troop (Sappers and Miners) were then doing front line work; "B" Troop (Sappers and Miners) were stationed in India, and the A.I.F. Troop were to be "C" Troop. Training was seriously attended to, as it was the wish and hope of all to be doing something in the nature of our calling. We were told by the Director of Signals that another troop was to arrive almost immediately and would be camped alongside us, and that our C.O. was to arrange for its accommodation and meeting. Everyone was glad to see and welcome it, but more so when we learnt that they were New Zealanders and were eventually to be operating with us. They were to man four pack stations also, and were to be called "C" Wireless Troop of the 1st Wireless Squadron.

## THE N.Z. PACK TROOP.

This troop arrived in the field on April 18th. Its origin has already been referred to and its subsequent history was much the same as that of the Australian Pack Troop. The unit was under the command of Lieut. Clarke, and his men were operators and linesmen from the Government Telegraph Service. As drivers were required, the reason for sending linesmen was not clear, and placed the unit at some disadvantage (which, however, was soon rectified on the other side). The troop had about a month's training in equitation, musketry, visual signalling and buzzer work—which was not very much, but as all ranks were very keen the total result was excellent.

The unit sailed on March 4th, 1916, by H.M.T. 49 (s.s. "Willochra") and made a good passage to Colombo the voyage being saddened by the death (on March 25th) of Spr. McMillan. Three days were spent on the island, the men being accommodated at the Barracks. They were well looked after and had an exciting game of Rugby. Madras was reached on the 31st and the journey continued the same day by train to Bombay (arriving April 2nd). There they stayed at the Coopers Camp and being granted leave, were hospitably received by local residents. The usual miserable trip up the Persian Gulf followed, and all were glad when Makina was reached and the unit joined up with their comrades in arms. However, the haste which had accompanied their movements all along did not desert them now, and within three days of their drawing horses the first station had to be embarked for up river.

## FIRST STATIONS GO OUT.

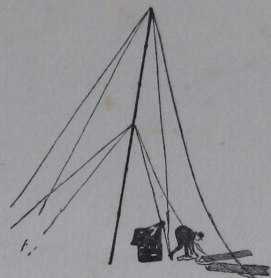
April 18th (the day the N.Z. Pack Troop arrived) saw the first experiments on the part of the Australians at leading pack horses. Ten days later the first station had joined the 15th Division and was on its way to Khamisiyah. It was a happy day for the boys to be doing something worth while, but a sad one for the force—for it was on this day that a white flag fluttered over the battle-scarred walls of Kut.

Back at Makina alarms were the order of the day. On one occasion the camp was barricaded with bales of bhusa (coarse chaff) in anticipation of an Arab raid; on another the horse picquet spent half an hour skirmishing after a rustling tortoise.

On May 9th—the first N.Z. effort—a second station was embarked for Mudeli on the Tigris, above Amara. On the 21st, camp was moved northwards near the river to Magil. During the same month both the second New Zealand and second Australian Stations were despatched into the field—for Ali Gharbi on the Tigris and Nasiriyah on the Euphrates respectively.

In June two stations accompanied a force sent to strafe certain Arab tribes. One station from each troop

A pack station partially erected; the guys have to be adjusted and the aerial hauled up. An operator is unrolling the capacity earth-nets.



was detailed for this stunt. The column was made up and left on June 17th for Ghabishiyah—24 miles at 110 degrees in the shade (not that there was any shade either going or coming!). On arrival an aeroplane reported the inevitable—not an Arab in sight for miles. Accordingly return was ordered for the 20th. The feature of the affair that will remain longest in the mind was the sight of the New Zealanders' engine horse running amok through bamboo huts, leaving behind it a devastating ruin of Tommy mosquito nets.

July 1st proved to be the first day of sadness for the Australians—for death walked amongst them. On that day Driver Bowen died of malaria. It was the beginning. Malaria, smallpox, cholera, dysentery, enteric, and typhoid were soon to take a heavy toll.

On July 6th S.H.Q. and "A" Troop arrived from Australia and took charge under the title 1st Australian and N.Z. Wireless Signal Squadron.

The Australian Pack Troop Stations remained in the field till October—when they were recalled preparatory to the Squadron mobilisation.

Pack Troop days were over, but the memory of good work performed during the force's darkest days remained with the High Command, promising well for what a larger signal body could accomplish in a wider field of endeavour.

The work of the two Australian pack stations in the field is now described.

## THE KHAMISIYAH STATION.

### 15th Division takes over Euphrates Line.

On April 25th—as has been indicated—news was received that an Australian Station was to stand by to proceed to Khamisiyah. It comprised the O.C., Sgt. Pell, Corp. Simpson, Sappers Carmichael, McDowell, Fletcher, Jackson, Bourke and Bishton, Drivers Spragg, Parry, Watkins, Matthews, Shelley, with 20 horses and 18 mules for baggage; and it moved out with the 42nd Infantry Brigade (15th Division) for the first stage of their 140 mile trek. Shaibah Fort was reached on the 30th after a 13-mile trip. This journey was quite trying enough for the horses, but the Infantry had a terrible time of it, carrying their packs under a broiling sun.



The Shatra Gate, Nasiriyah.





Sketch Map of Lower Mesopotamia, showing the Shatt-el-Arab, the marshes at the junction of the Tigris and Euphrates, and towns where the early pack stations were on duty.

Station erected upon arrival and remained open until 10 p.m., when it was dismantled ready for the trek on the morrow.

Next day, left at 6 a.m.; finished the morning's journey at 10 a.m., and erected. All suffered from dysentery due to the water, which was brackish. For the rest of the journey the mules for baggage transport were replaced by camels that had been waiting at Shaibah, and a magnificent sight they made as 750 of them moved slowly forwards. Left early the following morning for Grainat, 15 miles, which was reached after another tedious and trying journey. The infantry upon arrival had to set to and dig firing trenches round the camp.

The following morning, 14 miles was set for the march, and it was a pitiful sight to see the British infantry ploughing through the sand. Owing to the number going sick and exhausted at this stage, the ambulance wagons (each drawn by two bullocks) were placed at the head of the column, the idea being to let the men see there was no hope of being carried; they would have to see it through themselves. Sections were detailed to bring up the rear and to assist along the "knocked-out" ones. The Wireless Station horses had infantry rifles and haversacks hanging all around them. The ambulance wagons and A.T. carts were up to their axles in the sand, and after a cruel and terrible march the Brigade filtered into Ratawi. Wireless Station erected, and, during the evening, a press wire was received stating that General Townshend had surrendered.

The next trek was one of 10½ miles to Ghabisiyah, and after the usual torments of the march, all were delighted at finding the river water fresh and free from salt. The following day, 17 miles were covered, and a sick parade held for all troops at Lagait. Three wireless men were marked for return to Basra by stream. Friday, May 5th, was hailed as a holiday by the brigade troops, but the Wireless Station put in a busy day reporting progress.

The next stage of 28 miles brought Khamisiyah into sight, and we received orders that the Station was to remain with a detachment of troops, while the Brigade was to continue to Nasiriyah, doing two stages, in all 35 miles. Lt. S. J. White, after saying farewell to the Station, returned with the brigade sick, by boat to Basra.

The work of the Station on the long trek was a

subject of congratulation from the Director of Army Signals, and had created quite a wonderful impression upon the English section by the speed at which messages were handled to and from VTC. In addition to its own messages, the Station had successfully relayed a quantity of traffic when conditions were bad.

## THE NASIRIYAH STATION.

### With No. 2 Pack Station to Nasiriyah.

This consisted of 13 other ranks, 6 Indians, 18 horses and 17 transport mules, and was embarked on barges at Magil on May 31st. Remount officers stood by and gasped as they witnessed the rapid and successful embarkation of the "outlaws" they had known so well—the horses walking behind their owners along a plank 3 feet wide and 20 feet long. The "wild horses" of April 1st were now the Station's pride and joy.

A steam launch soon had a barge on either side and the party was on its way to Kurna, junction of the Tigris and Euphrates. Here the route lay through the uncharted Lake Hammar, but on board was Miss Gertrude Lothian Bell, and she piloted the craft through. The daughter of a north-country ironmaster, she had been explorer, antiquarian and British agent in the Near East almost since girlhood. Her knowledge of local affairs proved invaluable to the force.

Nasiriyah was a pretty enough village after Basra. It had actually been laid out in squares by a progressive Sheikh. The place was the junction of the Hai River and also the British left wing, and the last outpost on the Euphrates, but rather dull from a military point of view. However, heavy rifle fire and Arab raids were a nightly reminder that something might be doing some day. Meanwhile, there was a fair amount of traffic, as land lines were continually down.

Later, an advance by river and launch to Samawa was ordered—the next important town on this part of the Euphrates. On a flyboat went some of the operators. Considerable Turkish opposition was encountered, but all traffic was satisfactorily handled both by the gunboat and the relay station at Nasiriyah.

The political importance of Nasiriyah must be mentioned. It is a land of gardens and mud forts and of chieftains divided amongst themselves. It commands Basra from the Euphrates side, controls the importation of arms and supplies, and watches the Hai tribes and guarantees their quietness.



# COLOMBO AND BOMBAY

June, 1916: S.H.Q. and "A" Troop men celebrating the crossing of the Line. Owing to accidents (on other transports) due to horseplay, the ceremonies were later forbidden by A.I.F. Headquarters.



February, 1916: Pack Troop men in the luxuriant Peradeniya Gardens, Kandy.



June, 1916: Squadron men at Mt. Lavinia, Colombo.



A reinforcement at Elephanta Island, Bombay. This island is famous for its ancient carved caves.





## A black and white photograph of a palm grove in the Sudan. In the foreground, a large palm tree trunk is on the right, and its fronds arch over the path. In the background, several people are walking along a dirt path lined with palm trees. The scene is bright and sunny.

10

FORMATION  
SQUADRON  
HEADQUARTERS  
and "A" TR

Early in March, 1916, the Imperial Government informed the Commonwealth Government that it desired to increase the wireless capacity of the station by the addition of another section, thus making a complete station. The object was to be a homogeneous Australian and New Zealand station. Five reinforcements were to sail for New Zealand by 15 per cent. reinforcements quaterly.



# FORMATION OF SQUADRON HEADQUARTERS and "A" TROOP

Early in March, 1916, the Imperial authorities informed the Commonwealth Government that it was desired to increase the wireless establishment in Mesopotamia by the addition of another troop, also an H.Q. section, thus making a complete squadron that would be a homogeneous Australian and New Zealand unit. First reinforcements were to sail with H.Q., followed by 15 per cent. reinforcements quarterly.

Accordingly Captain Gartrell (S.A.) was given instructions to collect men in the southern states and Lieut. Marr from the northern. Captain Gartrell was, however, accidentally drowned before the formation of his unit had been completed, and Major Sutherland was therefore appointed to command with Marr (now Captain) as second-in-command. The work of recruiting continued; every effort was made to secure men of the highest technical knowledge from all the military districts of the Commonwealth. After the customary visual training in Centennial Park, the N.S.W. section entrained on April 26th for Broadmeadows in Victoria, where, despite cold and rain, the complete unit managed during the next month to get in a considerable amount of wireless and transport practice. Rumors of sailing dates and similar exciting topics filled our conversation, and confirmation came quickly. By 8 a.m. on May 30th we were on board the P. & O. steamer "Morea," and, though the date had been kept secret, a crowd assembled on the wharf to say good-bye.

We had a day's leave in Fremantle, and on June 13th engaged in the Crossing of the Line ceremonies. On arrival at Colombo we were surprised to learn that the military authorities had no information regarding us—a circumstance that appeared curious at the time, but in later experience proved to be repeated everywhere. At any time troops and reinforcements destined for Mesopotamia might, for all the information the authorities in Ceylon or India had regarding them, have been going anywhere; in fact, reinforcements were occasionally sent to Egypt by mistake. It might also be said that the haziness regarding the Squadron's whereabouts and movements was by no means confined to India, Ceylon, and Mesopotamia itself, but was shared by Australia as well, for the General Staff there knew almost as little as anyone else about their own unit.

It was not unnatural, therefore, that the feeling of being "nobody's baby" was a general one among all ranks in the Squadron's early days in Mesopotamia, but, in fairness, it must be added that when Australia

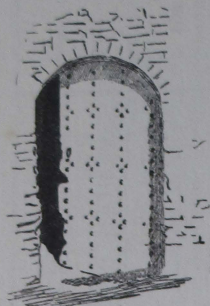
A Bombay Tram-ticket.

F 697118	
ONE ANNA.	
FROM	TO
1	8ASSOON DOCK.
2	2 Colaba L. Xing.
3	3 Museum East.
3A	Museum West.
4	4 Ballard Pier
5	5 Bori Bunder
6	6 Cr. Market.
7	7 Dhobi Talao.
8	8 Carnc. Bnd.
9	9 PRINCE'S DOCK
10	10 Girgaum P. Ch.
10a	10a Opera House.
11	11 Pydhonie.
12	12 Nall Bazar.
13	13 C. P. TANK.
14	14 Cor. of Gt. Rd.
15	15 Charni Rd. Ja.
16	16 GRANT ROAD.
17	17 Foras Rd. Ja.
18	18 TARDEO.
19	19 Two Tanks.
20	20 J. J. Hospt. Ja.
21	21 MAZAGON.
22	22 Parsi Statue.
23	23 JACOB'S CIRCLE.
24	24 Byc. Bridge.
25	25 V. Gardens.
26	26 Lal Bag.
27	27 Parel.
28	28 DADAR.

finally received definite details the response was immediate and generous. Especially was this the case in regard to reinforcements and comforts.

When one considered the conflicting reports that reached Australia and New Zealand, it was not to be wondered at that people had but the vaguest idea of Mesopotamian conditions. One individual would describe the country as a vast quagmire, while another would call it a huge dry desert with continual dust storms. A third would write of the extreme heat, a fourth of the extreme cold; someone else would mention the hostility of the Arabs and yet another write of their friendliness; and so on with every aspect of the country and conditions. Nor could it be said that any of these writers were wrong, for each was merely describing the country from a different view-point. In a land where a man could be sunstruck by day and frost-bitten by night all things were possible: a huge stretch of barren dusty country could, by a few points of rain or the breaking of a river bund, become an impassable swamp in a few hours. Arabs who sold eggs during the day would as soon rob the buyer at night. Allowing, therefore, for the general ignorance displayed concerning Mesopotamia's geographical position and of its climatic conditions, one ceased to be surprised at the somewhat ludicrous gifts that were sent to us at first, and remained grateful to those who showed that our small unit was not altogether forgotten. It was, for instance, unnecessary to forward





Almost anywhere on the Rivers—an iron-studded courtyard door telling of past troublous times.

packets of dates to troops who were camped under date palms, or tins of "bully-beef" to men who ate that nourishing article every day!

## COLOMBO, BOMBAY, AND THE PERSIAN GULF.

Colombo arranged for the troop to stay at the Echelon Barracks. Leave was granted and the men went off sight-seeing. Next morning reveille was at 4.30, and, passing out of the barracks, the troop marched down to the jetty and was conveyed in a tender to B.I. steamer "Novara," leaving Colombo at 10 a.m. for Bombay. The troop-deck accommodation was so filthy that a small "mutiny" was necessary before second-class accommodation was offered. Monsoonal weather was experienced during the voyage. The steamer anchored in Bombay harbour at 3.30 p.m. on 22nd June, and, as the low tide would not allow her to berth alongside the quay, the men disembarked by tender. The troop stayed at Colaba Barracks, their advent, as elsewhere, being unheralded. Here the men were issued with summer uniforms in place of the thick woollen clothing with which they had been provided in Australia. (It turned out, however, that this woollen clothing, quite unsuitable in tropical weather, was exactly what was required for the bitter winters of Iraq and Persia).

Accordingly felt hats (always our pride) had to be replaced by topees, which were made further uncomfortable by the addition of a shade to protect the back of the neck. As a further and necessary protection against heat-stroke, pads, to be worn over the spine, were also issued.

On June 24th S.H.Q. and "A" Troop embarked for Basra in the B.I. s.s. "Ellengra." Karachi was reached on the 27th, after a voyage during which the ship rolled intolerably, and after spending a day here she proceeded to Muscat. The heat at Muscat was intense (122 deg.), and no one was sorry when, at 4.45 p.m. on the 30th, the voyage was continued. The next call was Bushire, where the "Ellengra" remained from 3.30 p.m. on July 3rd until 7.40 next morning, and then made the Shatt-el-Arab bar at 5.30 p.m. the same day, anchoring there for the night.

Next morning at daybreak a pilot was taken on board, the journey up river begun, and Basra reached at 4.45 p.m. Our reception was indeed a miserable one. Gloomy reports from the front, as well as stories of the terrible death-roll from heat stroke, the oppressive climate, and the incessant attention of insect pests, united in depressing our spirits.

The men remained on board in midstream until the 6th July, when they disembarked at Magil Wharf,

and, marching into the camp, joined up with the remainder of the two troops already here, who were eagerly waiting to welcome their new comrades.

## WITH THE SQUADRON AT MAGIL

With the arrival of S.H.Q. and "A" Troop at Magil Camp on July 6th, the Australian and New Zealand Wireless Signal Squadron came automatically into being; it comprised S.H.Q. and staff, "A" Troop (2 wagons and 2 packs), "B" Troop (the Pack Troop—1 wagon and 3 packs), and "C" Troop (the N.Z. Troop—1 wagon and 3 packs).

The N.Z. troop suffered this same day a heavy blow when it lost its O.C. and only officer, Lieut. Clarke, and S.H.Q. suffered similarly three months later through the loss of Newman, its Squadron Sergeant-Major. (His place was filled by S.M. Head and in 1918 by S.M. O'Dea). Mid-July was indeed an unfortunate month for the squadron to arrive; it meant that all ranks were plunged into the terrors of a Mesopotamian summer without having had an opportunity for acclimatisation. By July 31st "B" Troop could boast only 27 effectives, "C" Troop 21, and "A" just about as many. The new unit therefore had to cope with sickness, disorganisation, extreme heat and ten months of bully beef, but the pluck and endurance of officers and men triumphed over all four.

The climate in the Basra district was the most humid in the country; the troops did not benefit by cooler nights there as they might have farther up the river. Sandflies, mosquitoes, and flies were such that little sleep was possible by day or by night; men would be seen walking about the camp at all hours, solely to escape the distraction of vainly seeking sleep hour after hour. During the daytime the men would lie in their tents nearly naked, yet still in a bath of perspiration; owing to the prickly heat many men, under the doctor's orders, discarded pants altogether and went about the camp in shirt and topee only, causing universal amusement.

In spite of camp orders to the contrary, the men insisted on watering their horses every noonday, preferring to take the chance of heatstroke rather than allow their horses to suffer. However, the trips to Gurmat Ali formed a useful training manoeuvre when we had got used to our horses and our sets. As many pack stations as possible were manned. We then set off northward to the Arab plantations at Gurmat Ali, erected stations, bought (and stole) fruit and watermelons, rested under the date palms, after which we dismantled the stations and betook ourselves home.

Meanwhile, by arrangement with the Second (British) Squadron, it had been decided that we should take over advanced wireless work and leave to them that at the base and on the lines of communication. To handle this work we were equipped with two classes of sets. These were rated as half-kilowatt and one-and-a-half kilowatt respectively, and were manufactured by the Marconi Company. Their design seemed to be based on dependability—with weight, efficiency, and up-to-dateness falling into second place—and dependable they certainly were for the hardest of work, and they proved invaluable through-



Hospital Paddle-Wheeler, with green-painted cots filling all the available accommodation on both decks.



