

ROY GORDON GARVIE

Transcription by Suzanne Laslett of his diary from WWI

No. 4 Section

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Nominal Roll

No.	Rank	Name	Remarks
	Lt	Garvie R G	
338	Cpl	Ross R D	Trans to No.6
501	LCpl	Donovan E wounded 24/3/18	prom. Cpl C
2889	LCpl	Sayers R.R.R	prom ?cpl ?
2648	LCpl	Cameron H.A	Cpl
353	Hor?	Makelton(?) E.H	Wounded 31/10/17
1171	“	Jones P.G.	Hospital 9/11/17
2867	“	Donegan M.J.	
2807	“	Connors J	
2829	“	Peters B	
1687	“	Hodgson E	
2896	LCpl	Wellington W.P	
2828	“	Pearce E.J.H	Hospital fever 1/11/17
2224	“	Pearce A	Wounded 12/4/18
757	“	Bigelow J.A.	
3121	“	Herbert G.B	
2810	Tpr?	Dickens C.V	zotp (?)
3177	“	Gibbon H.E	trans. No 6 Section
3126	“	Morphett R	Hosp
2810	“	Burgess F	Wounded 12/4/18
10	“	Rose R.B	
852	“	Abbott T	Hospital 3/10/17
1017	“	Edwards W	Hospital 9/10/17
2819	“	Long J.E.	transferred ASC
1394	“	Carsons J.A.	hospital
12	“	Burn E	
520	“	Gill H	Det.IM ?
61	“	Moore G.V	Rpt
1286	“	Smith W.H.	

No.	Rank	Name	Remarks
559	Driver	O'Connor J	
2326	"	Duffey M.J.	
1769	Trans to HQ	Hall B.	
554	Driver	Newton M.J.	
2817	"	Kirk D	att.Bde train
2880	"	Marsh W.E.	att. Bde Tn.
2827	Pte	Pitceathle J	
36	"	Coxen A.J.	Hospital
37	'	Ahearn F.K.(?)	Hospital
2808	Driver	Caquahon	
2869	S.Smith	Best H.	
65	Sgt	McDonald F.J	QM
3245	Pte	Wade W.J.	
1042	"	Pimm B.	Hosp.
171	"	Nourse R.J.	
825	"	Abbott T	
1768	"	Harris H.	HQ
11A	"	Shaw D.J	
3439	Farrier	Davidson J.K Northfield	

NOMINAL ROLL OF HORSES

Rider	DES	O.F.	N.F.	O.H.	N.H.	Marks	NAum?	NF	DF
Lt Garvie	Chg	AF	337					4	402
	Bm	AE	76			NIZ in rump		4	403
Cpl Ross	Bg		60	M	X	White NH		6	628
LCpl Donovan	Bg		733	X	2	White both H feet		4	426
LCpl Sayles	Bg	4	203			Arrow over R (symbol)		4	424
LCpl Cameron	Bm	4	80	m	-			4	425
Smith T/or ?n?	gg	x1	758					4	401
Herbert	ChM				x	550 Nr Shldr		4	434
Makiham	Bg	4				4 white feet wsv		4	422
Dickens	Bg	v4		M	x			4	430
Donegan	Bg					white In HF W30		4	406
Burgess	BM	4	513		M	L01 over 335			
Burn	Blkg	4	30			M over HZC			
Rose	Ch M	4	391	M		arrow O.sh 9 over c thigh			
Long	Chg					E nr sh. WF thigh		4	400
Gribbon	BM	4	66		M	No marks			
Jones	Brg		30		M	W.OH 3 nr thigh			
Farmer Best	BM		291		M	2WF-WHO			
Bigelow	ChM	4	088		M	4 white feet RI over O			
Peters	Bg				X	N N over upside down B nr shldr			
Connors	Bm	4	456	M		J-over upside down (
A Gun packhorse	DchM	4	284			No brands			
Morphett	Bg		M		672	JFjoined nr sh 3LH thigh			
Amm. Packhorse	Bm	4	1507			No brands			
Pearce E	Brg	4	64		M	White OH V3W			

