

AWM52
2nd Australian Imperial Force and
Commonwealth Military Forces unit war
diaries, 1939-45 War

Item number: 8/3/4

2/4 Infantry Battalion

April 1941

2/4 AUST INF BN.

R.M.O.'s Diary

Apr 1941.

Movements of the Battalion

- 1 Apr Left Alexandria for Pireefs. "Pennland" Other units on board:-
- Details 6 Aust Gen Hosp.
3 Aust C.C.S.
HQ 6 Aust Div.
2/3 Aust Fd Regt.
2/8 Aust Inf Bn.
HQ 19 Aust Inf Bde.
- 3 Apr. Arrived at DAPHNE CAMP outside ATHENS - 6 cases V.D. evacuated to Hospital.
- 6 Apr Arrived at LARISSA ("C" Coy detached and sent to VOLES) security duties - 4 S.B.'s att.

Tactical Posns Occupied Subsequently

1. XYNON NERON - VEVE
 2. SOTER
 3. NORTHERN SIDE OF ALIAKMON RIVER
 4. DOMOKOS
 5. BRALLOS
 6. MEGARA
- 26 Apr. Evacuated GREECE - arrived CRETE.

Although we had our share of casualties, the rigors of the campaign were due to Physical and Mental hardships

Physical Hardships

I have never seen a body of men more completely worn out than those who ~~were~~ evacuated Megara 26 Apr 41. This was due to many factors:-

1. Loss of Sleep Unit was moving and without sleep one night in every three while we were in GREECE.
2. Exposure to Cold and Snow Fighting three days in snow without blankets. Early Frost Bight of Feet prevalent.
3. Long Marches with precipitous climbs over rough country carrying heavy loads.
4. Frequent changes of posns meant almost continuous digging when not marching.
5. There were quite a few wounded still walking with the unit

Mental Hardships

1. The multitude of enemy aircraft, and the complete absence of our own.
2. Repeated bombings, dive bombings and machine gunning.
3. The realisation that if they became casualties, they had very little hope of getting away from GREECE.

Reaction of the Men to Hardships

1. Physical Hardening quickly took place "Needs must..."
Little sickness. Feet were a problem.
Stamina unbounded.

2. Mental
 - i. Courage and Helpfulness "They helped every man his neighbour, and every man said to his brother, Be of Good Courage." I have never seen such a large number of people honestly trying to do something for someone else.

 - ii. Confidence It was the universal opinion that given air equality they would take on the HUN 3:1 and beat him

Recommendations for Awards

NX9901 Sjt Porter M.W. recommended for Military Medal.
NX27617 Pte Harber L. recommended for Military Medal.

Contact with Medical Units in GREECE

1. LARISSA. 189 Fd Amb.
2. XYNON NERON. 2/1 Fd Amb (Capt Matthews) daily contact.
3. A.D.M.S. or D.A.D.M.S. once at BRALLOS PASS.
4. 2/7 Fd Amb at BRALLOS PASS and at BRALLOS.
5. Other R A P's 2/3 Fd Regt on the way up to VEVE.
2/6 and 2/8 at DOMOKOS.

Supplies

Normal channels - once at BRALLOS PASS.
From 2/6 and 2/8 R A P's.

Loss of Medical Equipment Truck had to be abandoned at ZYNON NERON.

*P. K. Tomlinson Capt.,
The Aust. Inf. Bn.*

- 3 Jan 41 BARDIA
 5 Jan 41 Minor role.
 11 Jan 41 Lot of bad feet - stony ground, water short, socks worn.
 20 Jan 41 TOBRUK. Lt-Col Cunningham, Majrs Russell and Young visited SB's attached not to leave RMO at opening in wire. SB's and Amb from 2/7 Fd Amb, attached for battle. ADS (Russell) at junction of 415 line and escarpment.
 21-22 Jan 41 Battle of Tobruk. 15 cwt truck, RAP
 30 cwt " brought up also. v. useful at night.
 16 Bde went through wire in front and deviated to planks. Att Amb and SB's not found now (after treating cas). They left opening in wire. SB's returned later but not amb. Message sent thro Adj asking Fd Amb for M.A. Cas from shelling and traps.
 30 cwt truck ASC detailed v. val. as w.wdo truck, could not have evac cas without.
 1300 hrs (21 Jan) to push on down wadi from escarpment across road. 2/8 Bn bad time on left.
 A. Coy took Corps HQ many prisoners coming in.
 22nd. 0900 into Tobruk with I. tanks
 RAP in house with hot water in afternoon.
 Bn moved out 5 kilos.
 24 Jan 41 On toward DERNA
 26 Jan 41 Contact Capt DORNEY, 2/2 Fd Amb.
 Wadi DERNA, 8 - 900 ft deep and 900 yds wide - nightmare for evacuation. SB relay at bottom.
 31 Jan 41 Through DERNA.
 1 Feb 41 RMO and RAP truck with Bn
 Cpl and ord in small amb with C Coy
 Mob Sect 2/7 Fd Amb in rear of 2/8 Bn
 MDS and Div Rest Stn, Derna.
 3 Feb 41 Green surroundings - some fresh food bought by tps at Giovanji Berta.
 5 Feb 41 Fringed Barce, and stopped 10 m.s.
 6 Feb 41 v. heavy rain - To Benina.
 Diarrhoea C. Coy (unauthorised water) lot of drunk people from (unauthorised cognac) Action taken CO. BENGHAZI surrendered.
 8 Feb 41 In bug infested Barracks at Burka.
 25 Feb 41 Left Benghazi. Night at G. Berta.
 26 Feb 41 Ain el Gazala. 2/1 Fd Amb detachment and Dental Unit
 (Matthews) (Chapple)
 Evac to 2/2 CCS Tobruk. ADMS T. Lt-Col Saxby.

WAR DIARY RMO 2/4 INF BN - CAPT P. A. TOMLINSON

1 Apr 41 Left ALEXANDRIA.
3 Apr 41 Arrived DAPHNE
6 Apr 41 LARISSA. Unit had casualties but the main hardships
of the campaign were physical and mental hardships.
26 Apr 41 Men left MEGARA from BRAILOS and were evacuated. They
were then completely exhausted, unit had sleep only 1
night in three while in GREECE. For 3 days in the snow
without blankets. Early frost bite of the feet was com-
mon. The marches were precipitous and rough, the loads
were heavy, changes in position meant almost continuous
digging, and a number of wounded still walked with the
unit. The air activity was very trying and the hope of
getting away from GREECE seemed small. There was little
sickness but everyone was confident and the RMO states
"I have never seen such a large number of people, honestly
trying to do something for someone else."