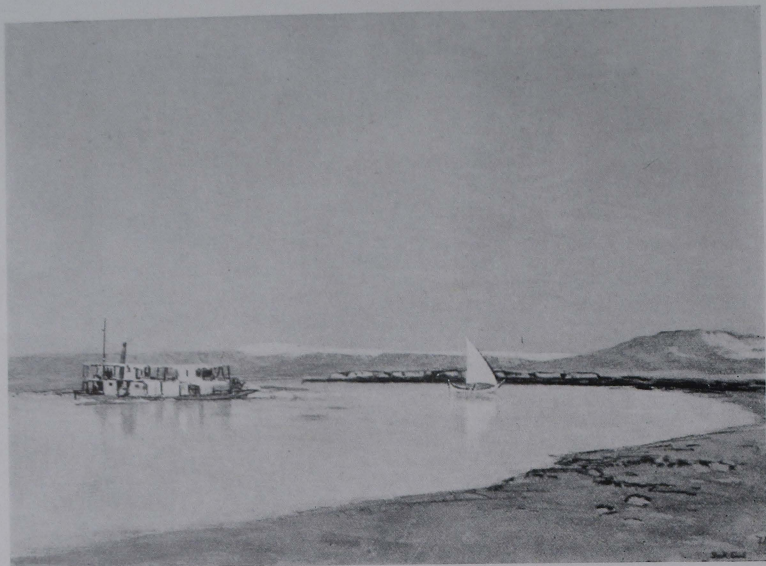
## A COOK-SHOP IN THE BAZAAR



*Squares of meat (kabobs) are being roasted on a spit over a charcoal fire. When they are ready, they will be served to a customer inside, wrapped up in a chupatty.*



# M E S O P O T A M I A N   D A W N



NEAR SHEIKH SAAD.

(from the Water-color by Donald Maxwell)

*F*ar as the snow upon the untraversed hills,  
Far and as lovely lies my dreaming thought  
On heights where hope has magically wrought  
Her rosy-gleaming wonder. The sun spills  
Gold on the glittering plain, and music thrills  
The frosted air as though the wind drew taut  
Strings of invisible harps. Beauty is caught  
In shining meshes, softly as God wills.

*Young with the Dawn awakens out of sleep  
The desolate interminable land ;  
Her sinuous river winds across her sand  
Swift, but the liquid silver seems to creep  
As slowly as those unhurried flocks of sheep  
That crop the withered grass and pause and stand.*

*J. Griffith Fairfax,  
in "Mesopotamia".*





El Azair—The Tomb of the Prophet Ezra. Its blue-tiled dome was the most photographed thing in Mesopot.

out the campaign. Nevertheless one cannot help smiling at the idea of 500-watt stations rated for 35 miles, when amateurs to-day are sending half-way round the world on a tenth of the power.

The smaller and more mobile "set" was the "Pack Set," which got its name from the fact that it was carried as packs on horses or mules. It consisted of five separate loads carried on specially-built frames strapped on to pack saddles. Load No. 1 consisted of an air-cooled petrol engine of 2½ H.P., built by Douglas and Co., evenly balanced by an alternator on the opposite side of the saddle. There was also a piece of shafting to connect both together when in use. Load No. 2—two boxes containing the actual sending and receiving gear. Load No. 3—two valises containing sufficient rigging material to erect two masts, also aerial gear and capacity earth nets. Load No. 4 was a pair of specially built frames, each carrying eight sections for the masts. The sections were constructed of tubular steel, with a flange so as to fit into each other for a few inches, and would make a mast 30 feet high. Load No. 5 contained spare parts and stocks of petrol and oil. The personnel of a Pack Station was: One N.C.O. in charge, a corporal in charge of transport, six operators, and five drivers—all mounted. Each driver had a pack-horse to lead and look after. Each operator had a distinct number of duties in the erection of the station, thus enabling a set to be erected and be in communication within seven or eight minutes. Later on a mechanic was allotted to every station, but they were not on the original establishment. It was also not till sometime afterwards that a sufficient complement of farriers, saddlers and carpenters was provided, and that only after a good deal of agitation.

The other "set" was the "Wagon Set," and consisted of two limbered wagons, each drawn by teams of six horses driven postillion fashion. The instrument wagon contained the engine, alternator, and rotary discharger in its front limber, and radio gear in its rear limber; the mast limbers carried petrol, oil, tools, the mast sections, and gear sufficient to erect two seventy-foot masts on the "jury" system. The staff employed was similar to that of a pack-station, but with the addition of an operator and a driver.

On September 17th Major Sutherland went into hospital, and was evacuated to Australia. Captain Marr, therefore, took command; shortly afterwards Lt. White was also evacuated to Australia. By now it was somewhat cooler, and work took on a new zest; nearly every day we had all the horses out on desert treks. It was just as well that we were starting to feel our feet, for the beginning of our real work was close at hand.

We already had two New Zealand stations up river; for the Australians October 14th was the great day when the staffs for a wagon and two pack sets were embarked on the famous old paddle-wheeler "Mejdieh." The following six weeks was a busy one, and by the time it was over the squadron stations had all been mobilised into their scheduled positions in the field. The details of that mobilisation are as follows:—

## FIRST MOBILISATION OF SQUADRON STATIONS.

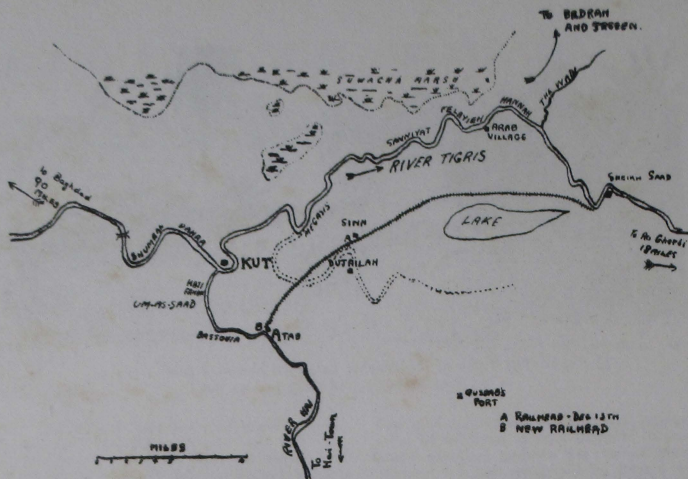
October 14th—December 12th, 1916.

- Oct. 14th.—Two N.Z. packs (J and K) already at Mudellil and Ali Gharbi (posts between Amara and Kut).
- Oct. 14th.—One wagon (E) and two packs (F and G) embark. Arrive Arab Village (G.H.Q.), 20th; E and F to 1st Corps H.Q., Felayieh (left bank), G to 13th Divn., Es. Sinn.
- Oct. 23rd.—One pack (H) embarks, arrives Arab Village 30th and joins 6th Cavalry Brigade.
- Nov. 12th.—One N.Z. and one Australian pack (L and D) leave by road. Reach Amara 21st, Sheikh Saad (Advanced Base) Dec. 2nd and Es. Sinn Dec. 5th.
- Nov. 17th.—Three wagons (A, B and I) and one pack (C) leave by road; reach Ezra's Tomb 23rd and Amara 27th. I wagon remains Ali Gharbi Dec. 5th. C continues by road and A and B by river to Arab Village (Dec. 10th).
- Nov. 18th.—Squadron Headquarters embark and reach G.H.Q., Arab Village Nov. 25th.
- Dec. 3rd.—Director of Army Signals orders squadron to be disposed as follows by December 12th:—  

G.H.Q.	.. ..	A Wagon and L Pack
I. Corps	.. ..	E Wagon and F Pack
III. Corps	.. ..	B Wagon and D Pack
Cav. Div. H.Q.	.. ..	C Pack
6th Cav. Bde.	.. ..	H Pack
7th Cav. Bde.	.. ..	G Pack
Ali Gharbi	.. ..	I Wagon and K Pack
Sheikh Saad	.. ..	J Pack
- Dec. 13th/14th.—S.H.Q. and A Wagon with Army Commander at Sinn Abtar; L pack at Advanced Report Centre, Dujailah. All other stations already in allotted positions by the previous day.

About this time the N.Z. Government promoted two senior N.C.O.'s to commissioned rank. These were Sgts. Melville and McKeown, of whom the former was appointed to the command of the N.Z. Troop.





Sketch map, showing Kut-el-Amara and surrounding country. Prior to December, 1916, British military effort had been concentrated on the Turkish trench system at Sanniyat, between the river and the Suwacha marsh. This position was to all intents and purposes impregnable.

## THE OPERATIONS ROUND KUT

### REORGANISATION OF THE FORCE

A summer and winter had passed since Kut fell. In military operations nothing had been done (except on the Russian side), but behind the British lines a miraculous transformation scene was in progress. The noise of renewed activity mingled everywhere with the echoes of the great disaster. Gone was the control of the India Office—its parsimony, its over-optimism—gone were even the memories of its mistakes.

In July the War Office took over. From the ashes of Indian Expeditionary Force D arose a shining phoenix—the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force. A month later, General Maude assumed command. He had led his division through the dark days before Kut fell; now as Commander-in-Chief he brought his strong heart to the stern work of reorganisation—and with it a decision not to move till every detail was ready. The port of Basra was put in charge of a distinguished engineer; transport facilities were multiplied by five; hospital services were now all that could be desired. Ice and soda-water factories, canteens, a visit from the incoming Chief for India, new activities on every side enhanced the morale of the troops.

By December, Maude was ready (and the mobilisation of the squadron wireless stations was part of that readiness). His plans were to advance to the Hai and to secure it with a strong force, and then to continue a steady co-operation of infantry and cavalry throughout the winter on the right bank of the Tigris. No return to a useless sacrifice of life against an impregnable position; rather give the Turks something to think about elsewhere. The Hai flank must be turned!

All followed according to plan. In nine weeks' stubborn fighting, "Tommy" and Indian had cleared the enemy out of every right-bank trench; then in one glorious day Shumran was bridged, Sanniyat forced, and the Turk in full retreat on Baghdad, with his roll-call suffering by the loss of four thousand men, eighty guns, and vast masses of every kind of military stores. The task was done; British prestige in the

Near East was again something to be reckoned with!

What share did the squadron have in the victory? A more substantial one, we believe, than the world knows, if only through the activities of the two stations at the advanced report-centres, of which more later.

During the operations round Kut the following stations did not move:—

E Wagon—Traffic for I. Corps H.Q. at Felayieh.

F Pack—(From Felayieh) at Es Sinn, Interception.

A Wagon—G.H.Q. traffic, also Interception.

B Wagon—Traffic for III. Corps H.Q. at Atab.

I Wagon } L. of C.,

K Pack } Ali Gharbi

J Pack—Advanced Base, Sheikh Saad.

The more strenuous mobile work thus fell on Packs G, H, C, D and L. (The personnel of the original C Station was exchanged with that of F on January 7th, their designations, however, not being altered.)

### THE ADVANCE TO THE HAI.

When the operations began the Cavalry Division (6th and 7th Cavalry Brigades) was in camp at Arab Village bridgehead. On the 13th the division, with three pack stations (C, G and H) moved up to the Hai and beyond as flank guard for the infantry. The advance was rather experimental. Units lost contact with each other and with their commands; the wireless stations were not called upon to any extent. However, the objective was gained without much fighting and the division re-formed at Atab on the following day. Here G Station put through the first good batch of traffic.

A narrative of that first famous advance is given hereunder:—

"Wednesday, the thirteenth, dawned cloudlessly, and our camp with the cavalry at Arab Village is as peaceful and calm as could be, but before the sun sets we are destined to travel far and fast, as it is the opening day of a new campaign.



"The troops are all quietly exercising their horses, and we are out on the desert practising erections and taking things easy, when a heliograph rapidly flashes out a message to return post haste, which we do, wondering at the excitement and bustle. Immediately we arrive we are ordered to pack up and to dump our kit with the exception of a change of underclothing and one blanket. The secret is out; a big stunt is imminent. Two hours later we are on the move.

"It is 5 p.m., and the sun slowly sinking in the west casts long and deepening shadows across the desert. Thousands of horses and men are moving out. Squadrons of Hussars and Lancers with colored pennants flying and swords swinging are a sight never to be forgotten as they turn and wheel into position. Batteries of field-guns are dashing hither and thither in quest of their respective positions in the vast multitude of horses and men. Despatch riders are delivering operation orders. Slowly but surely dusk overtakes them all, leaving a few parties still desperately trying to find their places.

"The place of our three stations is at the head of the column. The night is pitch dark, though clear. All is silent; orders are whispered; the only sound is the dull thud of our horses' hoofs on the soft ground. We appear to be alone, yet the neigh of an impatient horse and the stamp of a restless hoof tells us others are near. Leaning down we see silhouetted against the skyline the heads of horses and men and the tops of lances, and we know we are passing the 7th Brigade waiting its turn to join in the column. Strict orders about smoking, whispers, thousands of eager and restless horses and men, pitch darkness, destination unknown. Everything keeps us to a high pitch of excitement. Smothered coughs and restless hoofs tell us we are still passing hundreds of armed men, hidden by the night and impatiently awaiting the order to advance.

"On and on we go, alternately walking and trotting, and no one knows our direction until we reach Twin Canals. Here we halt and dismount; rumour has it we are camping for the night, but no, we are off again. Riding 12 abreast we continue till midnight, when we halt to water our horses at what we afterwards discover is Es Sinn. Off we go again. Travelling is very rough—the pack horses have to be trotted over old trenches, nullahs, and holes. Away on our right at Sanniyat the artillery is bombarding heavily, covering our advance.

"We dismount and rest awhile. It is bitterly cold and we alternately run alongside our horses and ride to keep warm. Some sleep in their saddles, and some are asleep at their horses' hoofs the minute we stop for our 10-minute rest in every hour. Orders come back to the effect that all overcoats are to be strapped to saddles—and a shiver goes down our spines. It is bitterly cold and we very reluctantly obey. "We may come across the enemy at dawn" and "there may be no more stops" are other comforting messages sent back. We have another run and loosen our stiffened joints.

"Dawn breaks to find us on the banks of an almost dry river, which proves to be the Shatt-el-Hai. Here we erect our station in 6 ft. liquorice reeds, in order to send some urgent messages, while our advance-guard is skirmishing with an enemy outpost across the river-bed. We are left alone with a squadron of lancers as escort while the cavalry division passes rapidly on. Our messages acknowledged and our work finished we dismantle, and proceed. Down one bank full tilt—up the other and on toward the cloud of dust in front. It is the cavalry miles ahead and travelling fast. We no sooner arrive and find the General than we have to erect. Finish, off again, another wild gallop to catch up and another stop for communications. All the morning we do this while the Division presses rapidly on, and we do our best to keep up

communications with H.Q., and report our progress every 10 miles or so. Kut is now the centre of a terrific bombardment, across on our right still, though now farther back.

"Now the division divides. 6th Brigade to the right, 7th to the left, each taking its own artillery. In this formation a couple of miles apart we continue to advance till 3 p.m. The cavalry squadrons now advance in skirmishing order, four or five yards between each man, while we stop to erect. The horse artillery has galloped past and by now is in action, bombarding the Turkish line on the river bank. Turkish troops and cavalry can be seen advancing about 3 to 4 miles away, but by this time our guns have drawn the fire of a monitor (captured from Townshend at Kut), whose 6-inch guns outrange the 13-pounders of the horse artillery, and cause havoc. Ten minutes of this and it is realised that we will soon be blown to pieces, so the order is given to retire. The brigades on both flanks then come back at full gallop out of range, but our station has priority messages to transmit and gets left out on the desert with a troop of Indian Lancers as escort.

"Our aerial masts are now conspicuous on the vacant plain, and the next five minutes are lively. We decide to evacuate when a staff officer is seen galloping towards us, storming because we have been left to the mercy of the Turkish gunners. All records in wireless-dismantling are smashed within the next few minutes. High explosive lands all round us as we make off at full gallop. One shell lobs close enough to cover us with dirt. Luckily no one is hit and our horses need no spurs. At this moment an aeroplane working with us develops engine trouble and lands on our left, and the Turks, realising it, change their fire over.

"We bivouac near Atab about 9 p.m. (14th) and dine luxuriously on an ounce of biscuit and a little jam. Besides this, we have only had a biscuit or two, and half a tin of bully in 26 hours. The horses have hardly had their packs off during the same period. After a bitterly cold and dewy bivouac we are off again."

## OTHER CAVALRY OPERATIONS.

On the 15th "D" Station joined up, and during the next week the division did good work by co-operating with the infantry in its efforts at cutting off the Haji-Fahan loop, with the artillery stunt north of Shumran (when Turkish communications received a heavy bombardment), as well as with the two premature efforts at bridging the Tigris.

L. Station (N.Z.) also participated in these operations.

By this time the wireless and the other cavalry units had settled efficiently to their work—which was exceedingly strenuous and conducted under extreme shortage of rations and water, and often under heavy fire.

## RAIDS ON ARABS.

Later, just before Christmas, G, H and D went off with the division on a raid southwards to Qussab's Fort. Here two Arab compounds were shelled and burnt and large quantities of grain seized. Boxing night saw them at Arab Village (except that L stopped at Sinn and D went back to Atab). Here the divisional stations, thoroughly soaked, found all their tents had disappeared and that they were homeless. Stations and tents had to be erected in the rain and mud and darkness.

The desert Arabs were a problem in themselves. They were forever hovering on our flank or that of the enemy, ready to take advantage of any accident or confusion by the way. That they usually singled us out for attention rather than the Turks was simply because they depended on gaining more plunder from the average British soldier. Their mobility was as





tonishing; they had only a bag of dates, a small ration of grain, and a Mauser or Martini-Henri, while our chargers were handicapped with all their official accoutrements and trappings. They were for ever swooping about on the horizon, watching—watching for the isolated soldier, for the wounded man—for a chance to kill and rob and mutilate. Treating them as they would treat us was the only way to deal with them; the only teaching they would listen to were the ranging observations of artillery observing officers.

Despite the line of blockhouses and wire-entanglements along the light railway flanking the camp on the desert side, raids by Arabs were frequent, and many were the "dodges" devised by them to obtain a little loot. A certain staff-colonel saw a suspicious figure prowling around the camp one night and gave chase in his pyjamas armed with a revolver. He was gone only five minutes, but in that time everything he possessed, including even his tent, had disappeared!

Exceedingly good work was done by the wireless stations during these strenuous ten days. Incidentally they had no transport and had to depend on the contents of their haversacks for rations and clothing. Wet weather lasted till January 7th, when a night cavalry movement was ordered from a new base on the Hai (G, H and C Stations), while D went with the 14th Division. However, a thick mist arose and the cavalry only got back to their base by following a paper trail.

## HAI TOWN AND THE WADI STUNTS.

Communications for the division on the famous Hai-town stunt were provided by C, H and G Stations (January 10th to 15th)—a raid on a larger scale than that previously undertaken. The division travelled all day, and camped in the open to the tune of continuous Arab sniping. Vast quantities of grain and live stock were captured, as well as seven thousand rifles and a quarter of a million rounds of British ammunition, but British ideas of humanity prevented the raid from being pushed to a point where it would have had any effect on the Oriental mind, and it was a psychological failure. However, the stations managed to get a few fowls into the larder as well as some extra food for their horses.

On January 19th, C Station was sent on a combined cavalry and aeroplane reconnaissance round the marshes north of Sanniyat (Fort Abdul Wahad). This reconnaissance showed that it was quite possible to turn the Sanniyat position by a wide flanking movement around the Suwacha Marshes and through Jessen and Bedrah, near foothills. Special preparations were accordingly made for such a movement with a combined force of cavalry and artillery. C, H and G went

off on this expedition (afterwards known as the "Wadi" stunt), carrying as much fodder and rations as they could. Unfortunately, severe thunderstorms passed over the foothills, and hail and continuous rain fell on the plains. Marshes overflowed and dry wadis became roaring torrents. One station (G) erected and, with men holding a tent over the apparatus, was gallantly attempting to clear traffic when the whole affair collapsed and all concerned received a high tension shock! When the order to return was given, the bivouac was six inches deep in water; however, saddling-up was accomplished by the light of a flaring Primus. An unexpected rum issue saved the life of the party. On the way back things got even worse. The artillery had an absolutely terrible time man-handling guns and limbers, while the wireless lost a horse in quicksand. Most of the time they were floundering in slippery mud or struggling in water up to their horses' knees. Charges by wild pigs added to the excitement. At dawn G Station erected under difficulties, and managed to put through a batch of traffic.