Rider	DES	OF	NP	OH	NH	Marks	Remarks
B gun packhorse	Brg	4	404		M	Three arrows	
Pearce A	Lbg	x2	048			B over B	
Amm packhorse	Blk g	R63	91			Arrow	
Spare amm pack	Bg					Arrow off shldr	
Edwards	Cream M		M			B nr shldr	
Wellington	Bg					Arrow off shldr	
Abbott	Bg					C nr shldr	
Sgt Allen (attached) Transport	gg	11	12			AA joined	
J. O'Connor	bg					M underscored O. thigh	
"	Bg					U over shoulder	
Newton	Bm					S nr side	
"	Bm					Arrow nr thigh	
Hall	Brg					3F Y sideways n. shoulder	
"	Bg					U 23 over 33 nr sh MG6 nr thigh	
M J Droffey ?	Cg					M on neck	

Note: All the pages relating to the nominal roll of horses were marked cancelled .These were all double pages.

The next page is a loose single page found inside the diary. The other half is missing.

NOM. Roll

Rider	DES	OF	NF	OH
Lt Harvey	Ch.g	AF	337	
"	Ch.m	-	-	
Sgt Garvie	BM	AE	76	
L/cSpurling	BG	AB	268	
" Kempe	BM	AE	13	
Col Edmunds ? 2br or 2pr?	BrG	-	-	
Norman	Ch.M	A28	242	
Riley C	Bl G	Rx	600	
Foulis B	Bg	AE	25	
South A.C.	Bg	G	102	
Woods	BM	AE	38	
O'Brien L or F	Bg	A7	003	
Smith	GG	X1	758	
Henderson	BM	A7	457	
Hoggarth	BrG	6	600	M (this name has been crossed out)
Wade W ?	BG	35	931	
Wade W ?	BrM			M
Clutterham	ChG			
Do	BrG			

"A" Gun Team

No. of Gun c.299
No. of Tripod c.48976
No's of spare barrels 839 and 453c
No. of Range finders 4989 12036
"Beer Sheba Stunt"
No.1 Makeham wounded 31/10/17
No.2 Driver Dickens Pitceuthley?
No.3 L/cpl Wellington
No. 4 Gribbon (crossed out) Wade
No. 5 Donegan Range Finder
No.6 Bigelow (arrow from this name pointing to No 5 line)
Gun Leader Hodgson Harris
No. 1 Amm. Morphett
No. 2 " Burn

"B" Gun

No. of Gun 1013
" " Tripod 21519
No. of spare barrels 8350 and 898
No. of Range finders
No. 1 L.Cpl. Sayers (crossed out) Cameron written above
" 2Burgess Pitcathley
"3 Jones
" 4 Gill with ? and crossed out. Pearce E hospital fever 1/11/17
" 5 with ? Connors
" 6 with ? Peters
? Pearce A wounded
No.1 Amm.Carsons (crossed out) Coxen
No. 2 " Rose
Long Moore ?
Park
No. of Telescope 13971
Glasses: L Cpl Sayers 21350
L Cpl Donovan
Dickens (Mackeham to hosp? wounded) S4 over 21005
Revolvers: L.CplDonovan No. 248573
L.Cpl Sayers 198732
? No. 6 Cpl Ross 248821
L/cplPitcuthley

Rider	Desc.	O.F.	NF		Brands	Remarks
Best S.S.	BM	4	418	Sad.	(7) thigh	Spider
Biglow	Cht.M	4	419	"	C73 arrow of.sh.	Queenie
Gribbon (crossed out)						
Wade	Br.M	4	420	Sad.	Clean skin	(to Cinders? In place of ? L Bar (Chum)
Jones	Br G	4	421	"	3 on thigh	Babs
Markeham (crossed out)						
M ? (can't decipher) BG	BG	4	422	"	WSV nr shld	Bilby (? R.G. ? ? 5/11/17)
Wellington	BG	4`	423	"	Arrow off shld.	Crooked Legs
Cameron	BG	4	424	"	Double arrows	
					Off shld.	Guts
Sayers	BM	4	425	"	clean skin	

Rider	Desc.	OF.	NF.		Brands	Remarks
Corp. Donovan	BrG	4	426	Sad.	Symbol nr shld	Corners
Pearce A	Br. M	4	427	"	U thigh	XX
	Ch. M	4	428	Pack	Arrow thigh	Kitty
? crossed out						
Moore	BG	4	429	Guns	clean skin	Remount
Dickens	CG	4	430	Sad.	B N. Should.	Ginger (K in A)
The above has been crossed out.						
Rose	BG	4	431	Pack	W arrow NShld.	HNR shld Stumpy
"	BM	4	432	Sad.	S over C thigh	Rose
Coxen	BrM	4	433	Pack	Clean skin	Biddy (EVUC 29/12/17) – crossed out.
"	Ch.M	4	434	"	55 U near shld	Bella
McDonald (crossed out)						
Donegan	BG	4	628	"	Bell near shld.	Perkins
Rider	Desc.	NF	OF		Brands	Remarks
Rose	BrnG	710	7	Dght	Wc over 33	Lion
Transport (crossed out)						
"	Brn.Geld	711	7	"	N. shld.	Bones
"	Chst G	783	7	"	clean skin	Bill
"	BG	764	7	"	"	Tired Jim
"	BG	750	7	"	U nr shld	Toby
"	BG	749	7	"	U on rump	Sandy
Died 29/4/17	BM	751	7	"	Arrow on thigh	Windy (line crossed out)
	BrG				ONR shoulder	
Buckshees						
	BLM			"		
McDonald Sgt	BrG	1	589	"	N nr Sh	SABA
Herbert	Bl.G star	141			Indistinct brand N shld	
Shaw	Bl.Mare				(XY over 394)	
Dickens	Br.geld	110	D2		()	
Shaw (crossed out)						
Abbott	Br.geld				clean skin	
Long	Bl geld				Symbol	

Attacked Tel-el Saba, Beer Sheeba etc. 31/11/17

Casualties

352 Makeham E.H. wound through leg

Expenditure Amm:

10,000 rds S.A.A.

Shortages applied for "losses in action"

Water bottles 6

Haversacks 6

Report on Operations 31/11/17 SABA

To

CO 1st Aust. M.G. Sqdn

Reported with No. 4 Sub-section to COL. BELL (3rd L.H. Regt.) 10 05 proceeded forward, in reserve with B Sqdn (under MAJOR BROOKS).

Occupied first position under COL. BELL in branch wadi East of Tel-el-Saba. Brought fire to bear on mud huts on right (crossed out) northern side of wadi at 1100 yards on grenny (? Not sure what this word is) sniping position between huts on right, stone building at 1175 yards & on trenches to left & in front of stone building. These positions were traversed by 2 guns during the time. New Zealanders on north & 3rd Regt on south side of branch wadi were getting into position for the advance on Tel-el-Saba. At 1415 covering fire was given New Zealanders while they moved forward. When position of 3rd Regt moved forward on south, overhead covering fire was given while right gun continued to bring fire to bear on sniping positions in front of New Zealanders. At 16.30 it was observed that a heavy fire was coming from trenches on top, at bottom & on left of Tel-el-Saba. In order to bring fire to bear on these positions (overhead fire was unsafe) I moved forward with one gun about 200 yards (?) where oblique fire was brought to bear on enemy positions at 900 yards. My other gun under Sgt McDonald who quietly (?) moved forward with advancing troops & the 2 guns working in co-operation continued the advance with 3rd Regt until 17.30 when operations ceased. Owing to the distance between horses & gun position (about 600 yards to first position) heavy work fell to the lot of ammunition carriers who had continually to pass across the open, under heavy fire to keep up supplies (Trooper (X) did particularly good work in this direction.