All were back in a new camp S9 (near Bassouia) by January 27th; on the 30th Station H accompanied a party on an Arab raid (and brought home fowls, kids and lambs—a welcome change from "bully").

## FURTHER CAVALRY ACTIVITY.

On two occasions (Feb. 1st and Feb. 2nd-3rd) the cavalry were ordered out (G and C Stations) as a flank guard for the artillery during their bombardment of the Kut salient, and were again under heavy fire. The Turkish pieces were hidden by smoke—with yellow bursts of flame against the black. The roar of the guns was continuous. On the 7th and 8th another visit was paid to Hai Town (C and H); on the 10th an artillery raid (C, H, G and L Stations) was made on the Turkish communications from the heights of Baghailah Ridge, and this ended, as similar raids had done, to the tune of pretty hot enemy fire. After Baghailah G Station went back to Sinn. February 14th, 15th and 16th were busy days again—flanking the infantry to keep off some of the enemy fire. On the last day the cavalry captured 1000 prisoners; but the Turks cut the bund on the way home, and the troops had to wade knee-deep for miles. We found out afterwards that our Arab friends had suffered badly by this flooding; so much so that we did not see them again for months!

This was the end of various flanking movements round Kut. The cavalry wireless stations had been almost continuously on the move for over two months; they had attended to a variety of jobs, under a variety of circumstances, and had shown the stuff they were made of. In enlarging upon cavalry activities, the work of the remaining squadron stations must not be forgotten. Though they were stationary a very careful and continuous watch had to be maintained. Often messages from the cavalry stations had to be copied first time of sending; there was no time for repeats, corrections, or even acknowledgments.

More important still was the work of A wagon and F pack stations at Squadron Headquarters. These two stations were on the important intelligence task of copying down the whole of the traffic of the enemy stations. At the same time this work always gave way to traffic from the cavalry stations, which messages were splendidly handled, and we believe that a repeat was hardly ever asked for by the G.H.Q. stations.

We must not forget that the final winning of Kut was an infantry job. Every inch of the ground had to be won with bomb and bayonet and machine-gun, every trench and sap gained only at the cost of heavy British and Indian casualties. Troops fought and suffered with the same heroism on the mud plains of Kut as did their comrades on the fair fields of France.



# OPERATIONS ROUND KUT

British Riverhead and Advanced Base at Arab Village, showing bridge leading to Felayieh. The tents are those of the wireless stations attached to the Cavalry prior to the advance to the Hai



Sinn Banks, as they appeared at the beginning of the operations, December 12th.



On the Hai-town Stunt—"H" Station erected to ask G.H.Q. what was to be done with a British aeroplane that had been forced to descend.

The portrait is that of an Arab tribesman who is watching his grain and livestock being carried off by way of reprisal for his and his fellows' misdeeds.

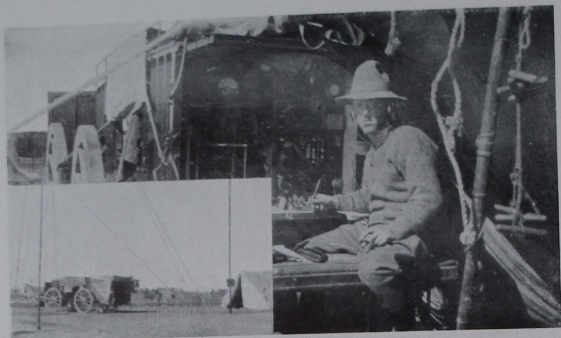


Cavalry operations round Kut—a station erected half-mast during one of the artillery raids.





# ON THE PLAINS OF KUT



"E" Wagon erected at Felayieh handling traffic for I Corps.



Just mud! So tenacious is Mesopotamian mud that an hour's ram was sufficient to immobilise troops for a week.

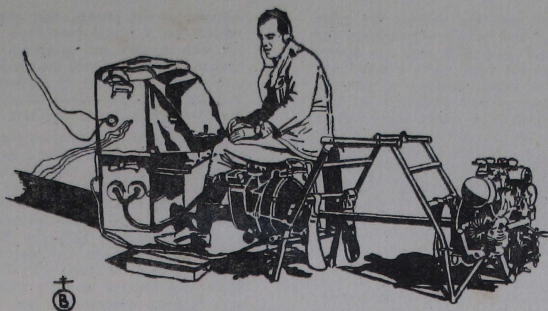


The N.Z. cookhouse at S9—a cavalry bivouac on the Ha.



Looking towards Kut—one of the last terrific bombardments of the Turkish position.





*A pack station erected*

## THE ADVANCE TO BAGHDAD

### THE CROSSING AT SHUMRAN.

February 23rd dawned. It was the great day. For weeks Sanniyat had been subjected to an absolute inferno of H.E., but without the usual infantry waves charging behind; for weeks enemy communications at Shumran had been subjected to artillery raids from across the river, and now at Kut and Megasis the Turk could detect ill-concealed preparations for bridging and ferrying. An attack was imminent, but where? The Turkish commander decided to strengthen the Megasis line.

Maude struck, but not at Megasis. Instead, our infantrymen followed on behind the last terrible bombardment of the Sanniyat position. Upstream at Shumran a bridge and three ferries had been planned in the hope that the ferries would succeed where the pontoons might fail. It turned out otherwise. The ferries had to be abandoned by their rowers under withering fire, yet at Shumran the bridge grew under the sappers' hands as smoothly as in peace-time practice.

By dusk on the 23rd the bridge across the swiftly-running, tawny Tigris was open for traffic; our leading troops crossed, and at once closed with the enemy rearguard in a fierce action. **THE ADVANCE WAS ON.** At 3 a.m. came D Station, under orders for III. Corps at Shumran, the first of all the mounted troops to cross the bridge, and it received the wrath of the engineer staff upon its collective head for so being. Behind, through the wintry dawn, followed the Cavalry Division (C, H and L Stations). They had been up most of the night, but were too late to do anything but spend a weary day in a vain endeavour to outflank the Turkish rear-guard ensconced in the maze of mounds, nullahs, and ruins that made up the Shumran peninsula.

During the morning the bridge was opened for a little while—it was the hour of the Navy. Monitor after monitor streamed through, their decks cleared for action. On the banks the troops halted and cheered, and then they cheered again. It was their first news that Cobbe had unlocked the gate at Sanniyat. Yes, it was true, that final bombardment and that last charge had carried the stronghold which defied us for more than a twelve-month, and had won for the British the empty shell-torn walls of Kut-el-Amara.

At nightfall the cavalry were in the thick of it—a battlefield littered with heavy casualties. General Crocker's horse was shot from under him. But the great moment waited for by every cavalry man—the chance of riding down a mob of panic-stricken fugitives—was denied them.

### ON TO BAGHDAD!

Next day the force at Shumran began to move north-west—for the Turkish rear-guard had decamped overnight. Ten miles away in the desert Khalil was making another stand, and the cavalry were therefore ordered to outflank the enemy by the river bank, but could make no headway in the marshy country against entrenched infantry. Nevertheless all was not going well on the enemy side; every moment the Turks were finding it more and more difficult to get away with any semblance of cohesion, especially now that the navy had begun to take a hand. Our monitors, disregarding a withering fire from artillery, machine-guns, and rifles at every river bend, pressed on past the fighting rear-guard and did enormous damage among the retreating columns. On land, the armoured cars drove up to trenches, likewise regardless of point-blank fire.

On the 26th the pursuit was organised in two columns, one following the river, the other (the cavalry) striking a day's march across the arid plain towards Summar, in the hope of intercepting a considerable body of Turks. But the bulk of them were too quick for our people, and the cavalry were only in time to come under unpleasantly close fire. Each station erected about four times during the day, and at one of them the men of H had a close shave—a shell dropping within 20 yards and rifle bullets falling like hail 40 yards short. "Stepping up" (that is, one station erected while another moved on) was the order of the day, and this scheme was maintained on a continuous and well organised basis. By river the navy was having a better time and succeeded in sinking or capturing most of the enemy craft.

Rations all round were by now pretty short—and they had not exceeded a bit of bully and a few biscuits per man for some days. Our supply and transport service had expected a rapid advance, but nothing like this! Sleep was another thing we badly needed—it had not been possible to snatch more than a few hours, for nights past. The weather, too, was bitterly cold—there was ice in our water-bottles in the mornings.

A similar plan of action was attempted on the 27th, but fortune still failed to smile upon the cavalry. The Turks, stripping themselves of every encumbrance, just evaded them, though not without a severe mauling from aeroplane and artillery-fire. Everywhere signs of panic and rout were found—bullocks still alive and entangled in the traces of trench-mortar carriages, broken wheels, overturned limbers, and hundreds of



live shells, all scattered over the country for miles. Every bend in the road told its tale of confusion and flight. Here was a field post-office with its money-orders circling round in the wind; there a brand new car held up for want of petrol; cartloads of rifle ammunition and oil drums; things destroyed or half-destroyed; and white columns of smoke ahead told of further destruction. There was enough litter by the road to keep the army in fuel for weeks. This abandoned material very soon attracted the attention of looting marauders, who did not hesitate to attack small parties barring their desires, and it was found necessary to station numbers of troops along the road.

The cavalry, after dismounting and attacking in the dark, halted in exhaustion by the river-bank, and the navy then took up the fiery pursuit till, at midnight, the Turks were streaming through Aziziye in confusion. It was on this occasion that two of the stations came upon Turkish barges by the river bank. Dismounting, they rushed them. On board were hospital and signal stores, and, best of all to hungry men and horses, a quantity of dates and grain.

Other stations were now closing up to the front—those of III. Corps, followed by I. Corps and Squadron Headquarters—and G Station was keeping in touch with the G.O.C.'s paddle-steamer P54. In fact the whole of the communications during the advance was proving to be a wireless matter. Cable wagons could not keep up and their lines were often cut by Arabs. Every Anzac station was doing good solid work as it came; and each day the staff could see fresh evidence of the dependability of the wireless.

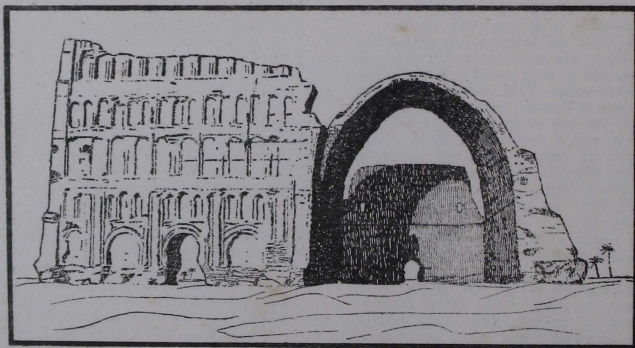
On the 28th the cavalry moved to Iman Imlik, a few miles off in the desert, awaiting the arrival of the infantry. Aziziye was entered the following day after a reconnaissance, by which time the 14th Division and its station were already there. The pursuit was now broken off for a few days while communications were reorganised and supplies brought up from Arab village. A week before the supply problem had centred round the narrow-gauge railway to Atab; to-day that transport facility was as useless as if it had been a thousand miles away. And, much as the Turks had

suffered in the retreat, they were not so completely routed that it would have been possible to keep them off with cavalry and gunboats alone, while, for an advance in strength with the whole force of the infantry and all the necessities of modern warfare, some delay was necessary. Nor could Maude afford to venture a second Ctesiphon with anything less.

Marshall's corps arrived on the 2nd March, followed a day or two later by Cobbe's, as well as Adv. G.H.Q., and Squadron H.Q. On one occasion the whole of the Australian stations were in camp together. Rations arrived, and even a mail! On the 5th the advance was renewed, and cavalry patrols were in brisk touch with the enemy at Lajj, the III. Corps being seven miles behind at Zeur. On March 7th the cavalry and III. Corps were in touch with the enemy all along the Diala. An attempt to ferry troops proved disastrous, and flanking unsuccessful, so, in order to create a diversion and perhaps succeed in enfilading the further bank of the Diala, the troops of the 35th Brigade were ferried across the Tigris at Bawi and soon had a bridge finished. On the night of the 8th the cavalry crossed, followed in the early morning by the 7th Division and the remainder of I. Corps.

Heavy fighting was still in progress along the Diala, where a pack was in the thick of it. While the East Lancers were struggling with desperate gallantry at this crossing, the right-bank force, after a long night march, had come into contact with the enemy at the ruined Shawa Khan, with the cavalry working to the west. The Shawa Khan position fell, but, owing to shortage of water, the cavalry had to be brought back to the river. While watering the wireless were fired on from the Diala position. Snipers' bullets whistled past and two mules and an Indian "ghari" driver were injured by a shell. The station mechanic had even to knock some dents out of the mast sections.

On the 10th the 13th Division was across the Diala and a pack with them, engaged in a final brush at Tel Mahomet. On the right bank the cavalry succeeded in getting to within a few miles of Baghdad, only to be driven back by a blinding dust-storm. The wireless



CTESIPHON

"The Great Arch—all that remains of the Summer Palace of the Sassanian Kings of Persia. Around it is "thirsty soil that has swallowed many empires". The arch of King Chosroes is the only monument that survives to the dignity of man in Mesopotamia—and even its survivorship seems fateful. Here Julian's retirement marked the setting of the Roman Star in the East; here the troops of the Caliph Omar put an end to the Persian domination of the plains; here Townshend found himself in a position in which neither gallantry nor genius could save him; just across the river shapeless mounds alone remain to tell of the vanished glories of the Greek city of Seleucia"

"We had good reason to be glad to leave behind so ominous a milestone on the long road to Baghdad." (Candler).



# B E F O R E       T H E       A D V A N C E

*Railway Station at Gurnat Ali, near Basra—an important railway and shipping centre.*



*At left: the drop curtain for the famous concert at Es Sinn, at which General Maude, General Hopwood, General Money, and others of the Staff were present and highly pleased. (A copy of the programme is reprinted elsewhere).*

*At right: "L" Station's cook—probably the best known member of the Squadron.*



*Christmas at Es Sinn—we receive an issue of billies (Comforts).*

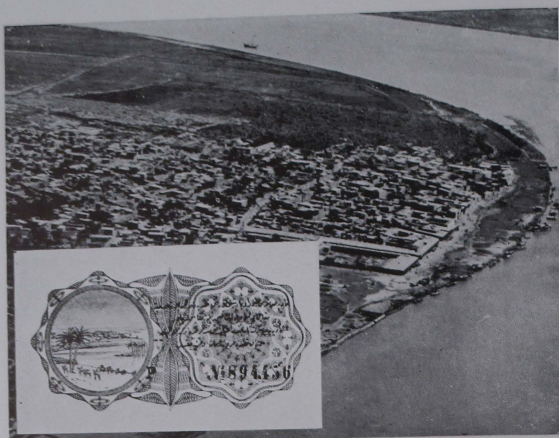


*The N.Z. Pack at Ali Gharbi (reinforced by some Australians) out with a patrol column.*





# THE ADVANCE BEGINS



The peninsula of Kut-el-Amara, downstream from the British bridge at Shumran. This R.A.F. photograph shows it restored to its present peace and prosperity, but at the time of the advance it was but a shell-torn ruin. Inset is a reproduction of a Turkish bank-note issued to commemorate their victory over Townshend at Kut.



Dawn on February 24th—Cavalry Division crossing the Bridge at Shumran. So that there would be no crowding, all units were mustered and passed across by the military police.



Turkish trenches at Shumran bend. A white flag is flying from the shovel on the right. Inset is a photograph of fire from a British fly-boat, which came so near the cavalry that a Station was ordered to erect and advise them—a difficult job because they had been out of action so long that we were not in possession of their wireless call signals.



# SCENES ON THE ADVANCE

*E Wagon with leading III. Corps troops, showing block-houses and army gear by the wayside.*



*A monitor passes the land forces. The heroism of the naval ratings on the advance is well remembered. With half their ammunition "dud" (supplied by a neutral country) and their craft pierced in dozens of places, they pressed on after the Turks and engaged them at every bend in the river.*



*E Station in sight of the great arch of Ctesiphon. Here it was that, centuries before, Omar's men had cried aloud "Allahu Akbar! What is this but the white palace of Chosroes. Now hath the Lord fulfilled the promise which He made unto His Prophet."*

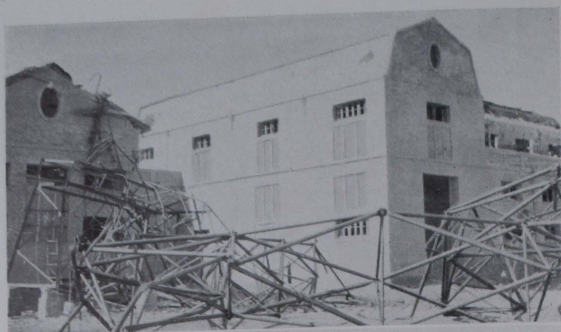


*A printing section of the Sappers and Miners (an English unit) engaged in setting type for corps orders. Note that their gear is carried in yakdans (boxes specially designed for pack transport).*

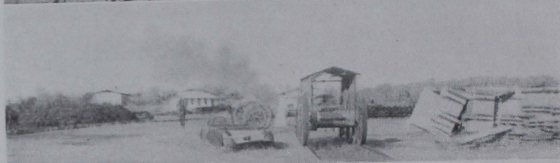




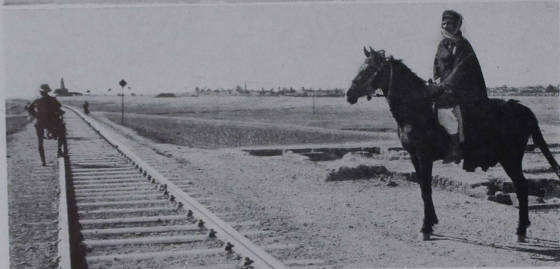
# B A G H D A D   A T   L A S T !



Ruins of the big German wireless station south of the city. S.H.Q. went to bed one night at Baiji (from which point the tall masts could be seen) with dreams of operating the big station next morning. But when dawn broke, there were no masts to be seen; the Germans had utterly destroyed over £60,000 worth of gear. The buildings were inherited by the Royal Air Force for their headquarters.



In Baghdad station yard—burning railway stores, set alight by the Germans.



A meeting of East and West—a desert Bedawi and the Baghdad-Samarrrah section of Germany's famous road to the East.



March 12th: Squadron men allowed on leave in Baghdad. In the foreground ruins of Khalil Pasha St. (soon to be known as New Street); in the background one of Baghdad's many blue-green tiled domes.





Suleiman Pak—the tomb of Mahomet's barber—on the Tigris near Ctesiphon.

stations handled plenty of work this day, but hands, faces, and lips of the men were cracked with exposure to the hot dust-laden wind. Furthermore they had to take the horses seven miles to water, got lost coming back, and had to stand-by in the desert all night.

Next morning our advanced troops (the Black Watch in the van) groped their way to the railway station, to learn that the enemy had retreated beyond the city. In catching up, one station came to grips with a party of Arab marauders who were casting eyes at a dump of British ammunition and rifles.

Early on the same morning (March 11th) Marshall found the Turks abandoning the Tel Mahomet position and lost no time in pursuing them, but the dust again prevented anything like a decisive action. An hour or two later he had completed the circuit of the city and General Maude, the last of Baghdad's many conquerors, entered by the Moazzam Gate. The arrival of the British, as they tramped, dirty and unshaven, amongst the ruins of Kahlil Pasha's new street that had been in process of construction, had nothing of triumphal grandeur, but it was a great relief to the Baghdadis, who were threatened with looting and burning by a riff-raff of Kurds and Arabs. Order was presently restored and the British flag once more flew over the British Residency (where the bombs left by the Turks had by some obliging accident been left unlit).