Casualties:

No. 353 Makeham E.C.

Ammunition Expenditure: 10,000 rds SA.H.

Guns worked splendidly throughout – no breakages – barrels both badly fouled – have had them replaced by new ones.

(signed) R. G. Garvie Lt.

OC No 11 Sub ??? (not sure what this all reads – guessing)

P30 of diary

Drew half of 7/11/17 rations on night of 7/11/17.

Drew other half from limbers 8/11/17 for that day, leaving us one day's rations behind or 2 days existing on one day's ration & water. Horse fodder plentiful.

9/11/17 drew half ration (yesterday's) for today (no horse fodder – got some from 3 L.H.)

10/11/17 drew remaining half of day before yesterday's rations to carry us through today. Drew yesterday's horse fodder this morning for today.

11/11/17 No rations! No fodder!

10/11/17 In reserve all day in front of enemy position, on right of A Sqdn until 1645 then on right of C Sqdn until 1730 – watered. Took up outpost line with A Sqdn at 2300.

Pearce A

Nourse

Abbott

Burn

Rose

Long

Shaw spare

Written over next two pages

Gun Teams for Dismounted Organisation

A Gun Team

Pitcaethley No.1 to School Zeetown

1. Wellington
 2. Wade
 3. Bigelow
 4. Connors
 5. Donegan
 6. Dickens
 7. Morphett (scribbled out) Moore
Cpl (act Sgt) Donovan
- 1 officer 15 O'Ranks

B Gun Team

H. C. Cameron (line through name)

1. Burgess (scribbled out)
 2. Jones (scribbled out)
- No. 1 Burgess, No. 2 Simon, No. 3 Pearce E
4 Peters
5 Hodgson
6 Herbert
a/c Cpt Sayers

This section is written in the back of the diary:

Yesterday before being ordered out with 2nd Regt I watered with 3rd Regt at a recently-captured village (BietDinas) or new PoirSheeba. It is a mission Station. We did not know this and as I rode up a street I wondered at the metal roads, the stone houses with red roofs (sic) and nice little front fences and trees but when the inhabitants came out to greet us words cannot express my astonishment, they were thoroughly European. Some charming in appearance and a few speaking English fluently. They brought out tea to the boys and generally acted as our own folk at home would have done. What a contrast from our experiences heretofore when one became used to the cramped up features of the native folk, the musty evil-smelling streets & the neglected-looking houses with their swarms of dirty ill-clad kiddies, goats, donkeys fontels (?) etc. The surrounding out-buildings were well-stocked with the latest farming implements, the fine engine on the big 200 feet well seemed to throb with excitement as it pumped up the delightful water to the overjoyed parched horses who had been nearly 7 hours without water of any description, little food and been subjected to a lot of solid work. This was indeed the land of milk and honey we had imagined during our wanderings in that burning shimmering waterless Sinai desert.

Last night we worked to the rear flank of the enemy and again surprises were in store. We passed over grassy country, through scrub and over a running creek!!! This morning one of my boys went to the creek for water & returned with a bunch of ripe blackberries for me!!!

1/12/17

A slight indisposition interested me in anything outside essential work so my diary has been neglected. However I'll endeavour to take us the strings/stings (?) from the blackberry treat. I found sufficient time before leaving the creek to soak my 12 days gathering – the result of a washless time. It was glorious! When the cool refreshing water pierced the outer coating and kissed my blushing nudity. Were I a “maiden fair” instead of hard-visaged warrior the scene would have been sufficient to send first the artist into raptures – then the multitudes to the gallery (or gallows) to gaze on the wondrous scene. A few moments after donning my clothes we were ordered to advance, but as my official reports give full details of the military situation, I won't touch on it here.

I may add that during the day of the El Bhurka battle I was on the extreme left flank with my 2 guns & about 2 miles behind the enemy lines. This position of reserved concealment gave me an ideal view of the fighting from a Turkish point of view.