Baghdad (right bank) was reached about half-past eight. Baghdad city (left bank) an hour or two later. On both banks the wireless men were amongst the first troops in. One station was erected in the left bank bazaar; a little later (4.30 p.m.) a scratch set was working in the Residency building, and, to S.H.Q.'s amazement, immediately got in touch with Basra and was able to exchange the whole of G.H.Q.'s traffic for three or four days until the land line was completed.

The cavalry moved up four miles to Kazimain, where a few stragglers were rounded up. Afterwards they went into camp near Hinaidi for a much needed week's rest. "The poor old horses," writes a driver in his diary, "were about done up and could just crawl—stumbling over every bit of uneven ground. We took

them to some oat crops next day—their first good feed for over a week."

So fell Baghdad—the immediate base of Turkish warfare and one of the most famous cities in all the East. If the recapture of Kut had produced an effect, the fall of Baghdad made an impression vastly greater. The conception of a great advance eastward through Turkey-in-Asia had long been a fundamental part of the German scheme of world politics. Where was that scheme now?

Meanwhile we must turn back a little and include two narratives of the advance, which are typical of the squadron's adventures during this famous fortnight. The first describes the work of D (Pack) Station, the second that of E (Wagon) Station.

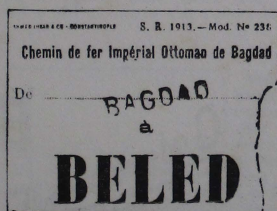


Blanket and palm-frond bivouacs of the cavalry stations near Bawi.

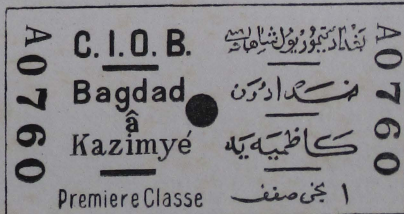
## TYPICAL PACK NARRATIVE.

"On February 22nd, we moved with the Advanced Report Centre of III. Corps to within two thousand yards of the river. Next day, the 23rd, history was made, a V.C. won, and the Tigris bridged. All day long we stood by ready to move. Long before dawn on the 24th orders came to hand and daylight found us across Shumran, within a hundred yards of the front line, and with our station erected. The British attacked, and a few minutes later we had to find shelter for our horses back under the river bank. We remained here all day with the 14th Divisional Headquarters, and at midnight hurried off to catch up with the 13th. By a process of early start and late arrival, which was continued for some days, we managed to handle the traffic of both divisions. On one occasion we had a go at traffic between the Cavalry and the G.O.C.'s steamer, and were so busy that nightfall found us out on the desert without guard or guide, with an anxious eye cocked for marauding Arabs.

"When the Tigris was bridged at Bawi we crossed with the troops of the 35th Brigade, and on the right bank came under heavy and persistent sniping from the Dila position (which had not yet fallen). On March 10th there sprang up dust storms that we shall



Found at Baghdad Station the morning of its capture—a torn fragment of a waybill and a train ticket to Kazimain, the first station on the northward.





never forget. The dust was fine and white and seemed to penetrate right through us and our horses. After a few hours' travelling our eyes looked like holes burnt in a blanket, while Indians were seemingly transformed into white men. Nevertheless, everybody was lighthearted at the thought of Baghdad. On this and on the following nights we had to take the horses back seven miles to water. Incidentally we had not seen much in the way of rations for three days.

"Early on the morning of March 11th, we came in sight of Baghdad Railway Station. Our party explored it inside and out. Many were the jokes that were passed—one would go to the ticket window and ask for a ticket to Berlin; others would parade up and down the platform calling out the name 'Baghdad,' and telling imaginary passengers to change for all sorts of places! It was the first real railway station we had seen for years, so our fooling was pardonable. But we had no train! The Turks had taken the last one at two that morning.

"Our fun ended when an order came for the advanced troops to push on, and in a few minutes we were in the centre of the city on the right bank. Here we received orders to erect station, which we did in the main thoroughfare. Needless to say we had some difficulty in erecting our station, as the aerial wires had to be put over telephone wires and other obstructions. At last we got working and communicated with several stations on the other side of the river, and with one of the monitors which was advancing upstream. All the time we were besieged by jabbering men, women and children. It took three or four of us all our time to keep them back so that the set could be worked. Little Arabs, three and four years old, sat on our earth mats, and, although they were almost naked, the sparks off the mats failed to shift them.

"Our next move was but a few hundred yards to the river bank; here we had to dispense with our horses and carry our set down to the water's edge and load it on gufas for the crossing to the Barracks on the other side."

### TYPICAL WAGON NARRATIVE.

"The wagon is to be off at last! For a couple of days we have been warned to be ready and have been busy packing. Through the camp transport of every description is streaming, to be in readiness for the troops on the great day.

"Then comes moving out. It is the funniest hour in the station's history. Everyone is in a bustle and a hurry to get near the head of the column. Organisation is among the missing elements. Everybody is having accidents of the same sort, everybody causing everybody else's. Everybody is endeavouring to break into somebody else's column. The road is no road; we are constantly coming to an old trench and having to call for picks, etc., to fill it in, so as to cross. Picks and spades are stolen wherever possible. Carts are advancing about six abreast; then trenches make them squeeze into single file and cause a hold-up. Drivers who manage to push in get across—the others are left. Vehicles are mixed up galore. Staff officers and others are galloping around in confusion. In general and in particular everything is in a mess. At Shumran bridge, however, the organisation was wonderful.

"At the end of the first day we are at Sheikh Jaad. A swim looks welcome, but proves to be bitterly cold. Already the troops regret having dumped their spare kit at Feylayeh. In fact, we never saw it again, nor any new issue for over three months. At Sheikh Jaad we camp near Squadron H.Q., and do so again two days later at Aziziyeh. Camp—did I say? Let me enlarge on the process of settling down at any old camping ground during the advance. The column

is wheeling and trekking towards the river for its allotted spot. Our sergeant careers madly back, waving his arms and yelling: 'We will erect here.' Bored and tired operators drop off and set about erecting. Finally the show is half up when a 2nd Lieut. comes along to inform the end-mast men that the mast must be shifted as his camp lines are right where it is situated. More cursing ensues, a fresh spot is picked, and the weary crew slog in again. By the time the aerial is up the huge camp has established latrines and a road to water right under the mast. The mast crew disdain to notice such trifles, pick up their spares, and amble back to find that the cook for the day has turned 'rusty' and that a big argument is in process as to the relative merits of drivers and operators. The bored ones pull out the old tin of bully, sling the water-bottle, stretch out in the dirt and soliloquise on many things, meanwhile knocking off stray spiders and scorpions. Dusk falls, and so does the far mast, owing to the carelessness of a mounted individual, who, hearing our pithy and juicy remarks from the far end, vanishes in the murk. Over the ensuing peace conference I draw a veil.

"All through the advance the dust is our worst enemy. It is not an exaggeration to say that at times we cannot see the outline of the horse and rider immediately in front. The dust is the cause of many transport carts getting lost and mixed up with other units.

"On the 10th, we follow the cavalry across the river, and, after a short march, make camp for the day in an onion crop. We have onions cooked in all manner of ways for days afterwards.

"At about 5 a.m. the following morning, the memorable 11th March, 1917, we are told to get on the march at double-quick speed, and advance as fast as possible. We are given precedence of all other troops for the road, and have to go at a fast trot for three hours to overtake Corps H.Q. At times we can hardly tell where we are, as the rising dust is so dense, but since we have authority to pass all others on the road, are soon in front and so escape much of it. A final gallop brings us to Corps H.Q., where the station is at once erected to send messages, and we then pack up again and go off with the General. We are told that we shall be in Baghdad in a few hours (and so we are). Erecting near the railway we pass back the good news. The finish is great—heavy guns, light guns, infantry, cavalry, hospital and engineering stores, all advancing at the double. Ambulances are at work clearing our casualties, every kind of vehicle being pressed into this service. Near the station destruction is supreme. A giant wireless station (that has sent only one message), roundhouse, wagons, and rolling stock—all destroyed. Coal stocks burning—rubbish and litter on every side.

"On March 12th three men are allowed into the city on leave but they return disappointed. Bazaars, shops, and houses alike are shut up; an air of desolation pervades the dirty streets, while through the city the ruins of Khalil Pasha's new street run like a horrible scar."

"God punish England!"

—a message painted by German operators on the wall of their wireless station, which they had destroyed so thoroughly that there was not so much as a square foot of marble left on the switchboard.





# AFTER THE FALL OF BAGHDAD

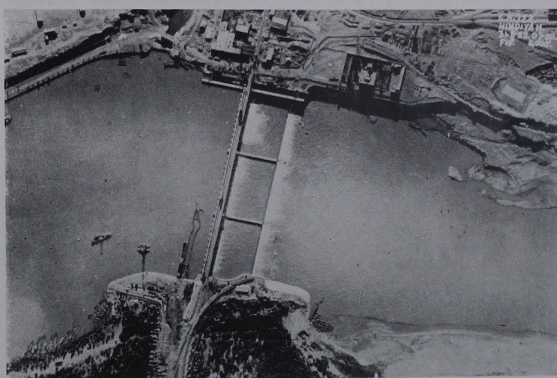
*F Station, Baghdad, March 12: Comforts before rations. The first barge to arrive in Baghdad was one laden with comforts for the Squadron. S.H.Q. had re-addressed it from Sheikh Saad BEFORE the advance—and the joke came off.*



*C Station with the Cavalry, erected during the operations on the DIAL and Khalis Canal. Note the arrangement of apparatus, also reels on which the aerial wire was wound. The officer is Captain Hillary.*



*A Royal Air Force photograph of the Barrage at Hindiveh, visited by several stations during the summer of 1917.*





# AFTER BAGHDAD, APRIL 1917



H Station, near Daltawa, receives a mail. Mail Day—let us quote a paragraph from a diary:

"The man calling out the names on the envelopes as he picks the letters out of the bag commands the attention of all.

"Suddenly one hears his name called—takes his letter and glances hurriedly at the loved hand-writing and retires to a solitary place. No one interferes with him, for each has his own letters to peruse. Contentment reigns in camp, and more than one eye has tears of happiness in it. These messages from home draw us closer together. Our joy is mutual. Each soldier looks at his comrade and understands."



E Station, on the upper Adhaim River, on the morning after a dust storm.



E Station, Barura riverhead, on the Tigris. A few mutual words after an egg raid.



F Station erected at Beled, one of the British outposts on the Tigris.





General map of the Near East, showing the relation of the Palestine and Mesopotamian Campaigns.

## CONSOLIDATING BAGHDAD'S DEFENCE

While it was desirable to restore order in Baghdad, to enlist the sympathies of the population, and to rehabilitate the city, it was more important to render our position secure. Three roads meet in Baghdad—those to Samarra, to the Euphrates, and to Persia along the River Diala. It was therefore essential to safeguard both our right and left flanks as well as to obtain control of the Tigris for a satisfactory distance northwards. For the moment the Tigris movement was the more important; it was now the flood season, and the enemy was in control of the bunds. If he could cut them and allow the waters to stagnate in vast stretches of marsh, he would seriously retard British activity. So an advance beyond Baghdad by the 7th Division (G Station attached) followed immediately on the capture of the city and involved continuous marching and skirmishing for two days and two nights. Yahudie was occupied on March 13th, with an advance-guard at Kasirin. At daybreak on the 14th the column was in sight of the Turkish entrenchments at Mashahdidah. With cavalry co-operation, the Ghurkas and Black Watch flung their full strength against that part of the enemy line farthest from the river, with complete success. A day or so later our airmen reported the Turkish van nearly 50 miles away.

### FELUJA.

Tigris affairs being thus brought to a temporary success, the question of the Euphrates could now be considered. Accordingly, G Station was brought by forced marches from the north, and set with the 7th Brigade upon the road to Feluja. As the map shows, the two rivers are here but thirty miles apart, and to command those miles is to command the communications of the country. That the enemy abandoned without a tussle so important a strategic centre shows how greatly his morale had suffered from the fall of Baghdad. But the British commander had expected more of the Feluja expedition; he hoped that it would be in time to catch the garrison retreating from Samawa, but

unfortunately it was not in time to effect this. The Turks, instead of cutting the bunds at Feluja and so flooding Baghdad, cut them at Ramadie, which, far from hurting us, raised the level of the Tigris about two feet and enabled our river-craft to come all the way to Baghdad!

An incident of this advance was a demonstration by Arab irregulars. G Station erected and called for assistance, and in a very short time an aeroplane appeared and dropped bombs with good effect.

### KHALIS CANAL OPERATIONS.

Meanwhile, the main scene of hostilities had developed in the British right centre—in the stretch of country that lies to the immediate north of Baghdad, between the Diala and the Tigris. The occupation of Baqubah and the situation on the Persian road are referred to some few pages on; about the same time the important centre of Daltawa had also fallen into British hands. To the north and north-east of these points the Turks were in strength with two army corps—one at Dali Abbas in retreat from Persia, the other on the Adhaim near its junction with the Tigris. Within a day or two it became evident that a converging movement was in the air. In his usual way Maude decided to strike first and, with the object of containing the Dali Abbas force, sent the cavalry (C, H, & L Stations) N.E. between the Diala and the Khalis Canal. On the 25th, a strong column, centring round the 13th Division (F Station attached), was concentrated in order to follow the Tigris and deal with the Adhaim Corps. By the 31st the cavalry had reached Dali Abbas, only to find it abandoned, and for a very good reason. The immature Turkish converging movement had been effectively thwarted by the gallant and spirited 13th Divisional advance, which had driven the enemy beyond Dogameh.

With Dogameh in British hands, the first week in April saw further movement on the right bank of the Tigris. Here the 7th Division was advancing steadily.



Someke fell on the 6th, and Beled on the 8th, followed by Harbe on the 9th, on which day F Station joined them, its III. Corps job having been taken over by E Wagon.

## EVENTS ON THE ADHAIM.

At Harbe a pause was ordered to allow of further operations on the opposite bank, the next step, this time in the province of III. Corps, being the forcing of the Adhaim River. A reconnaissance of the crossing was in progress when word came of a second enemy converging movement. Under instructions the cavalry advanced to Dali Abbas, and then slowly retired to draw the enemy on. This retirement was successfully carried out on April 9th, 10th and 11th, and, at an opportune moment on the last day, a column of the 39th and 40th Brigades was able to take the Turkish flank by surprise at Shialah, forcing a withdrawal to Arab-bu-Abin. Contact with the enemy, now entrenched for a rear-guard action, was regained by the cavalry at dawn on the 12th and, the situation continuing thus on the 13th and 14th, our progress was slow. The cavalry essayed an enveloping movement on his right, in an attempt to gain the Kifri road ahead of him, but lack of water prevented this objective from being attained. However, on the night of the 14th, a clever British feint at Serajik caused him finally to take to his heels, and by dawn he had melted into the Jebel.

The success of this manoeuvre enabled the Army commander to reduce his demands on the cavalry division, which had now been hard at it on short rations for the best part of five months. Accordingly, a composite cavalry brigade was formed round the old 7th, with H Station for wireless communication, the remainder (with C and L Stations) later returning to the rest camp at Sindiyeh.

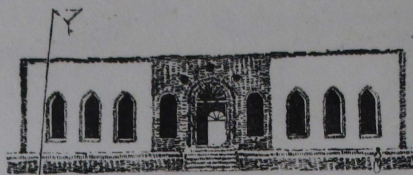
The eastern flank being once more clear, it was now possible for the 38th Infantry Brigade to go ahead with the Adhaim crossing. With the assistance of the cavalry, this operation commenced on the 8th, the river-head being advanced to Sinijah on the following day. By skilful handling of the cavalry, the Turkish retreat across the Barurah peninsula was turned into a rout and, after a slight stand at Dahuba, the enemy disappeared some distance up the Adhaim.

## BACK TO THE TIGRIS.

Hostilities were once more transferred across the Tigris, Istabulat falling after heavy fighting round the bastions of the Median wall. The 7th Division (F Station) had a hard struggle here, for the old stubborn spirit of the Turk in defence asserted itself again, and he showed a more resolute opposition than had been seen since Kut. But against the dash and gallantry of British, Highland, and Indian troops, a long stand was impossible. On the left, valuable co-operation was



At Daltawa—an Indian helio station.



Ruined billet, Kazimain, occupied by H Station after the fall of Baghdad.

rendered by Cassell's cavalry brigade (the 11th), now under fire for the first time. Samarra railway station was occupied on April 23rd, and the town on the following day, with the enemy in full retreat on Tekrit. The station buildings had been partially destroyed by fire, but in the yards there was a rich booty of railway material. In little more than a fortnight trains were running from Baghdad. Thus the whole section of the line built by the Germans had fallen into British hands practically intact, and, with the danger of inundation past, the successful accomplishment of two of the main objects of this section of the campaign had been achieved.

While this advance was in progress, it became evident that a third Turkish thrust was developing—again down the Adhaim. On the 23rd, the enemy's leading echelon had reached Dahuba, with another a day's march behind. The opportunity of catching them piecemeal was too good to be missed. On the 24th, when we attacked frontally at Dahuba, the composite cavalry brigade was assigned the mission of intercepting any forces that might come up in support. The action developed rapidly and the Turks were soon in retreat towards Satha. Further British progress was delayed by furious dust-storms, but on April 29th the enemy was found entrenched in a promontory in front of the village of Band-i-Adhaim. After a rather bloody engagement, the "boot" (as the promontory was called) was captured and the British were able to see the last of the Turks disappearing through the defile back to the hills. For a day or two after this the cavalry was engaged on the eastern flank towards Abu Ghuraib, but the Adhaim fighting was over and Baghdad was absolutely secure.

In every direction the enemy had been pushed at least eighty miles from the city. Despite its brilliant retreat from Kermanshah, the Turkish XIII. Corps had three times been engaged and defeated, and was now forced back into the fastnesses of the Jebel Hamrin. On the right bank, the Turkish XVIII. Corps had fallen back on Tekrit, having been five times defeated in the month of April alone. With the exception of one engagement our casualties had been slight, while transport, supply, and hospital facilities were now as good as on any front. Maude could call a halt with an easy mind.

One last sentence must be included, a quotation from the official "Eye-Witness".—

"The success of these operations is only one instance of the good work of our intelligence, which was becoming almost uncanny in the certainty with which it forestalled every movement of the enemy." (And, during these same operations, he might have added, operators of the wireless squadron by day and night were copying down all enemy wireless traffic).



# AT SAMARRAH ON THE TIGRIS

Engine shed partially destroyed by the Turks. Inset shows engine disabled by being backed into the turntable pit. This engine was so little damaged that it was running again within two days. April, 1917.



Summer, 1917. A group of men of E Station looking rather thin after their adventures on the Adhaim.



Canteen, Samarra. The Expeditionary Force canteens contributed enormously to the comfort of the force. Being at railhead, this canteen usually had good stocks and was rushed by troops returning from operations.



Christmas Dinner, 1917. E. Station.





# TO PERSIA WITH "AA" STATION



*In Chahar Zabar pass, No. 9 Wagon posed approximately at the spot where the Kurds attacked the Russian column.*



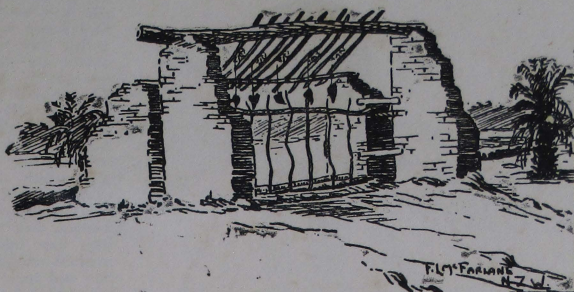
*July, 1917: Kermanshah. Personnel of Russian H.Q. and of "AA" Station. In the front row are Lt. J. White and Lt. (afterwards Major) S. J. White.*



*September, 1917: Kermanshah. Loyal Partizanski ready to return to serve in Mesopotamia. They are being blessed by their priest on the morning of their departure.*



A water-lift on the Tigris. A rope running over a pulley had one end attached to a well-trained beast of burden, the other to a long funnel-shaped leathern bucket. By an ingenious arrangement of ropes, the water emptied itself into an irrigation channel as soon as it reached that level.