Although they knew it not, we were in some sand dunes within reach of their General Headquarters. The targets that presented themselves as their front lines were battered in by our own big guns & the reserves formed up their advance into position made my fingers itch to press the double button of the guns; but it was not our job. We merely had to wait, watch and under certain circumstances, to act!

After the fall of Bhurka we were withdrawn for a spell on the beach. We went back through Esdud (?) & at 7 o'clock p.m. I left the regiment and proceeded in accordance with instruction back the telegraph line 2 miles where I should find Brigade. After a fruitless 7 mile ride we camped for the night and picked up the Brigade next morning at 11 a.m. When we arrived Brigade was waiting to move out. Our “spell” had ended. We moved out at 12 noon – just time to give the worn out horses & men a feed – and proceeded all night arriving in RasDarsur (?) next morning. The town was taken with little opposition; but the enemy held strongly to the Hills just outside, counter-attacking one of our Brigades 3 times during the afternoon.

The Bgde happened to be the NZM Rifles (the finest fighters in the world! A sweeping statement but true!) and the result was serious for the enemy who left 400 dead in the field.

In the meantime my little job was in a defensive position just on the outskirts of the town.

I took my section during a quiet time of the day through the town for water. Passing through the boys were enabled to procure a supply of bread & plenty of beautiful oranges. One of the boys approached a fine orchard & was met at the gate by a pretty Jewish maiden who said in perfect English, “Good morning, we are thankful you have arrived at last. Come in and take as many oranges as you can carry for your friends.” Oh, the feast that followed! The town was well-laid out, ornamental trees in the wide streets, a fine-looking hotel. Fashionably dressed males and females paraded the street, chatting occasionally with the boys. Those who couldn't speak our language showed their appreciation of our arrival with welcome smiles. Oh, such smiles! The boys absolutely blushed shyly: but, I am proud to say, behaved like gentlemen & as we subsequently heard from the lips of General Chevalle (Desert Corps Commander) the highest praise was given to the Brigade for their conduct by the dignities (sic) of the town.

On returning to my position, where the battle still raged, I learned that all officers that could be spared from the firing line should attend a dinner given by the mayor of the town. I could not attend the feast but when my mind was at the zenith of torture, through visions of lost feasts – fostered no doubt by an empty belly – a messenger arrived with a couple of bottles of beautiful Port wine from one of my more fortunate pals. Port wine was never more delicious, & as my sergeant passed back the empty bottle with a flush of gratitude on his drawn tired face, we were at peace with the world in general in spite of the shells which continued to throw pellets through the air. The whizzing and howling of the shells were music to our ears & the whistling of the bullets were as the pleasant chirpings of the birds in the trees, while no kettle drum ever played to better time than the dear old Vickers as they rattled off belt after belt of love messages to our foreign friends on the opposing hills. That night was one of watchfulness, anxiety.

The first half of the next page has been scribbled out so the writing underneath is indecipherable.

Carry on.

The SM just sung out “Anyone want to see the doctor?”

“Yes,” said one of my boys. There’s a few chaps over here with a headache!” indicating some enemy trenches undergoing rough treatment at the hands of our heavy guns.

The enemy is traversing our position with his heavy guns. He put them in thick heavy everywhere but just where we are. There was a lull in the storm for a moment & Cameron quoted “Silence is golden”.

We are receiving no comfort this Xmas but I’ve sent back to a village to try & get a couple of head of poultry etc. They are scarce as is other food, but we may have luck.

8/1/18

I’ve just completed a most pleasant meal of chicken, biscuits & Australian butter & oranges & now I’m lying in front of a nice warm fire & enjoying a pipe. No, I’m not at the Grand Continental Hotel. I’m in the front line!!! We’re occupying a position in the Judean Hills N.N.W. of Jerusalem & east of Jaffa.

The enemy has been forced by the general formation of our line to retire about 2 miles from this point & we occupy a kind of “Come into my parlor” position. Owing to the extreme wet we have evacuated our bivies for the better shelter of large spacious caves which probably Moses great grandfather inherited. They are hewn out of solid rock & the one Mr Hackney & I occupy lent itself to the building of a fireplace inside & left plenty of room for a mess table (formed out of amm. boxes) seats & beds. There are plenty of olive trees about so we keep a fire going night and day.

A village which is perched on top of a hill on our right (& is incidentally the most filthy stinking place I’ve ever been in) runs a few head of poultry – hence our sumptuous repast.

These hills are very spectacular. They appear to have been originally built by some giant hand. They are built up of layer upon layer of huge flat rocks & then as if to bind them together, this giant hand poured molten rock down over them. In places time & weather have broken off great lumps of this lavae (sic) & the great pieces of rock stand loose on the sides of the hills.

Earth has formed in places here and there, an olive tree struggles for existence in the meagre soil. The natives preserve this soil by placing pieces of rock in ledges; this, besides preventing the rains from washing it away, catches any little bits of soil or vegetation which may be washed down from higher ground. They plant grain in these small patches – some of them only about 3 fee square, others even smaller.

Time is no object to them – food is everything. In Australia a man would be placed in an asylum for cultivating such country. Here it is necessary & evidently supplies them with the little they require to keep them alive.

All over the hills great cisterns have been cut out of the rocks, many of them about 40 feet deep & about 20 feet in diameter coming to a hole of about 2 feet in diameter on top. These cisterns catch the water as it streams in torrents, first from the clouds then down the slopes of the hills & it is preserved for drier times. The natives don’t draw on this supply during winter, they use all surface water, which forms in small natural basins on the rock. The natives make, or have made, all kinds of things from the rock. – tubs, washing basins, seats, caves, vaults, coffins etc. They always build on top of the hills. They are very steep, and no doubt in olden times formed wonderful positions of natural defence against attack by their enemies. It is marvellous the way the women climb about these great rocks, with bare feet, & huge earthenware pots of water on their heads. Their villages comprise hundreds of hovels, closely packed together, low-lying, evil-smelling & insanitary in the extreme. The alleys and even the huts themselves are too loathsome for description. How they ever live is a wonder. No doubt it’s “the survival of the fittest” & they probably are immune. The gullies, although deep & narrow, have rich soil in them & this is practically all planted with olive trees. They exist principally on olives, & of course, are (this page ends here)

Next attached page in the diary.

(only the reciprocating sensation is vastly different)

When one returns to the scant shelter of his bivouac he sits down and with difficulty he lifts one leg in the air and crashes it down with the hope of disengaging a couple of cwt of the clinging mud. A little of it removed and he sits like a novice skater who has crashed to the ice in the middle of the floor.

A camel corps officer just called to see us, and like us he is sick of his surroundings.

"Anything but this" is the favourite expression. One is tired of the companionship of those good comrades he found so interesting at first. Each has spoken his store of speech. Each knows the ins and outs of the others life and experiences. Repetition is sickening and there is no fresh matter for discussion.

A move is imminent but even its possibilities have been drained of interest and now our only hope lies in an action to clear the atmosphere.

One hears of officers of the Egyptian Army posted in remote places drinking themselves into D.T's. They see no white man for months at a stretch and only hear the yabber of their native subordinates. We see white men, we get an occasional mail and now and again are a white – or partially white female and we get tired of it all. One's inner soul craves for communion with those he knew in a life heretofore but like the souls in purgatory he must hope on, work on and dare to do and be.

In France one occasionally meets English folk and he is continually meeting men of other worlds. Here in these great historical mountains one meets only with historical relics. Relics of lonely lives, of persecutions and misery. He too must offer self-sacrifice, suffer the same life of exile and in many cases meet with the same untimely death as those knights of old.

What a contrast to those sunny progressive days we knew in our dear old Australia. The darling land I fear we will know no more. For even if we return, can we look the same on those fellow beings who inhabit the land of our birth who betrayed us in the hour of need. Those who splutter nonsense about conscription and those who defeated it by listening to such idle twaddle are enemies in our midst! The only fly in the ointment of our Empire!