## INTERCEPTION OF ENEMY MESSAGES.

The time has now come for a few detailed notes on a subject we have mentioned several times. In the early days at Magil (Autumn, 1916) by way of practice for our operators, we first began copying enemy messages. After a little while we managed to get down with accuracy the mixed figure and letter groups (which were sent at high speed), and the O.C. forwarded the various batches of traffic to Signals, who were somewhat nonplussed at their receipt. The matter did not reach General Maude's ears until some time later, when he was rather annoyed that he had not been informed earlier, and forthwith ordered that a cable be despatched to the War Office asking for a deciphering expert to be sent out.

Meanwhile S.H.Q. had moved up river, and in its camp before Kut made further progress with this work. The operators now recognised the comparative importance of the various messages and even the branches of the army in which they originated. In addition, a rough and ready direction-finding plant had located the situations of many enemy stations (e.g., SAR, Dabra Bend; SMR, Samarra; SBA, Mosul; DAS, Damascus). A little later Capt. Clauson arrived; he was five feet high and only a handful at that, but ciphers were his lifeblood. Within 23 hours he had mastered the secret of the first code; thereafter, despite daily changes and enciphering of a most complicated kind, every enemy message arrived at I Branch as surely and certainly as if it had been addressed to them.

But from the squadron's point of view this special work was not easy. It required two stations, two staffs of our best operators, and the most assiduous attention for over two years. The information gained enabled us to forestall many enemy moves, and also to confirm the reports brought in by spies. On one occasion the Army commander stated that the intercepted messages agreed so exactly with his previous information that there was only a discrepancy of two guns and seventeen men over the whole Turkish Near-Eastern front. We were hardly surprised when, a year later, a special unit arrived in Baghdad and began the erection of the most fabulous of direction-finding stations—each carefully surrounded by barbed wire!

Russian traffic was quite important and was most difficult to handle, as it necessitated familiarity with a new Morse code covering the thirty-odd letters of the Russian alphabet.

As a side line our intercepting operators also copied down press from Basra, Bombay, Malta, Eiffel Tower, and also Berlin itself.

## ALONG THE DIALA AND TOWARDS PERSIA.

Of the routes over the Mesopotamian plain which Maude won with the capture of Baghdad, none was more important than the historic highway to Persia. Along this road for thousands of years caravans had borne the rich commerce of the East to the ancient Empires of the Tigris and Euphrates; along this road throughout the centuries countless armies had marched to and fro. By it Darius had fled before the might of



A Canal, Baqubah.





A Kurd,  
Kasr-i-Shirin.

Alexander, and by it, in the days of Omar, the victorious banners of Islam had been carried into the heart of Asia. In the present campaign it had seen the indecisive ebb and flow of Turk and Russian—and now it was to be of concern to Briton and Australian too.

North-east it runs by the hot banks of the Diala to Kizil Robat, whence it follows the rushing Hulawan to Khanikin and Kasr-i-Shirin; then it climbs the great Paitak pass, travels on through Karind and Kermanshah (in rocky valleys of the Median Range) and so to Hamadan upon the high Persian plateau.

## THE RUSSIANS.

Here in Hamadan lay Baratov and his small force of infantry and Cossack cavalry. Early in the preceding year his outflung patrols had knocked at the gates of Khanikin, but the bold adventure was brought to a swift termination by the disaster of Kut. Now that we were in Baghdad, we ventured to hope for a renewed Russian offensive, with which we might co-operate, and thus cut off the enemy's natural line of retreat through Qarah Tappeh. It was therefore not a time for the British to delay, nor did they. Four days after the morning of Baghdad saw Keary's column (comprising the 8th and 9th Infantry Brigades of the 3rd Division, with D Station attached) on its north-eastward way. On the 17th March the Diala was crossed at Buhriz, and the column fell unexpectedly from the east upon the Turkish garrison at Baqubah.

By this time Kermanshah had fallen to Baratov, thus closing one line of retreat—that through the mountains by Senneh—and the Turks were beginning to feel unpleasantly hemmed in. To save his corps the enemy commander threw out two strong flank-guards, one at Paitak and a second at the Jebel Hamrin, in order to delay the advance of Russian and Briton respectively until he could get his main body across the Diala to safety.

Sharoban fell to Keary's artillery on the 23rd, and on the same day the pack D was relieved by E wagon. Unfortunately, delay occurred in bringing up bridging material for the Ruz Canal, and this, combined with a mistaken optimism as to the imminence and strength of Baratov, led to the mistiming of the attack on the Jebel. The 9th Brigade, with its supports, suffered heavy casualties, losing as many as one-third of their numbers. About this time E Station was under orders for Persia, but, owing to the failure of the attack, its personnel lost both the honor of being first into Persia, and the satisfaction of seeing what was on the other side of that bare range which lies in front of Sharoban.

By the last days of March the Turk was out of the trap, his flank defences withdrawn, and the scene of hostilities moved northwards to Dali Abbas (where the cavalry and its stations were working), and later to the valley of the Adhaim (H and E Stations). Paitak

was abandoned to Baratov, whose Cossack patrols were able in a few days to join hands with the British at Kizil Robat. It was, however, a hurried meeting, for neither force could stretch its communications sufficiently, nor was there any great need to do so, and consequently the British returned to Sharoban, while Baratov made his headquarters at Kasr-i-Shirin.

"It was only after this meeting that we realised that our Russian allies were starved in the matter of ammunition, transport, and supplies; political conditions in Russia were paralysing the sinews of the army. The party which met us was but a single *sotnia* far in advance of the main body. They came in at a walk, riding with short stirrups, toes down, heels up, leaning forward, their weight thrown upon their stirrups. Besides their rifles they carried knives and Caucasian scimitars without handguards. Their small horses looked thin and spent and were heavily laden. For a week they had fed on the dry leaves of scrub oak. There was neither grain, transport, nor supplies to be gained from the exhausted countryside. Our small motor-convoys gave them the best meal they had known for months." (Candler.)

## "A" JOINS THE RUSSIANS.

To afford signal facilities to Colonel Rowlandson, Liaison Officer with Baratov's force (1st Caucasian Division), came A Station, known later, when it was almost given up for lost and another wagon added to the squadron establishment in its place, as AA Station. Since the advance this wagon had been desultorily employed at Aziziyeh, but early in April it was relieved by I Wagon and hurriedly brought up to Baghdad, and then across the sixty miles of blank emptiness (which is Mesopotamia) to the upland of the Jebel. Here, in strange contrast with Baghdad's palms, little spring flowers were cropping up everywhere amongst the red sandstone, that colorful rock which lightens and darkens respectively with the sun and every passing cloud.

April 22nd saw A Station at Khanikin, a rabble of old-time houses clustering around a great high spanned bridge; a further day's trek took them twenty miles over the Persian border to their destination, Kasr-i-Shirin, and into camp with the famous "go-as-you-please mob." Here willows formed a pleasant change, likewise the rolling hills, rich with the greenery of spring. For the historically-minded there was a centre of interest in the walls of cyclopean masonry to the north of the town, where the foundations of fort and palace, wall and aqueduct stretched for many a long mile. It was here, too, fourteen or fifteen centuries before, that the famous Dastgird, the summer palace of the Sassanian kings, stood; within these buildings lived Khusru Parvis and his beautiful and accomplished Christian wife, Shirin, of which pair many a legend is to be heard in Persia. The town itself is set on a hillside, all flat roofs and arches of ruddy brick, watched over by a square-walled castle. Behind rise the sheer cliffs of the Simbula Kuh, rainbow-shaded rock, all red and blue and purple when the sun goes down.

Life with the Russians was fairly satisfactory, for no ungentelemanly hostility disturbed the daily bath of Turk and Russian in the Hulawan, or the pleasant refreshing anticipations of our men for the escorted convoy which brought rations and mails every few weeks.

High - spanned  
bridge over the  
River Hulawan, at  
Khanikin.







## THE ARAB

"Left to himself the idle, hungry Bedawi, picturesque figure as he is and romantic social asset, is the bane of civilisation. He is the marauder whose depredations must be bought off, since there has been no power capable of restraining them. His private interests run counter to those of the community. He does not wish to see the plough conquer fresh acres where the wild herbs were enough for his sheep and camels, nor the highroads where he waylaid merchant and muleteer, held up the post and put the traveller to ransom, turned into secure and well-guarded ways of communication and commerce. Peace does not suit him; he has not the slightest inclination to set a term to blood feuds, which combine pleasurable excitement with the fulfilment of family duties.

"But these predilections, though strongly rooted, are not invincible. The cultivating tribes along the rivers who were nomads a couple of hundred years ago, are now villagers under a tribal organisation. Some of the great sheikhs have recognised the solid advantage of real property, and though they still boast that they are unfettered children of the wilderness, are in fact anchored by the possession of estates and gardens in the settled areas."

"The conversion of the wandering camel breeder and camel lifter into a cultivator of the soil, in so far as it has taken place in Mesopotamia, was an inevitable process. In their progress northward the tribes found themselves ultimately upon the limits of the desert; the wide spaces essential to a nomadic existence no longer stretched before them, while the pressure of those behind forbade any return. They were obliged to look to agriculture as a means of livelihood. Instead of devastating hordes, sweeping like locusts over cornfield and pasture, the surplus population of Arabia may find in a Mesopotamia reconstituted by good administration not only abundant supplies but far-reaching possibilities of social and intellectual advance."

(G. L. BELL)



NOTES.

1. "Railway from Air report" is Decaueville Railway. It is incorrectly shown West of R. of Railway.
2. MUFRAZ Post is at 8 F.O/30 where Decaueville Railway reaches EUPHRATES.
3. RADWANITYAH Post is at junction of RADWANITYAH Canal and EUPHRATES.

INFORMATION.

(a) The KURAD Section of CHIDADAH Arabs (strength 100 rifles) and KROUSHIEEN Arabs of RADWANITYAH (strength 300 rifles) implicated in murder of Lt. Col. MAGNIAC, 27th Punjab, on 28th April, are near IMAM HANZA and along both banks of RADWANITYAH Canal, about 7 E.O/3, respectively.

(b) (Details as to strength of other tribes likely to join the malcontents).

(c) (Possibility of Deleim riflemen crossing Euphrates and joining malcontents).

(d) (Attitude of the BENI TAMIN, strength 500 rifles).

INTENTION.

2. The Divisional Commander intends to deal with the KURAD and KROUSHIEEN Sections, in the first instance, by the operation of punitive columns from MUFRAZ and RADWANITYAH Posts, which will attack the tribesmen, thoroughly destroy their crops and habitations and seize their livestock. These tribes are to be most rigorously dealt with. Further operations will be carried out according to the situation disclosed by the first phase, and the consequent attitude of neighbouring tribes.

ORDERS TO TROOPS.

3. (a) Troops "A" form LUCAS'S COLUMN.  
(b) Troops "B" form DAVIDSON'S COLUMN.

Commander: Brig. General F. G. LUCAS, D.S.O.

"A" 2 squadrons 14th Hussars.  
A composite Batty. 4 guns A/B 215th Batty. R.F.A.  
3 cars 14th L.A.M. Batt.  
42nd Infantry Brigade (less 2 Battalions).  
Detachment 3rd Divn. Signal Company.  
Detachment Wireless (from G.H.Q.).  
A composite detachment Field Ambulance (from 3rd Divn).

Commander: Brig. General S. R. DAVIDSON.

"B" 300 rifles 7th Infantry Brigade.  
1 section Machine Gun Company, 7th Infantry Brigade.  
1 section 66th Batty. R.F.A.  
1 section 21st Coy., Sappers and Miners.  
1 Company 34th Pioneers.

(c) LUCAS'S COLUMN will assemble at about 2 miles South of IRON BRIDGE near junction of old and new Decaueville Railway lines before 12 noon on 3rd May, and march to reach MUFRAZ before midnight 4/5th May.

4/5th May. DAVIDSON'S COLUMN will concentrate at RADWANITYAH Post before midnight 4/5th May.

(d) On 5th May LUCAS'S COLUMN will deal with KURAD and DAVIDSON'S COLUMN will deal with Arabs near RADWANITYAH Post, the Columns operating towards one another and clearing the country between the EUPHRATES and the RADWANITYAH Canal.

(e) On 6th May the whole force under Brig-General DAVIDSON's orders will deal with the KROUSHIEEN; LUCAS'S COLUMN, as such, being broken up.

(f) Any further operations which may be necessary will be carried out under Brig-General DAVIDSON'S orders.

SUPPLIES.

4. Six days' rations for LUCAS'S COLUMN will accompany the Column.

REPORTS.

5. Reports to 3rd Division Headquarters, BAGHDAD.

SUSPENSION OF EXECUTION.

6. These orders will only become operative on receipt of a message worded "Carry out 3rd Division Operation Order No. 76," which will be despatched by 3rd Division to all concerned on receipt of orders from G.H.Q. to undertake the punitive operations in contemplation.

R. POPE-HENNESSY,

Lieut.-Colonel.  
General Staff, 3rd Division.

Copy of 3rd Division Operation Order authorising the punitive operations of May 18th-24th (postponed from May 4th), in which C Station participated.





## SUMMER 1917—IN THE FIELD

### THE HINDIYEH BARRAGE.

Seven stations found work to do during April — a month that gave full promise of a summer likely to be abnormally hot. Of these, the work of A wagon in Persia and of E wagon and L, C, H and F packs on the Tigris and Adhaim has already been reviewed; the other, D, was brought into Baghdad on the 28th and attached to a column of the 52nd Brigade, bound for Hindiyyeh to see what had become of the Barrage.

Of all the works planned by Sir William Wilcox for the reconstitution of Mesopotamia's prosperity, this had been the only one undertaken by the Turks—and that simply because its construction had become essential if the last cultivated areas were not to disappear. Below Hindiyyeh the Euphrates divides into two branches—the Hillah and the Hindiyyeh: the former (flowing by the ruins of Babylon) is the old stream; the latter was once only a swollen canal, but it grew every year till at last it took all the water from the old bed and so deprived the Hillah district of its irrigation. Though the Turks had (through the British contracting firm of Sir James Jackson) built the Barrage at a cost of £2,000,000, they had not completed the few canals necessary to finish off the job. Now, as they retreated, attempts were made to destroy it, but the Arab cultivators prevented this — yet the very same men looted everything of value round the works on their own account!

Now in April the British were on the spot and began at once to get the regulator and its canals into working order. They also commenced tapping the rich corn resources of the Euphrates, and all the summer the old road north from Babylon was thick with the dust raised by mules. Later the connection was made by rail.

As soon as the British were firmly established here, arrangements were put in hand for linking up with our troops at Nasiriyah, thus bringing the whole of the lower Euphrates under control. It was singularly peaceful penetration, welcomed by the Arab cultivators, and adding enormously to the resources of the force.

May found most of the stations settled in summer quarters. Experience had shown the unprofitableness of campaigning under the blazing heat of the mid-summer sun of Iraq—and 1917 was to prove the hottest season for many a decade. During the month E Station returned from Satha and camped with F and the 7th Division at Samarra, then the British front line on the Tigris.

### STRAFES ON THE ARABS.

Another move was that of C Station. It had gone back earlier with the cavalry to their summer camp at Es SulaiKh on the outskirts of Baghdad, but was ousted from this palm-shaded retreat for a day or two to provide wireless communication for Lucas's column, which undertook a reprisal on the Arabs in the Mufraz-Radwaniyeh region below Feluja.

A copy of the operation order issued for this stunt is reprinted on the opposite page, as it gives interesting sidelights on how such affairs were managed.

H Station was also travelling during May, being deputed to make a second trip up the Adhaim—this time with a reconnaissance of the 40th Brigade. During June, too, H maintained its well-earned reputation for getting over the ground, as it had to go across to Baqubah to allow L Station to co-operate in another strafe. It had hardly settled down again with the III. Corps at Sindiyeh when it was ordered out with the 37th Brigade for the occupation of Beled Ruz. This move had been rendered necessary by the retirement to Kermanshah of the Russians, with whom went A. During the same month K was out on the inevitable Arab strafe, this time round Aziziyeh. F was withdrawn from Samarra to join the 8th Brigade, which was then holding the British second line at Beled.

### TWO N.Z. STATIONS REACH BAGHDAD.

In July, the last two New Zealand stations came





Army transport cart or "ghari". This one is a member of the Lucknow Bullock Corps. Bullocks were used in base camps—the more active "cutchers" (also Jaipur ponies) in the field.

up-river from L. of C.—I from Aziziyeh and J from Baghailah, the latter going on to Hindiyyeh to relieve D, whose transport animals were suffering from the poorly cleansed grain available in that region. It was indeed good to get these two N.Z. stations up-river at last. They had been denied a share both in the adventures round Kut and the glories of the Advance—yet the long months of humdrum L.-of-C. work had not weakened their efficiency or enthusiasm. H station was also relieved by L at Beled Ruz and was able to get six weeks' rest, or at least as much as work on the horse-lines of Es Sulaikh would allow.

### FAILURE AT RAMADIE.

Early in July activity again became necessary on the Euphrates. Feluja was being held comfortably enough, but the position could hardly be considered satisfactory, for the presence of a strong Turkish force at Ramadie led to continuous friction with the tribesmen. For once Maude was led to abandon his definite summer policy, and, accordingly, the 7th Brigade (G station attached) was ordered to concentrate at Dhibban, ready for an advance on Ramadie. The heat was distressing, but, as careful arrangements had been made for the supply of water, and for the transport by van and lorry of a part of the force, all hopes were for success. But, just as our men came in touch with the enemy at his advanced position, a blinding dust-storm sprang up, and, this combined with the heat, placed them in a difficult situation. The projected attack was therefore cancelled, and the entire operation abandoned.

A G. Station account of this stunt has been preserved: "Orders to move out came at 11 p.m. on the 9th July—the hottest July in history—130 degrees in the shade, and G was to have four days and nights of it. We trekked all night and spent the days on duty, fatigued, or lying gasping under the shade of the gharis. How quickly the sun moved the shade round and left us frizzling. Also we went in fear of the bunds being cut, and erected station with the masts well sandbagged.

"Early on the 12th we hove in sight of Ramadie and incidentally came under pretty healthy fire from the enemy and from Arab irregulars—'zips' and 'thumms' from all kinds of bullets seemed to be everywhere. However, we dodged into cover under a hill and put up the station for traffic, when Johnny saw

the tops of our masts and dropped some bombs uncomfortably near. Still we hung on all day, even when one of them raised a pile of pack saddles high into the air! Then at night came the retreat—and more attention from our Arab friends, who seemed to be out in force. They gave it to us the whole way back, and at one point where the road ran along the river bank away from cover we lost three horses in as many minutes to marksmen who were absolutely invisible. As soon as we bivouacked, the lads tried to get their own back—but it was no go, and we were just about done in, anyway. After this stunt a mud hut in Feluja seemed heaven—I need say no more!"

Although the operation was a failure, it served to give the Turkish commander false confidence, an error for which he was to pay dearly in less than two months' time. After this the 7th Brigade (which had been all through the worst of the Mesopotamian campaign) was withdrawn from the Euphrates, the 15th Division taking over. The brigade rejoined the remnants of its division (the 3rd), which was thereupon transferred to Palestine.