Those who have endeavoured to uphold the prestige of our land must hang their heads in shame. For those who have made the supreme sacrifice in the faith that their land was with them are looking down on those shirkers who remain.

What is there for us to do but fight on in hope that the war will end ere the last volunteer falls beneath his burden.

9/8/18 – That was a rather morbid foregoing chapter. I must in reality felt miserable. However things are different today. The sun is shining brightly, the birds are singing sweet melodies in the tree above my head and the murmuring of the pretty Nimrin (?) completes the harmony of my surroundings.

Well, we weren't "left in the mud". In due course we trekked from Birih (?) back to Bethlehem. It rained all the way, the roads were bad, the horses weak and the men wet and miserable. We pulled into a camp between olive trees at the northern end of the town. We just got the lines down when the Brigade Major called to inform us that no horses were to be tethered to the olives and not even a handkerchief hung on them. Next morning when I got up I was astonished to find more women and kids in the camp than men. Some were selling oranges, others crosses of mother of pearl and others every kind of curios imaginable, while still more collected to look around to see what they could attach their fingers to. One lady of stately bearing we found selling crosses in one hand and pinching our soap with the other. Some were here for immoral (moral?) purposes selling articles as a cloak.

Many of them were extremely pretty and they claimed to be direct descendants of the Crusaders. They are certainly the best-looking and most intellectual Arabs I have yet met with. One lady whose husband was a Turk did my washing. She was very pretty. She bore the name of Miriam and knew how to wash clothes. She was quite a moral person but for some reason or another she would sit and gaze for hours at me, smiling at times sweetly and guise catire (?) She would call at the camp first thing in the morning, do any washing or cleaning I wanted (much to my batman's relief) then sit and watch me. She was certainly a very nice little girl to have as an ornament about the place. In the afternoon she would "put 'em all on" and come with a stately swing into camp. She wore the dame's high hat and dress a worn by the female members of the Crusades. Just before dark she would shake my hand, say "Laida" (?), walk away about 10 yards, look back, blush, then go swiftly from the camp and out of sight. It is a marvel to me there is not more matrimonial trouble in this country than actually exists.

A prospective husband gets an agent (usually a relative of a would-be bride) to find a youthful wife for him. He doesn't (under ordinary circumstances) see her until after the marriage! No love-making, no mutual affection. They are just married & as is the custom, she obediently becomes his mistress & he becomes her Lord & Master.

If someone else should awaken the real love in the woman after her marriage to maybe a wholly unsuitable partner, he (the husband) smooths things over with a knife.

On a very wet Sunday I took charge of the RC church parade & we attended the Church of the Nativity. We afterwards went through the Greek church, the Armenian & down below into the rock stable. There we saw the spot marked where Christ was born, the spot where the manger stood, the well from which the cattle in the stable were watered & many ancient painting and mosaic works. Here & there beautiful ? (next word indecipherable) burning lamps stood & in addition to the monks who were ever jealously guard the sacred places, an English sentry stood with fixed bayonet. Priceless jewels decorate these places & the archway leading to the main church contains 44 large pillars from Solomon's Temple. High above the church tower is a great cross cased in solid gold & above that again shines a golden star (the star of the East). Another large monastery has a marble statue of the Saviour standing on a high place. When the sun strikes on this, one looking through the trees at it would imagine it was alive.

When, on Sundays and Saints days, the blending of thousands of church bells rolls through the air, one cannot feel but impressed. Though the bells ring from various churches they all blend in one beautiful harmony like, I believe, eventually, the souls of all sects will meet & roll home along the broad straight road together.

We left Bethlehem on 20/3/18 & on 24th we were crossing the River Jordan at MakhadetHayla 1254 feet below sea level. The tanks held the opposite bank & after heavy fighting we took the machine guns directly opposing us, & the cavalry crossed in comparative safety. The infantry crossed the broken valley to the foothills clearing the way for us (the cavalry) to move up the valley. On daylight on 25th we went advancing steadily and the infantry were well up in the hills. The line was roughly (diagram) – see attached.