### CAPTURE OF SHAROBAN.

In August orders were issued for the capture of Sharoban, on a canal from the DIALA, near the defile by which that river issues from the Jebel Hamrin. This place had previously been in British hands, but had been given up after the Russian retirement in June. An aeroplane reconnaissance now reported that the Turks were entrenching hereabouts—hence the orders, which were carried out by two converging columns, Thompson's from Bagubah, and Hesketh's from Beled Ruz. D Station, which had been relieved at Hindiyyeh by J, accompanied Thompson's column, and C was attached to Hesketh's. On our approach, however, the Turks hastily retired into the Jebel, without making much of a stand. Good work was done by the wireless stations in keeping the two columns in touch.

Here is C Station's story, related by one of its members:—"We got off at 11 with about 500 cavalry and a few infantry, and marched till daylight, when we camped near a rice field (20th) with water handy. We moved again the same night at 10.30 and trekked towards the hills, stopping just before day broke. When it got light we set off again, but hadn't gone many yards when a Turkish gun in the hills let go, bursting shrapnel all round us. We turned to get away and found we had a river on the other side, which was so deep that we couldn't cross, so we stood about waiting for orders for five minutes, and men and horses were going down. One of our horses was shot, otherwise we got off, but it was pure luck. We put up the station just after this and a few more bullets came across, but nothing to speak of."

It turned out afterwards that we had advanced too far and that our advance guard had failed in its mission, which was to destroy a bridge over a deep canal.

During the summer the remainder of the stations were handling traffic as follows:—

AA Wagon.—Col. Rowlandson, 1st Russian Caucasian Division, Kermanshah.

A Wagon.—Baghdad.

B Wagon.—S.H.Q., Baghdad.

E Wagon.—7th Division, Samarra.

I Wagon (N.Z.).—L. of C., Aziziyeh and Cavalry Camp, Es Sulaikh.

F Pack.—8th Infantry Brigade, Beled and Istabulat.

K Pack (N.Z.).—Stand-by for mobile column, Aziziyeh.

J Pack (N.Z.).—L. of C., Baghailah and Hindiyyeh.





A GUFU WITH A LOAD OF PUMPKINS.

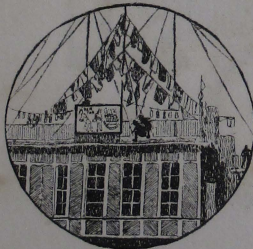
For centuries Baghdad has been headquarters for this curious type of boat and many hundreds have been registered with the British Administration. They are solidly built of wicker-work covered with bitumen and their large capacity and ease of loading makes them ideal for lightering and ferrying. Unless carefully rowed by two boatmen paddling in opposite directions, however, they spin round and round with the force of the current in a way that is rather disturbing for the unaccustomed passenger.

## LIFE IN BAGHDAD

### THE BILLET.

April—the dates were blossoming—and the “close season” for fighting beginning. Both Turk and Briton bowed to a common enemy—the sun. Still not all the squadron stations were able to enjoy a rest, or rather to endure the heat, flies, and dust in summer quarters. In Baghdad life was beginning to be more comfortable than it was on the bare plains of Kut. The merchants were back in the bazaars; the coffee shops filled with their old-time habitués; rations became more plentiful; and comfort coaxed romance back to Baghdad’s narrow streets and blue-tiled domes. Two homes were found for the wireless—for the Squadron Headquarters, a group of billets in New Street, nearly opposite G.H.Q.; for a details’ camp, a site in a vacant patch between the palm-groves outside the south gate (Bab-es-Shargi).

At the “Billet,” the rear building provided living and messing accommodation for Headquarters’ staff, which included mechanics engaged on repairs, operators on traffic and interception work, the orderly room staff, quartermaster’s department, etc.; the front portion contained the officers’ quarters and mess, as well as the various offices. One recollects with amusement that we had our masts up on the roof a good week before receiving authority from the Military Governor to move in!



Christmas, 1917 — the Billet decorated with blue and white signal flags, also a painting depicting the Kaiser and the Crown Prince in the hands of Beelzebub.

Though you will not find much reference to Squadron Headquarters through the book, we hope you will not forget that they are still behind the scenes, keeping station equipment and personnel at the highest pitch of efficiency.

### THE HORSE-LINES.

Our details’ camp, where unallotted men and horses were to be found, became known as the “The Horse-lines.” It fronted the Hinaidi road, separated from the Tigris by a small date plantation. A small but well-proportioned single-story building—said to have been a Turkish police post—contained the sergeant’s mess, and provided cooking and messing accommodation for the men. It was distinguished by the variety of its patterned brickwork; we saw nothing anywhere else more beautiful. The tents were erected over four-foot pits, or dugouts, with raised walls of “mutty” (a mixture of mud, straw, and water), and in the centre two standards kept the tent poles on ground level so that the maximum of breeze and the minimum of sunshine were obtained by the occupants; in summer-time sheets of matting were sometimes placed on light rafters as an inner ceiling. Before long we discovered that we could buy beds, cleverly patched together out of the central stems of palm fronds. It was, on the whole, quite a comfortable camp, except during the rainy season, when it became a quagmire—yet we did not mind that if we could get gum-boots.

The squadron farrier-sergeant was stationed here. He was in charge of the horses and horse-lines, and, besides selecting animals to replace casualties in the field, also tended those that fell sick. If necessary he called in a veterinary officer. Each man usually had four or five horses to look after—still there were compensations. First of all there was room in the big dug-outs to stand up or lie down at a reasonable distance from the scorching canvas. There was also a dhoobi-woman (washerwoman) and a barber; and tables in the mess-room on which to put your plate and mug (this in itself is a greater comfort than most people imagine)! And we were always sure of some excitement when the G.S. ration wagon left—at the gallop!



**MIDAN THEATRE**  
**IN AZAWEE HOTEL**  
*Dancing, Singing & Comedy Scenes*  
 2nd Class, Annas 8

موقع الثاني أنه ٨

*Admission Ticket to Arab Theatre—and incidentally to the dulllest thing in Baghdad.*

At the rear of the Horse-lines were camped those of our Indian soldiers and followers not actually on stations. The soldiers were under the charge of a havildar (equivalent to a sergeant), and comprised horse drivers of the artillery and mule drivers of the Supply and Transport. Among the followers, who are drawn from the low or no-caste tribes of India, were mehtas (sweepers), bhishtis (water-carriers), and moochhis (saddlers). Caste and religion are very strong factors in Indian life, and the follower was consequently much despised by the Indian soldier. Their diet also comes under rigid regulation, and so, when live rations were issued to us, the job of preparing the meat was usually handed over to the Indians, who saw that everything was done in the prescribed way.

### HYGIENE IN THE FIELD.

The squadron, like the remainder of the M.E.F., suffered heavily from the endemic diseases of the country. New arrivals especially had a bad time, and usually more than fifty per cent. were soon in hospital with sandfly fever, colitis, dysentery, etc. The list of men invaded home grew to large proportions; of those who stayed many became so debilitated that their names were frequently on sick reports, up to fifty-seven admissions being recorded in a single month (June, 1918). More than twenty per cent. brought home malaria in their blood, or T.B. tendencies, while our casualty list showed the toll of small-pox, cholera, enteric, and other diseases, in spite of the efforts of medical skill. We were repeatedly vaccinated and inoculated, and all drinking water was chlorinated. Chlorination served the double purpose of throwing down sediment (which was exceedingly heavy in spring) and of killing microbes, but as it was usually practised to excess, and the water seldom allowed to stand very long, most of our food, and always our tea, suffered from a strong taste of chlorine. As it turned out, by some curious gesture of Mars, we did not lose a single man by enemy bullets, yet this volume records some fifty odd occasions when stations experienced shell-fire, sniping, aeroplane bombs, and raids by Kurds and Arabs. As you read you will see that on many occasions whole stations missed death by inches; at other times shells turned out to be duds, though coming so close as to splinter an instrument-box or kill a horse. It was nothing short of a miracle that the enemy inflicted only two or three slight wounds on the men of the wireless stations, whose aerial masts usually offered a good target. Another risk incurred by our men was the frequency with which stations were ordered to move hundreds of miles without escort. Yet here again our luck held good. AA station might easily have been wiped out at Chahar Zabar, or half-a-dozen other stations have met a similar fate during their long treks without escort. Even in 1919, within a few days of No. 24 Station leaving Amadia in North Kurdistan, the political and telegraph staff were murdered as they slept.

To return to hygiene, not the least of the discomforts suffered by our boys were the *ukhts*, or Baghdad

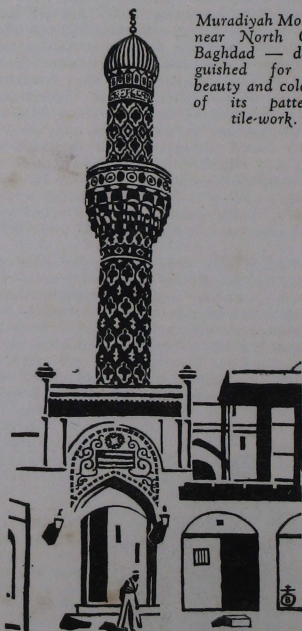
sores. Practically no one escaped these pestilential sores; some even developed them after their return to Australia. The Baghdad sore is a sloughing ulcer, commencing as a tiny red pimple and developing till it is an inch and a half across and half-an-inch deep. Believed to be caused by a parasite introduced by a sandfly bite, it attacks the face, hands, wrist, or ankle, and its progress, which is exceedingly tedious, usually lasts a whole year. The local population enjoy no immunity from the scourge—in fact, practically everyone seen in the streets bears a relic in the shape of a disfiguring scar on the face.

In Baghdad our chief entertainer was the Y.M.C.A., which contained the usual equipment of such institutions. Best of all was the Y.M.C.A. Open-air Theatre, near G.H.Q., where something was provided for the troops every night in the week—lectures, concerts, moving-pictures, Indian jugglers.

### BAGHDAD'S ANCIENT DAYS.

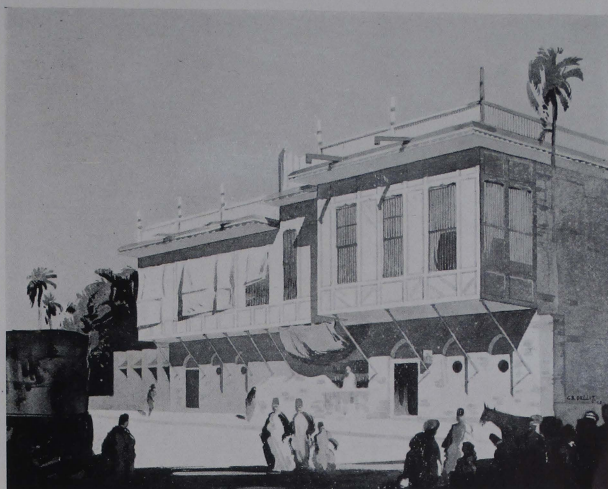
For those who were enthusiastic enough to walk further afield, all the charms of Baghdad waited. And Baghdad has charms for anyone who will look around him with a seeing eye. Let us make a start with some history. Mesopotamia was but a province of the Arabian Empire from the battle of Kadiyah (A.D. 636) till A.D. 762. The second Abbasid Caliph, Mansur, after the destruction of the Umeiyad dynasty (which ruled from Damascus) perceived that a fresh capital was needed for the new dynasty. The decay of the Arab tribal system, on which the military power of the Umeiyads depended, decided him to move the seat of government to Mesopotamia. Accordingly he founded the famous Round City of Baghdad on the right bank of the Tigris, at a point which may now be

Muradiyah Mosque,  
 near North Gate,  
 Baghdad — distinguished for the  
 beauty and coloring  
 of its patterned  
 tile-work.



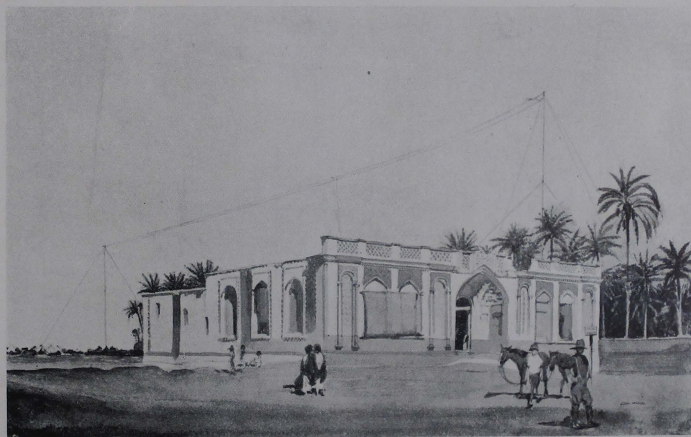


# OUR HOMES IN BAGHDAD



THE BULLET

(from the water-color by C. B. Dellit)



THE HORSE-LINES

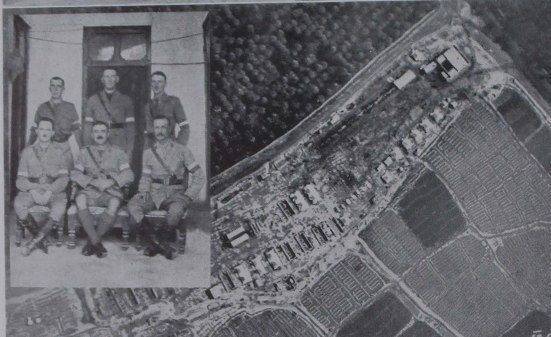
(from the water-color by John D. Moore)



# SQUADRON LIFE IN BAGHDAD



Summer, 1917: A sports meeting at the Horse-lines. In the background are the large E.P. tents erected over dugouts.

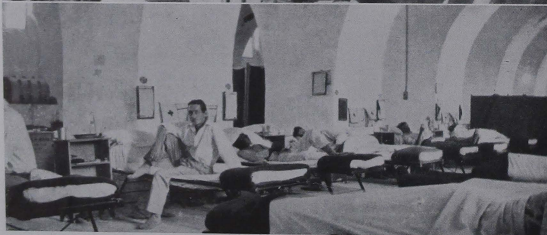


A Royal Air Force photograph of the Horse-lines, showing the billet, some E.P. tents, also dug-outs without tents. See how a palm-grove looks from the air, also a typical irrigated field.

Inset shows Officers at S.H.Q. during the first days in Baghdad. Back row: Lt. Melville, Lt. McKeown, Lt. Bagot. Front row: Lt. Hillary, Major Marr, Capt. Clark.



The Horse-lines.



A member of the squadron in the 31st British General Hospital (the old Turkish Infantry Barracks). Most of our men were at one time or another either in this or in the 23rd, just outside the North Gate.



# SQUADRON LIFE IN BAGHDAD

*Interception Room at Baghdad, showing operators on duty.*



*May, 1918: A group in the courtyard of the men's billet, Baghdad.*

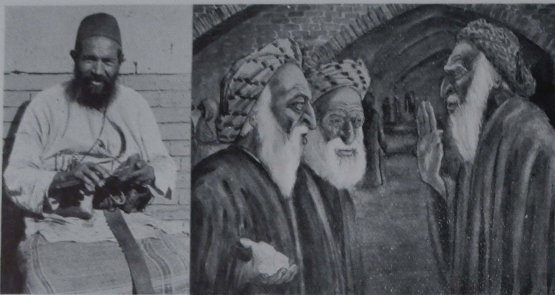


*Summer, 1918: No. 7's mess-room at Chaldari, Cavalry Summer H.Q.*





# SOME BAGHDAD PERSONALITIES



*On the left—our barber; on the right—three Baghdad Jews. A Turkish proverb runs: "It takes three Jews to cheat a Greek, and three Greeks to cheat an Armenian."*



*Mary, our washerwoman, and her daughter Selima.*



*A Sikh soldier and two sweepers at S.H.Q.*



described as situated between West Baghdad and Kazimain. This was a triple-walled fortress city, circular in form, wherein were located the principal State buildings, palaces, etc., while for fear of treachery the populace were ordered to live outside. Here it was that the three great Caliphs, Mansur, Harun-el-Rashid, and Ma'mun, flourished in turn in Baghdad's golden age, from 762 to 833 A.D. It soon rose to eminence, second only to Constantinople during the Middle Ages, and was unrivalled for splendour throughout Western Asia; yet to-day not a trace is to be found of the Round City.

After a short removal for political reasons to the vicinity of modern Samarra (836-892), the Caliphs again returned to make Baghdad their capital, and it was at this period, when many gorgeous palaces were built, that the city grew mainly on the left bank of the river, until it stretched as far as the present suburb of Moazzam. Near the end of the eighth century, an Abbasid Caliph formed a bodyguard of Turks from the marshes of Turkestan, where the outposts of Islam were. This body gradually grew in power and influence, while the Caliphate rapidly declined, and thus it was, that, when a tribe of Turks called Seljuks came south under their chief, Tugril Bey, they found men of their own race, language, and religion ruling the rulers of Islam. In 1055 Tugril Bey was invested by the Caliph with what was practically the temporal sovereignty of Baghdad, Mesopotamia, and the countries then in the power of Islam. The Caliphs become mere figureheads, living in a mysterious seclusion. The break-up of the Seljuk power enabled the Caliphate to reassert a brief flicker of independence, which was, however, extinguished in the cataclysm of the Mongols. In February, 1258, Hulagu Khan took Baghdad; the city was sacked, and the last caliph of the Abbasids taken prisoner and killed. The wealth and treasures of ages were plundered; priceless literary and artistic remains were destroyed. An irreparable blow had been delivered at the heart of Moslem civilisation. It ended Arab rule in Mesopotamia, and was accompanied by the ruin of the whole system of irrigation. The country which had known prosperity for thousands of years became a waste of unfruitful waters in arid plains of dust and sand, and the work of three hundred generations of men was destroyed in a single year; and the desolation of the Mongols has endured to this day.

### 1917—THE BRITISH ARRIVE.

And now the British were in Baghdad—the last of her many conquerors, yet the first to enter her gates not unmindful of the ancient glories. Let us quote a passage from General Maude's proclamation to the Baghddadis:—

"Since the days of Hulagu, your city and your lands have been subject to the tyranny of strangers, your palaces have fallen into ruins, your gardens have sunk into desolation and your forefathers and you have groaned in bondage. Your sons have been carried off to wars not of your seeking, your wealth stripped from you by unjust men and squandered in far off places."

True indeed; the last nine hundred years had dealt hardly with the old city—at one time its population fell to fifteen thousand. So it is right that we should make allowances for those centuries of tyranny as we walk through its narrow streets. Let us forget our disappointment at finding Harun's Palace only dust beneath our feet, and pay tribute to a city that still lives and works despite the vicissitudes of time. These people we meet in the streets—these portly merchants—these proud faces from the desert—these toiling porters and sweating coppersmiths must surely be the same as Sinbad met and talked with. Are these not the flat roof-tops and open courtyards across which Harun walked disguised? Yes; Baghdad to-day is as ever, a

city of the Arabs. The towns of Morocco and Egypt are products of the melting pot, but Baghdad remains of the Bedawi.

### FEATURES OF THE CITY.

Of her attractions, the river has pride of place. It flows through the city and gives space and dignity wherever it goes. On it ply military craft of every description—from giant paddle-wheelers to fussy hospital launches; a tug slowly ploughing its way against a seven-knot current sends consternation into the heart of a giant Arab who is dexterously manœuvring a gufa; a raft of brushwood and skins sends ripples to the shore, where an uncomplaining ass monotonously operates a creaking waterlift. Upstream two sinuous bridges of boats rise and fall on the flood, and across them all day long a busy crowd passes to and fro. And what would we do without the river at twilight? Every evening we go across to the waterfront and watch the passers-by, or a boatman kindling his brazier on the deck of a high-pooped mahallah. And here we can get a glimpse of "home life" in an Arab village, and relapse into quiet thought as the setting sun throws the palms into sharp silhouette.

To-morrow, before the sun has made the day too hot, we can go in search of more material things. First of all, to the bazaars—the long-roofed arcades thronged with every sort of people buying and selling at every sort of shop—Arabs and Jews, Kurds and Persians, Hindus and Tommies, Armenians in fez and women in veils—half-clad urchins and donkey boys filling the air with their shrill cries—overburdened coolies calling



A Kurdish Porter—one of a hard-working tribe who will not disdain to carry even pianos on their broad backs.