Our objective was first ? Salt (about 20 miles up in the hills & 3595 feet above sea level). The Jordan Valley is richly covered with flowers of every color, & I thought as I rode along that it would be an ideal spot for one to come after a hard days mental toil, allow the cool breezes to blow away the worries of the world & bathe in ethereal mediation.: but I was awakened from my reverie as we came opposite the enemy line. We got fire from all directions. It was our job to continue up on the flank of the Infantry to Salt, while others held back the foe on our flank. It was essential to our success that we should surprise the ? Salt garrison & to do this it was necessary to avoid all known roads or tracks. In consequence we had to make our own track over the most precipitous country.

Just before sunset we had climbed about 3000 feet & I looked back down the deep grassy gullies & could see the Jordan River glistening in the waning sunlight as it wended its way through the rich vegetation to the sea below. The great hills on the western bank stood out in the many **this page concludes here.**

Next attached page:

him. The youth was thunderstruck & went on to explain the hopelessness of resistance. However, he may have been canvassing for "Bite Beans" for all the Major knew & for all he cared.

"Sit down damn you," he said." Or I'll knock your bloody head off" & still looked dazed at the Major's madness he sat down & gaped.

I was short of men, my guns were eating up the belted ammunition & the boys were all too busily engaged to stop the file belts. A happy thought struck me. I seized upon the conqueror & shoved him towards my little redoubt (? Redouble?). He waved his arms in defiance & told me much that I didn't understand. A final assistance landed him into a safe position & one of the boys seeing the drift of my brainwave, shoved a belt into his hand, a box of amm. up to him & pointed out the way to a happy existence.

The German lad with a "You're all mad but I must humour you expression" fell too & assisted us to save the situation. We had an anxious & tenuous time for about 4-1/2 hours. Bursting shells raking fine from enemy machine guns & snipers, gradually lessening our little garrison. The boys were happy as Kings, & fairly yelped with delight, when a big batch of the enemy (forgetting we were in their midst & still full of punch) would present a target which our machine guns & automatic rifles didn't fail to take advantage of. At about 9.30 our reserve troops were obviously driving in a counter-attack to our relief. Would they be in time? Would our ammunition stand the strain? & finally, would the mass falling back on us be sufficient to overwhelm us before our rescuers offered battle?

Back they came & we decided our only hope was to shoot down all in any direction approaching us. They were coming from all directions & all (except redcross men, stretcher bearers etc) were subjected to a hellish fire. At 9.45 the heads of our troops appeared in the distance, & on & on they came driving the enemy before them. The enemy artillery (mistaking the retreating enemy for the first line of our counter-attack) threw a withering fire into them & our machine guns wrought havoc amongst those who rushed in mobs in various directions.

At 10am the first officer of the counter-attacking force tumbled breathlessly into our trench & gripped my hand. His men, their bayonets glistening in the sunlight & their sunburnt smiling faces looking grand is than anything I have ever heretofore seen, came along behind him & rounded up hundreds of the enemy. The conquerors of an hour ago were conquered by our saviours & the stout hearts of our little garrison.

The situation changed, I looked at the German boy who was now filling belts with all eagerness. He gave me a knowing look, saluted me then withdrew a photo from his pocket of his sweet homely-looking old mother & little sister.

We treated him well & he stowed the photo reverently back into his pocket. As he left by a special party to go back to the rear, he gripped my hand , although I could not understand what he said, I know he had learned much of what Australians are made of. It was a treat to see the tender look that came into the eyes of my (bloody warriors?) no! – Australian boys!! as they looked at the photo of the aged parent. Each boy thought of the dear old grey head that bent in prayer for him at home & I think each thanked God that at least one Mother's son had been spared that day! aye, & until he is returned to his native land apres le guerre.