## PROCLAMATION

"To the People of Baghdad Vilayet.

"In the name of my King, and in the name of the peoples over whom he rules, I address you as follows:—

"Our military operations have as their object defeat of the enemy and the driving of him from these territories. In order to complete this task, I am charged with absolute and supreme control of all regions in which British troops operate, but our armies do not come into your cities and lands as conquerors or enemies, but as liberators.

"Since the days of Hulagu your city and your lands have been subject to the tyranny of strangers, your palaces have fallen into ruins, your gardens have sunk in desolation, and your forefathers and yourselves have groaned in bondage. Your sons have been carried off to wars not of your seeking, your wealth has been stripped from you by unjust men and squandered in distant places.

"Since the days of Midhat the Turks have talked of reforms, yet do not the ruins and wastes of to-day testify the vanity of those promises?

"It is the wish not only of my King and his peoples, but it is also the wish of the great nations with whom he is in alliance, that you should prosper even as in the past, when your lands were fertile, when your ancestors gave to the world literature, science and art, and when Baghdad city was one of the wonders of the world.

"Between your people and the dominions of my King there has been a close bond of interest. For 200 years have the merchants of Baghdad and Great Britain traded together in mutual profit and friendship. On the other hand, the Germans and Turks, who have despoiled you and yours, have for twenty years made Baghdad a centre of power from which to assail the power of the British and the Allies of the British in Persia and Arabia. Therefore the British Government cannot remain indifferent as to what takes place in your country now or in the future, for in duty to the interests of the British people and their Allies the British Government cannot risk that being done in Baghdad again which has been done by the Turks and Germans during the war.

"But you people of Baghdad, whose commercial prosperity and whose safety from oppression and invasion must ever be a matter of the closest concern to the British Government, are not to understand that it is the wish of the British Government to impose upon you alien institutions. It is the hope of the British Government that the aspirations of your philosophers and writers shall be realised and that once again the people of Baghdad shall flourish, enjoying their wealth and substance under institutions which are in consonance with their sacred laws and their racial ideals. In Hedjaz the Arabs have expelled the Turks and Germans, who oppressed them, and proclaimed the Sherif Hussain as their King, and his lordship rules in independence and freedom, and is the ally of the nations who are fighting against the power of Turkey and Germany; so, indeed, are the noble Arabs, the Lords of Koweit, Nejd, and Asir.

"Many noble Arabs have perished in the cause of Arab freedom, at the hands of those alien rulers, the Turks, who oppressed them. It is the determination of the Government of Great Britain and the great Powers allied to Great Britain, that these noble Arabs shall not have suffered in vain. It is the hope and desire of the British people and the nations in alliance with them, that the Arab race may rise once more to greatness and renown among the peoples of the earth, and that it shall bind itself together to this end in unity and concord.

"O people of Baghdad! Remember that for twenty-six generations you have suffered under strange tyrants who have ever endeavoured to set one Arab house against another in order that they might profit by your dissensions. This policy is abhorrent to Great Britain and her Allies, for there can be neither peace nor prosperity where there is enmity and misgovernment. Therefore, I am commanded to invite you, through your nobles and elders and representatives, to participate in the management of your civil affairs in collaboration with the political representatives of Great Britain who accompany the British Army, so that you may be united with your kinsmen in north, east, south and west, in realising the aspirations of your race."

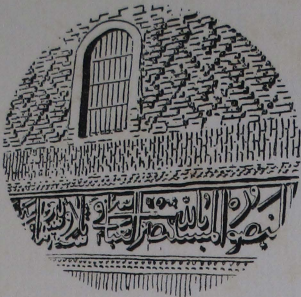
F. S. MAUDE,

Lieutenant-General,  
Commanding Army of Occupation.

March 19, 1917.

A copy of  
General  
Maude's pro-  
clamation to the  
citizens of  
Baghdad upon  
his occupation  
of the city.





Built before Harun's time—the wall of Mustansir's University, with its Kufic inscription deeply cut. Near Upper Bridge, Left Bank, Baghdad.

"balak" to all who would cross their path. Strange sights and smells, and stranger foods and sweetmeats—cloth from Manchester, brass from Ispahan, copper from Russia, carpets from Kerman, and rags from every loom in Asia. Everything is in the bazaar. Things useful and things useless, and heaps of mere rubbish. A thick murky air is pierced by a single ray of purest sunlight. Incessant clatter of hammers and anvils, and a noise and confusion of tongues to out-babel Babel; the brave glow of a tiny brazier in the distant darkness of a tinsmith's stall; tailors working in alcoves, with their machines humming like bees in jasmine; hatters making caps of Astrakhan; a shoemaker cutting uppers of red leather. Haberdashers sell a medley of miserable trumpery; but fruit stalls are high heaped with rosy pomegranates in season, and the sherbet seller keeps no stall at all but walks bent down by the weight of his great jar and rings his brass cups like cymbals as he goes. A rushing hither and thither and a wild living and dying—all this, and more, in the bazaars of Baghdad.

Another day, we have eyes only for blue-tiled minarets whereon the muezzins call to the faithful. And while we walk we can get glimpses, far-off and faint, of the Great Baghdad that was the centre of the world: the towering minaret of the mosque of Caliphs—the old, old Khan Orthma, still, after seven hundred years, in use as a commercial mart—the wall of Mustansir's University with its Kufic inscription deeply carved.

Over an understanding heart this city casts a subtle spell. Bricks and stones weighted with years, an ancient calm in ancient places, colours that run riot—new buildings and ruins on every hand, and spread around it all a fringe of nodding palms and of melancholy desert waste. Then yonder, romance at last, stirring the imagination of the dulllest—domes and minarets of lustrous, shining gold. It is true; just seven miles away, by ricketty horse tram, are minarets and domes covered with gold as thick as your finger, and vaults containing a treasure that is envied by the little old lady of Threadneedle Street. But you must turn elsewhere if you would know more of the gold and the treasure.

## REINFORCEMENTS.

As with other units of the A.I.F., reinforcements for the squadron (from the second batch on 20th June, 1916) sailed fairly regularly until the beginning of 1917, when there was a pause for some months. A complete unit—the Cavalry Divisional Signal Squadron—was then despatched to Mesopotamia, but, after some twelve months' service was disbanded, and most

of its personnel transferred to the wireless squadron. In November of the same year a reinforcement of drivers was embarked, and in December another complete unit—"D" Troop (light motor wireless sections). Two further drafts, 11th and 12th, were also sent a few months before the Armistice. The first and second batches were sent over in charge of Lieuts. Clarke and Hilary respectively. Complete details of the reinforcements will be found in the nominal roll in the Appendix.

The adventures of the reinforcements were exceedingly varied. Some went in transports and others in P. & O. mail steamers, and were usually disembarked at Colombo, travelling via Madras to Bombay (Colaba Barracks). Most of the time not passed in travelling was spent either in luxurious sight-seeing, or in penurious starvation in depots and barracks.

## INDIAN LEAVE.

In the heat of summer few hostile movements were possible, and consequently it became permissible to release a certain proportion of troops for leave to India. Australians and New Zealanders were included in this percentage, and the fortunate ones started full of hopes on the journey down-river in the direction of the comforts of that land.

An entire volume might be written on what happened before the individuals in these parties eventually returned to their units. The first feature of leave that our boys observed was the difference between being with their own unit and of being dependent on the doubtful hospitality of rest and base camps. For reasons unknown, rations hardly seemed to exist in those institutions; railway trucks invariably appeared to have been used quite recently for the transport of horses or coal; fatigues and guards were encountered with regularity; and interminable delays experienced at every possible point.

Naturally this sort of thing did not go down with our men. If rations could not be wangled or helped to, there was usually the char and wads of an Arab cafe round the corner. If the truck had coal in it—well, they could hardly be blamed for helping themselves to a few sheets of tattai matting in the face of an expostulating engineer N.C.O. Fatigues and guards—yes, there were even ways of dodging these; but the interminable delays made us want to be back with our unit.



"and the sherbet seller keeps no stall at all . . . ."





BAGHDAD—  
The Marjan Mosque.

In the Gulf, the ration question burnt with its old-time ferocity. On arrival at Bombay, leave was hardly ever given; straight on the train for Poona, the closest of the hill stations, on the Eastern Ghat, 60 miles above Bombay. It seemed strange to be once more amongst white bungalows set in gardens. From Poona, a leave pass for one month was usually granted, together with a second-class railway warrant; then the fun started. Unfortunately, there seems to be no record of most of it. I cannot say whether they travelled first or second, paid for their refreshments, or how they kept flush of rupees on empty paybooks. However, here is an authentic diary of the movements of one member of the first leave party of 1917.

April	22nd	Left unit.
May	3rd	Basra—embarked on "Egra."
May	13th	Bombay.
May	14th	Poona.
May	20th	
May	24th	Calcutta
May	30th	
May	31st	Darjeeling.
June	7th	

June	8th	Calcutta.
June	10th	
June	11th	Benares, Cawnpore, Lucknow.
June	17th	Delhi, Agra, Bombay.
June	18th	Poona.
August	6th	Persian Gulf.
August	13th	
August	31st	Baghdad.

In India, too, were to be found sundry details—invalided sick off transports, or back from Mesopotamia. Some of these were honestly trying to return to their unit, others trying equally hard not to get back! The wireless unit was small, the branches of the Indian Army wide, and it was seldom known whether we had a depot or not in India. Hence everything and anything might and did happen. However, after urgent representations were cabled back from the O.C. of the unit at the front, a gradual sorting out took place; the fit and worthy were returned to Baghdad, while those who had suffered too severely from the numerous maladies of Mesopotamia were invalided to Australia and New Zealand.

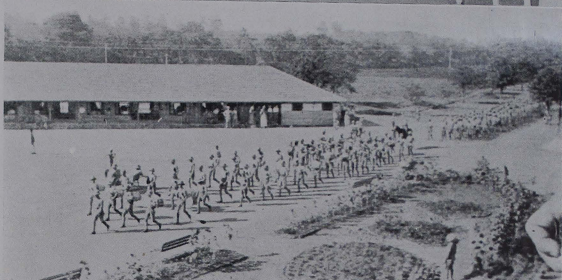


# AT BOMBAY AND POONA

*Freeman Thomas War Hospital, Bombay. During the war Bombay was a city of hospitals, practically every public building being utilised.*



*Deccan Hospital, Poona. A parade of convalescents.*



*Poona—A furlough group.*



*Outside Poona Barracks—a cycling party. Cycling (on hired machines) was one of the attractions.*





# BY TIGRIS BANKS, BAGHDAD



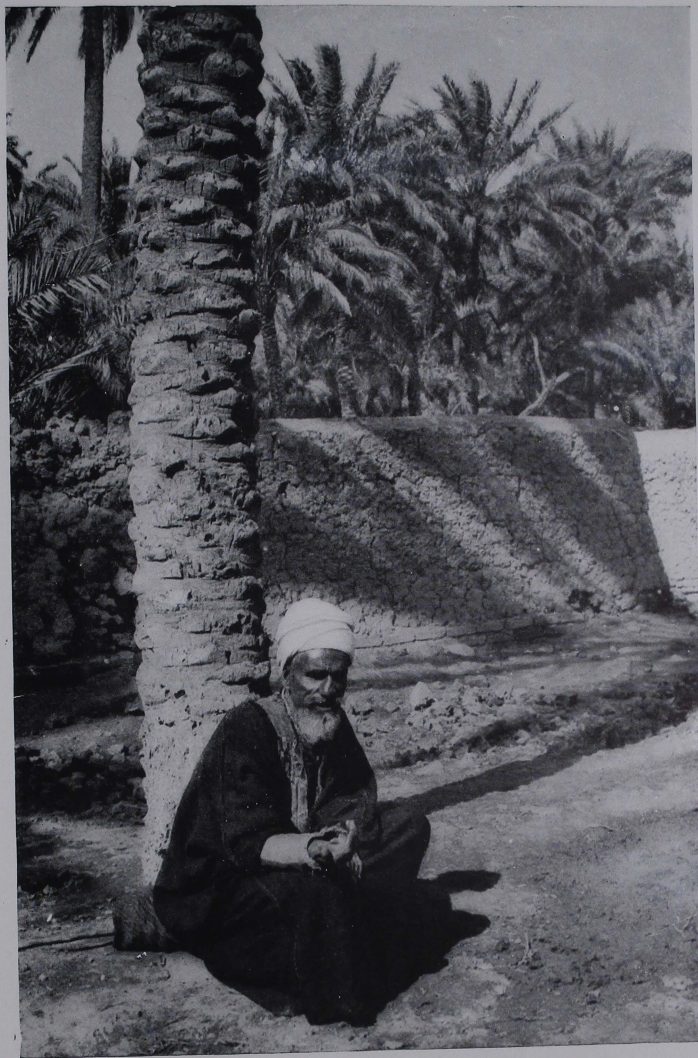
Upper (Khotah) bridge of boats, looking westward to the coffee shops on the right bank.



Waterfront at Battaween (near the Horse-lines) looking towards Karradah. In the foreground can be seen a large gufa used by Remounts and a bellum being towed upstream (towing being easier than rowing against the stiff seven-knot current).



# A BEGGAR OF BAGHDAD



*The giving of alms is enjoined by the Koran, so naturally there is no shortage of suitable recipients!*



## "OFF TO RAMADIE."

Here is an account of the capture of Ramadie, supplied by a member of the Cavalry Divisional Signal Squadron. This unit—an Australian one—had arrived in the field during the summer, but, as a whole was given no share in the Ramadie operations. Nevertheless, in order to gain experience of battle conditions, a small party—consisting of an officer, two sergeants, one corporal, and two sappers—was attached to C Wireless Station, and the divisional Cable Section (the latter a British unit, known as "B.X.").

"The tune of 'Cook's Son, Duke's Son, Son of a Hundred Kings' will always recall, to those who can remember, the picture of the khaki lads marching off to the Boer war; hear 'Tipperary' sung, and one can visualise the small band of 'Contemptibles' holding up the first German rush at Mons; but do not forget that the battle of Ramadie had its music, too. 'If You Were the Only Girl in the World' will probably bring back to the men who went on that stunt memories of the scorching, dusty rides by day and the freezing ones by night, and of a little soldier perched on a big horse, singing ever more merrily the nearer he rode to action.

"The dust billowed up from the horses' feet—fine, clinging dust, as soft as the powder that is sprinkled on a baby—and the men picked it off in lumps and knobs from their cheeks, where it had solidified the drops of perspiration continually running down their faces like rain-drops down a window pane. No doubt it was good camouflage—for men, horses, and equipment were all the colour of the desert. When they eventually wanted a clean up they had to pick and scrape off the dirt, not having sufficient water even to quench their thirst. In fact many, thinking first of the necessity of the horses, drank with relish from the bottom of canvas buckets the drops which the animals could not reach. Many of us, too, learnt on this ride the tortures of dry and swollen tongues, and of the resultant chapped lips for days after the experience.

"The first bivouac of the 6th Brigade was well watered, on a swift running offshoot of the Euphrates. This stream appeared to lose itself in marshes, where innumerable waterfowl, ducks, geese, and the enormous Mesopotamian storks rose in the air as the column passed. At the next bivouac (Khan Nuqtah), the

water was brackish; and it was with great joy that the mounted men beheld the Euphrates running swiftly by their third camping place (Feluja). Though but a distance of 18 miles, the march from Khan Nuqtah was a very trying one. The cavalry moved off as soon as it was light enough to travel, but before long the temperature was over 120 deg. The horses (at least of the signallers) were weighted down with saddles, rifles, ammunition, emergency feed, and canvas "chargals" of water, and, despite the fact that their riders dismounted and led them much of the way, and that the "chargals" were emptied en route, they were in a distressed condition at the end of the journey. The desert, too, was so soft in places that the A.T. carts of our mule and Jaipur pony transport often sank to the axles. Nevertheless, the animals showed wonderful stamina and courage, humping their backs and actually lifting their fore feet off the ground in their efforts to extricate the carts.

"The 6th and its attendant units camped at Feluja from the 21st to the 26th of September, in order to allow men and horses to recover. They then pushed on sixteen miles to a position three miles from Mahdij. This ride was not so fatiguing; the horses were watered at Dhibban, 8 miles out. A day was spent here and, at 2.45 a.m. on September 28th, the cavalry on the right flank moved out for the attack on Ramadie, taking up a position at daybreak, three miles from Mushaid Ridge, which was occupied by the Turks. The artillery opened fire at 6 a.m., and the Turkish guns replied for an hour with shrapnel. C Station, erecting half-mast, managed to get some messages through during this time.

"About 7 o'clock, the infantry having turned the flank of the position, the cavalry moved off to the left and made a dash across a bridge, which the Turks had not found time to destroy before leaving, over Aziziya Canal. It looked at first as if there would be a number of casualties, since the Turks had the range, and were peppering the bridge with shrapnel. The order was given to trot till out of range, but barely a third of the column was over before the Turks ceased firing. Some of the horses appeared to sense the danger, and their riders with difficulty restrained them from galloping. A member of the Signal Squadron caused some amusement at this stage. Having pulled his mount to a walk immediately he crossed the bridge, he was asked why he'd done so. "Oh,"



The Hindustani word for camel is "oont." It expresses camel superciliousness exactly.



"Bizz" or River Salmon—one of which is a load for a donkey. They are often six to seven feet long and over a hundred pounds in weight.

Those who went with the column to Hindi-yeh will remember the "miracle of the fish", when the quartermaster bought a single salmon and managed to divide it into a ration for the whole column!



he said, "if I'd trotted any more I'd have lost—(out of his haversack)—the onions I 'acquired' in Feluja." And considering that an onion could make a tin of "bully" quite attractive, his reason was accepted!

"As soon as the cavalry were out of range a halt was called while C Station erected half-mast and put through another batch of messages, and V Battery shelled an Arab village that was giving trouble. From this point the infantry could be seen assaulting the Mushaid Ridge under heavy fire from the Turkish batteries. Then commenced a long and tiring march to outflank the Turks. Arriving behind Ramadie about 4 p.m., the cavalry took up a position in some low sandhills, half a mile from the river. The batteries fired H.E. into the Turks, who replied with shrapnel, and an artillery duel thereupon commenced, which continued until nightfall.

"During this shelling, C Station, erected half-mast in a ravine between some low hills, got a charge of shrapnel all to itself. The pellets cut up the dust all round, missing men, masts, and instruments by inches; but the operator on duty (who happened to be the sergeant-in-charge) never missed a dot nor wavered on a dash as he finished sending the message. 'We're lucky; they never fall in the same place twice,' he laconically remarked to the mechanic working the engine beside him.

"By now the only line of retreat for the Turks was cut off, and preparations were accordingly made by the cavalry to resist whatever attempts they would make to break through. The attack came about 2 a.m., and hard fighting ensued until daybreak, when the Turks were forced to retire back to Ramadie. Fire was then opened on the cavalry position by a light battery, but this did not last for long. About 11 o'clock news came through of the total surrender of the Turks. The horses were immediately taken to the river to water, and a certain amount of excitement was caused when some of them struck a patch of quicksand, which broke up into a series of big raft-like cakes. As most of the unfortunate animals were well-nigh exhausted, having been saddled for some sixty hours, great difficulty was experienced in getting them out.

"One of the Signal Squadron men found a Turk, devoid of clothing, hiding in an irrigation canal beside the river. Some Arabs, on hearing that the Turks were beaten, had stripped him. He was taken prisoner and paraded before the General to be questioned, wearing only a balaclava cap, which one of our troops had given him.

"The cavalry rode into Ramadie in the afternoon, bivouacked there for the night, and at 7.30 on the 30th September left for Baghdad, which was reached on October 4th."

## RECONNAISSANCE TO HIT.

In October a reconnaissance to Hit was carried out by the 12th Infantry Brigade, which was accompanied by G station. They found no Turks in this ancient and evil-smelling town, and so left it to its inhabitants. But the name of Hit recalls a page or two from Candeler, which must be repeated:—

"At Hit we entered a new country, a land of limestone and gypseous clay, where the river winds in a valley between low hills. Viewed from a mile or two downstream Hit reminds one of a town in Italy. It is built of grey limestone as compact as a castle within its walls; the small minaret stands out like a campanile; the palms below the walls appear in the distance as black as cypresses, and the arched aqueducts running into the Euphrates, or standing broken and isolated in the middle of the river, are very Roman-looking. . . . As one enters the town the enchantment that distance lends disappears. The houses are tightly packed on the circular hill like one huge honeycombed dwelling falling away into a moat inland from the river. The shell of the town is formed of the conterminous walls, many of which are crumbling and expose ruined interiors, alcoves and divans. The moat-like depression is not really a moat, but the dip which has formed between the foundations of the town and the mound of refuse that has risen round it—the scourings of centuries. One cannot escape from refuse in these small, ancient Biblical cities. It is the salient thing. They are built on refuse. The Hit of to-day is built on strata of Hits dating back to the Ava of the Bible. The debris without grows until it threatens to dominate the walls of the town; yet the debris within never decreases, and being more recent is more offensive. One would think that bitumen must have a purging effect. The steep, narrow alleys were once paved with it, but they have become drains. . . . But, unsavoury as their town is, our airman probably wronged the Hitites when he implied that the smell which offended his nostrils as he flew over in his machine 300 ft. above the earth, travelling at ninety miles an hour, proceeded from the streets. He must have struck an emission of sulphuretted hydrogen from the bitumen wells. Whiffs of it are carried into the town sometimes when the wind is in the west, and the change of smell is, if anything, a relief."





Istabulat—Ruined Tomb.

## RECONSTRUCTION OF THE CAVALRY DIVISION

The excitement on the Euphrates being over, F Station went off to spend a fortnight with III. Corps at Baqubah, while C retired to Es Sulaikh with the 6th Cavalry Brigade. At Es Sulaikh was to be found the new Australian unit, to which reference has already been made—the 1st Australian Cavalry Divisional Signal Squadron, under the command of Captain Payne. All were busy getting tents and dug-outs secure from winter rain, gear repaired, etc., when 12 hours' notice was given to move out. They naturally proved an exceedingly brisk twelve hours. Istabulat was the meeting place for the Cavalry Division, as it formed up for its second campaigning season.

### FAILURE ON THE DIALA.

At Istabulat C and F stations met men of H, who were able to tell of the high hopes that had been expected of the previous week on the Diala. I, L and H had taken part in this venture—an elaborate converging movement with the object of containing the entire Turkish Diala force, troops advancing from bases as far apart as Mandali, Sharoban, Beled Ruz, and Sindiyeih. On October 18th the 40th Infantry Brigade had occupied Dali Abbas; on the 19th the 28th Brigade was in Mansuriyeh. The same day the 25th advanced from the centre, and the 26th and 27th moved along the crest of the Jebel Hamrin. Meanwhile the 7th Cavalry Brigade was astride the Khanikin road at Kizil Robot—wireless by H station the sole means of communication. But the elaborate converging idea that had proved so successful on the Euphrates was a failure on the Diala; overnight a suspicious enemy, warned by the dust of convoys, had slipped away to Kifri by the Qarah Tappeh road, there to plan his counter-attack.

### TEKRIT AND DAUR.

It was for the purpose of foiling this expected counter-attack that the cavalry had been concentrated at Istabulat, and before it could develop properly, the British advance was on. Huweislat fell early in the month to a determined 7th Divisional attack before the enemy had time to entrench. Meanwhile the cavalry (C, F, and H Stations) was moving up with great

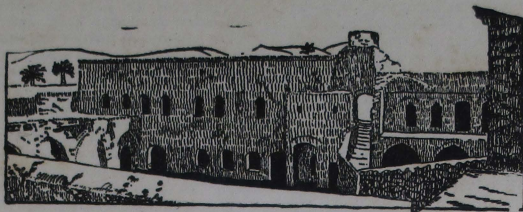
secrecy by innumerable nullahs, or beds of dry canals, the wireless often erecting half-mast to avoid disclosing the presence of troops to enemy detachments; by this concealment it was hoped to contain the entire Turkish force in Daur. But the enemy was very shy, and the movement resulted in disappointment. For their trouble, a good supply of bombs was all the Cavalry Division got. "Bombs are hard," writes one of the men. "He (the airman) is about a mile up in the air and all you can do is to stand and wait for whatever he may have for you. They make a swishing noise coming down; when they hit, everybody in the vicinity goes up forty feet in the air in a cloud of black smoke. You never know whether the next one will get you or not."

On the following day, after a long cold march, the advance was followed up to Tekrit—famous as the birthplace of Saladin the Great. The cavalry, operating to the north-west of the town, came under a good deal of fire, and so did the infantry; but when the place was entered there were neither troops nor stores, so the British withdrew immediately, as the place was needlessly remote from railhead. The Turkish base now seemed to be near Fatha, on the right bank of the Tigris near where the river has cut its way through the Jebel.

### DEATH OF GENERAL MAUDE.

So ended November—magnificent advances had been made with small casualties in the field. But back in Baghdad the force had suffered an irreparable loss. On November 18th General Maude died of cholera. He had come at the head of his division (13th) from Gallipoli in March, 1916. He had assumed command of the force when its fortunes were at a low ebb; before he left it to lie in the desert cemetery outside North Gate he had dealt the Turks a series of blows from which they never recovered. From the very first he brought confidence to the force—confidence to the long job of evicting the Turk from his trenches round Kut—confidence to every advance since. But the soil he conquered was ungrateful; it claimed him as its victim as centuries before it had claimed Alexander and Julian. To his place at G.H.Q. was summoned the senior corps commander, General Marshall of the III.





British Headquarters, Kifri.

## QARAH TAPPEH AND KIFRI

In the field there was no slackening of effort. For some time orders had been out for the regaining of the Persian road, which had been abandoned to the Turks after the Russian retirement. This entailed the forcing and crossing of the Diala and Nahrin rivers, the capture of the Sakultutan pass (a height of land valuable for future as well as for present operations), and lastly the occupation of the town of Qarah Tappeh, which controlled the route of Turkish retreat from Persia.

In the foothills the scenery presented a refreshing change after the drab plains. There was colour in the hills (the words "Jebel Hamrin" are the Arabic for "Red Hills"); there was beauty in the rocky gorge through which the Diala cut its way; there was a homely touch in the autumn blossoms that covered the ground. It was upon such a stage that the whole scheme was successfully carried out between the 2nd and 5th December, six wireless stations participating:—

I Wagon (N.Z.).—At Advanced III. Corps, Kalat Mufti.

D Pack.—14th Division, Kurdarrah.

L Pack (N.Z.).—13th Division, en route Qarah Tappeh.

C, F, H Packs.—Cavalry Division, River Adhaim (Chai Khana).

The operations were in the main entrusted to the 13th and 14th Divisions of the III. Corps, under General Egerton. I Station was attached to Corps Headquarters, and L and D respectively to the divisions. A force of Russian Partizanski (of whom more later), with a wagon station (8SD) co-operated with another British force that was making a demonstration on the Upper Diala. Meanwhile, miles away to the north on the Adhaim the Cavalry Division (General Jones), with C, F, and H. Stations, was ordered out to Chai Khana to make a demonstration in force, so as to discourage any idea of Turkish reinforcements being diverted from Tuz against our main body.

To the infantry divisions thus fell the active share in the fighting. The Turkish rear-guard was cleverly cut off before it could carry out its function, while Sakultutan was occupied after a short stand, the enemy feeling that his communications were endangered by the threats of the cavalry on the Adhaim, and of the mixed force on the upper reaches of the Diala. Despite heavy obstacles—sodden marshes and overflowing water-courses—the neighbourhood of Qarah

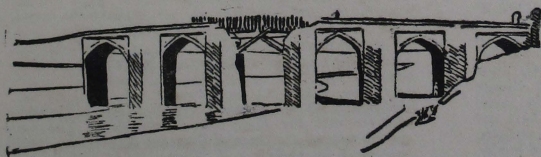
Tappeh was reached on the 5th, and, following on an attack by 35th and 40th Brigades, the enemy broke and fled through Kifri, firing the coal mine and his dumps of coal as he passed through. Next morning our aviators reported the enemy melting away along the Mosul Road. Demoralisation was rife; deserters came in daily. But further pursuit was considered fruitless and the troops were brought back again to the Diala, Sakultutan, however, being held as a future vantage-point.

"On the way back from Qarah Tappeh," says Candler, "the troops came in for an abnormal spell of cold weather. Snow had fallen in the hills. The water in the canvas buckets froze to solid blocks of ice. . . . Twelve degrees of frost were registered at Samarra, six at Baghdad; nothing very severe when judged by ordinary standards, but after the abnormally hot weather we were more sensitive to cold, our blood thinner, and the pores of our skin more penetrable. In barely four months there had been a difference of a hundred degrees between the maximum and minimum readings. The air was keen and dry. Since a week or two before our entry into Baghdad on March 11th there had not been a shower sufficient to lay the dust. The total rainfall in Baghdad in the last ten months had been nine points."

## RUSSIAN PARTISANS.

Of the Kifri stunt, easily the most interesting feature was the presence of the Partizanski. In midsummer, 1917, it will be remembered, Baratov and his division withdrew from military operations and returned to Kermanshah. But at Mandali, on November 29th, another party of Russians appeared and pitched their camp at the edge of this oasis, where walled clumps of poplar and palm melt into the desert. The leader of this force, the Partizanski, was Bicherakov, who, though wounded six times in as many actions on the Western front, was still carrying on with iron determination. His detachment consisted of picked regulars—volunteers from different regiments on the Caucasian front who, as free (Bolshevik) citizens, had waived their "rights" to desert the Allies and return ingloriously home. They had with them a mobile wireless station, and late in November a party of Australians was sent to handle traffic in English. Its call was 8SD.

The road to Persia was open once again! We who did not know War Office plans, were also unaware



Five-arched bridge at Nahrin Kupri, destroyed by the Turks on their retreat.



THE TRIALS OF AA STATION.

"Certainly we had a respite from the terrible heat of Mesopotamia, but what disadvantages the freedom entailed! And what a poor substitute for our mail from home was Reuter's wireless news! Yet the climate was wonderful—cool breezes and bright blue skies never seem to be lacking in the Land of the Lion and the Sun. In addition, there were figs and apricots; and for miles the restful greenery of walnut and poplar, as well as the ripening corn, and softly-tinted poppies.

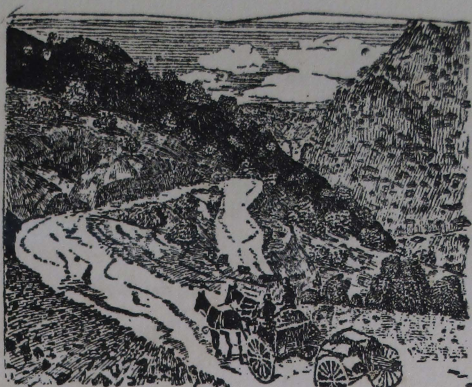
"And now in January we were to go back to Baghdad! We could hardly believe that an escort was on its way to Paitak to meet us, and that an Australian station—"VIS," a pack in Ford vans—was coming with it. We scarcely even worried about the snow that lay everywhere on the ground. Colonel Kenyon, the Consul, with guards of Persian tribesmen, accompanied

J Dewarwine  
 Foden  
 Mery  
 Stuart  
 P. C. Fordyok.  
 C. L. Ray  
 W. H. H. H.  
 C. Gault  
 M. A. Hew  
 W. R. R. R.  
 B. G. G. G.  
 L. J. J. J.  
 R. H. H. H.  
 W. H. H. H.  
 W. H. H. H.

66



*A hair-pin bend on Paitak Pass.*



us. Progress was terribly slow, snowstorms were almost continuous (at night we shivered in ruined caravanserais), and it was feared that the escort might run short of supplies and be forced to return without us. Accordingly, at Karind, the seventy-foot masts were put up in a howling blizzard, and a desperate all-night attempt to get a message through to it succeeded only in the pale dawn."

January 6th—the day of the meeting between AA Station and the escort—was overcast, with mist hanging low and heavy and lending a new grandeur to the rugged cliffs and steep slopes of majestic Paitak. War-correspondent Candler happened to be with the escort, and to him the wireless squadron owes practically its only mention in any work so far published. In *The Edge of the World* (p. 231), he writes: "First we met the advance guard of mounted Persian gendarmerie, then the Anzac detachment and their wireless wagons, each drawn by six stout horses. Their faces were black with wind and weather, and the 'butterfly' badges on their slouch hats had faded to a leaden grey."

By the 17th AA was back in Baghdad, where it was disbanded, a new A Station having been constituted in its absence some six months before.

About the same time the Partizanski and their squadron wireless operators were also taking their homeward road. The escort for AA had passed them at Kasri-Shirin, their flag in the van—that famous black flag, embroidered by the missionaries of Kermanshah. Bicherakov rode at the head of the column. Behind him, singing Russian part-songs, came the mounted men, their skull-and-crossbones pennants borne by the squadron leaders; then the infantry; and at the rear the hired Persian transport. A good-hearted mob, said the wireless men, for all their poverty of material equipment.

### BRITISH OUTPOSTS IN PERSIA.

Once more in British hands, the Persian road was the scene of considerable activity. The Headquarters of the 36th Brigade (D Station, later relieved by L) was established in the great caravanserai at Khanikin, whilst ahead of it an advance party of the Hampshire Regiment occupied Kasri-Shirin, where the New Zealanders of I Wagon Station opened on the 13th of January, 1918. Close on the heels of the infantry came some of the 14th Hussars with F station from Sadiyeh. Game—ducks and pigs—was plentiful as they road through the foot-hills. Reaching Kasri-Shirin on the 18th, they found the New Zealand operators at work. In three days the camp was twice bombed by enemy airmen, but little or no damage was sustained.

A day or two later the operating section of F was

sent with a Hampshire platoon in Ford vans to the base of Paitak, whence the detachment climbed the defile on foot, past busy gangs of Pioneers remaking the road, and camped in the Surkhadiza Valley. The pass was thus guaranteed to the British—a very necessary precaution. But the men of F station hardly appreciated the wisdom of this strategy—for they only had their summer kits, and were camped within one hundred feet of the permanent winter snow-level! The nights were bitterly cold; but the first six inches of snow gave new beauty to the barren hillsides, and snow-balling and a snow-man were features of the next day or two. In the tents, chimneys were built of stones, and this made things less disagreeable. But some nights the mast blew down again and again; on another the aerial broke four times—and it was hard having to turn out in the sleet and fix things.

The country hereabouts was rich enough in times of peace. But the presence of five armies in eighteen months had laid it waste, and the horrors of starvation were on every side. The inhabitants were almost walking skeletons—just skin over bone. Theft of roof-beams for firewood had rendered them homeless, and the destruction of standing crops had left no seed for the next sowing. Relief work therefore became an important section of British activity during the late winter and early spring.

### GENERAL DUNSTERVILLE ARRIVES.

Two days behind F Station and the Hants came the Ford vans of Dunsterville and his advance party. This party had been concentrated in Baghdad, and consisted—like the rest of the force—of N.C.O.'s and officers, who had seen distinguished service on other fronts. The "Dunsterforce" included men from most of the British regiments, as well as Australians, Canadians, South Africans, and New Zealanders. Under the leadership of General Dunsterville, its object was to win through to southern Russia, round about Tiflis, and there to provide a necessary stiffening to enable the Cossacks and Georgians to keep in the field and so parry the threat that the Turkish Caucasian Army was now making against our Eastern interests. The mission reached Enzeli, on the Caspian, only to find that town as well as Baku in revolutionary hands—and, worse still, with its object already disclosed by traitors on the Tiflis side. Consequently, without actual military force nothing could be done, and Dunsterville was forced to return to Hamadan (Feb. 25th) and await reinforcements, leaving Enzeli to its committees (which committees under any other circumstances would have been distinctly humorous, but now they were a tragedy).





Sketch map, showing country covered during the operations at Khan Baghdadi and the advance to Anah and beyond.

## KHAN BAGHDADI

The winter of 1917-1918 passed quietly enough on the Upper Euphrates. G Station was erected at Ramadie as a standby for the 15th Division while its troops were engaged in consolidating their position, and in establishing a sense of security among surrounding tribes. There were several raids on hostile sheikhs and reconnaissances, most of them deemed of insufficient importance to be accompanied by a wireless station. The Euphrates was bridged in several places, and the railway to Ramadie completed by December 21st.

However, in late December and in January it became evident that something was in the air on the Turkish side. Downstream floated rumours that vast stores of war material, rafts, etc., were being collected. At the same time enemy patrols grew bolder. Seeing danger in this enterprise, the G.O.C. issued orders for the occupation of Hit as soon as divisional arrangements would permit, but, nevertheless, he did not desire to engage in serious fighting for unimportant gains.

Accordingly on February 21st, the Lucas Column (42nd Infantry Brigade), with No. 3<sup>rd</sup> Station attached, advanced from Khan Abu Rayat, where they had been for some days, to Uqbah, ascertaining here that the Turks had moved to a new position at Broad Wadi, two miles above Hit. About the same time No. 4 Pack was brought up from Baghdad to join 15th Div. H.Q. In addition No. 11 Station relieved No. 10 (N.Z.) at Kufa, and the latter, after a few days spent in reorganising, joined the 11th Cavalry Brigade, which was also required for the coming operations.

On March 8th it was discovered that the Turks had again retreated, this time abandoning their Broad Wadi position to fall back on Sahliyah. Our troops were therefore pushed forward correspondingly, Andrews' Column (accompanied by No. 3 Station) leading, with the main body of the 15th Division (No. 4 Station) in support. Hit was occupied on the 9th and Sahliyah the following day, the Turks having withdrawn to

Khan Baghdadi. It was now decided to strike hard; could the victory of Ramadie be repeated? On the 12th the 11th Cavalry Brigade left its rendezvous at Iron Bridge and, by forced marches, reached Sahliyah on the day before the attack (which had been arranged for the 26th), thus leaving no time for the news of its arrival to filter through to Turkish intelligence.

The plan of operations, an almost exact repetition of that of Ramadie, was to attack with the main strength of the 15th Division against the enemy's left, while a column of armoured cars, known as "Hogge's Column" (with No. 39 Station—made up on the field from leave and relief men and a spare set—attached), and the cavalry, were to cut to Aleppo road far in the Turkish rear. These two forces, specially organised for swift movement, advanced with great stealth and were entirely successful. The infantry entered Khan Baghdadi town at 5.30 in the morning, the Turks having completely failed to break through the cavalry line, despite a heavy counter-attack near the Wadi Hauran. By daybreak the defeat was complete and utter, and, to make the most of the victory, an energetic pursuit by the cavalry and armoureds was forthwith ordered. The latter were soon at Haditha, occupying it without resistance, and by nightfall had reached Khan Fuhaimah; by noon next day Anah was taken, and from here the wireless station, now out of touch, had to return to Haditha. By the 28th the cavalry (with No. 3 Station—No. 10 remaining behind to relay messages) were at Anah, with the armoureds seventy miles ahead, bent on the rescue of Lieutenant-Colonel Tennant and Major Hobart, two airmen who had been captured at Khan Baghdadi on the 25th.

But in running on with our skeleton outline of the operations we are forgetting that we have an eyewitness' narrative of the work of one of the wireless stations with the main attacking column.

### OFF TO ANAH.

"It is 10.15 p.m. on the night of the 25th and final orders are through; in a few minutes No. 3 Station is

\*Stations were known by number instead of by letter, as from Feb. 1st. "A" became "1", "B" became "2", etc., except that "G" was made "3" and "O" "7".