

The History
of the
Canterbury
Mounted Rifles
1914-1919

by
Officers of the Regiment

Edited by
Colonel C. G. Powles,
C.M.G., D.S.O., A.D.C.

Contents

Foreword by Major-General Sir A. H. Russell, K.C.B., K.C.M.G.	vi.
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CHAPTER

I. On the Formation of the Regiment, its Embarkation and Voyage to Egypt	1
II. Of the Training at Zeitoun	11
III. Of the Voyage to and Arrival at Anzac and of Life in the Trenches	23
IV. Of the Desperate Fighting and the Move to New Country	45
V. Of the Final Days at Anzac and How the Regiment came away	69
VI. How the Regiment returned to the Horses	79
VII. Of the Crossing of the Canal and the Advance into the Sinai Desert	92
VIII. Of the Battle called Romani, but which might have been named the Second Battle of Pelusium	106
IX. How the Regiment reached the River of Egypt over against the Borders of Palestine	118
X. Of the Battle of Rafa and the First Crossing of the Boundary into Palestine	130
XI. Of the Advance into Palestine and the First Battle of Gaza	139
XII. Of the Second Battle of Gaza and the Holding of the Wadi Ghuzze	151
XIII. Of the Breaking at Beersheba of the Turkish Line	166
XIV. How the Regiment Rode Through the Plain of the Philistines	174
XV. How the Regiment Went Up to Jerusalem and Through the Wilderness of Jericho	192
XVI. How the Regiment Crossed the Jordan for the First Time	203
XVII. Down by Jericho	219
XVIII. How the Regiment Crossed the Jordan for the Last Time	230

APPENDICES

A. The Thoroughbred, Racing and Remounts: By Major J. Stafford, D.S.O., N.Z. Veterinary Corps	253
B. Killed in Action, etc.	257
C. Awards of Decorations and Medals	263
A Regimental Diary	265

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By
OFFICERS OF THE REGIMENT

Edited by
COLONEL C. G. POWLES, C.M.G., D.S.O., A.D.C.
New Zealand Staff Corps

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This Book is dedicated to the memory of the Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and men of the Canterbury Mounted Rifles who were numbered among those, who, at the call of King and Country, left all that was dear to them, endured hardness, faced danger and finally passed out of the sight of men by the path of duty and self sacrifice, giving up their own lives that others might live in freedom.



1ST (CANTERBURY YEOMANRY CAVALRY) M.R.



8TH (SOUTH CANTERBURY) M.R.



10TH (NELSON) M.R.

Badges of the three Squadrons which formed the Regiment and which were recruited from their parent regiments in New Zealand.

Foreword.

Recruited from the Plains of Canterbury, from Nelson, and Marlborough and the West Coast, the C.M.R. included a squadron from the 1st M.R. (Canterbury Yeomanry Cavalry), the Senior Mounted Corps in the Dominion, and so held pride of place "the right of the line" in the Mounted Brigade. Those who follow their career on the scrub-covered hills and deres of Gallipoli, and in the succeeding years of warfare in the desert and in the Holy Land will realise how fully they lived up to, and justified by their exploits, the distinction conferred by chance.

It was the writer's misfortune to lose sight of the C.M.R. in 1916. After the eventful happenings on Gallipoli, the Mounted Brigade and the Infantry Division parted company with mutual regret, the Mounted Brigade to prepare for, and carry out, the long series of campaigns which led to the final break up of the Turkish Army, ourselves to the rain-sodden fields of Flanders and the victories of 1918.

Science advances—and with each advance methods of warfare change. Allenby's headlong thrust across Palestine may prove one of the last, if not the very last epic in which cavalry take the leading role.

Science advances. Methods Change. But the spirit of chivalry remains,—and possibly the sons of the men who fought in the desert, rode down into the Promised Land and drove the Turks from Beersheba to Dan, will have to exchange their horses for wheel or wing. It is possible that the sound of galloping horses, *quadrupedante pedum sonitu*, no longer shaking the plains, will be exchanged for the whirr of the flying squadron: that the hurried speed of the armoured cars take the place of the swift moving charge. It is hoped not altogether! Be what may, the old cavalry spirit will carry on though all else change.

One experience the C.M.R. enjoyed was perhaps unique. They served throughout under one leader. When, as was their good fortune, that leader is at once beloved and respected by his subordinates, wise in his dealings, and a very capable soldier, it is an experience on which they may be congratulated and envied.



MAJOR-GENERAL, K.C.B., K.C.M.G.
Commanding
The New Zealand Division in France.

ERRATA.

Under Illustrations.

Page 81.—Major G. F. Hutton, O.C. 8th Squadron, should read:—"O.C. 10th Squadron."

Page 83.—The Canterbury Mounted Rifles on parade, Zeitoun, January, 1926, should read:—"January, 1916."



Lt.-Colonel John Findlay, C.B., D.S.O.
Commanding Canterbury Mounted Rifles.

The Story

OF THE

Canterbury Mounted Rifles.

CHAPTER I.

On the Formation of the Regiment, its Embarkation and Voyage to Egypt.

The history of "The Canterbury Mounted Rifle Regiment" commences on August 12th, 1914, when the first men reported to the Mobilisation Camp at the Addington Showgrounds. This Camp included all branches of the service in the Canterbury Military District. The Regiment when formed consisted of three squadrons, one from each of the three mounted rifle regiments in the Canterbury Military District—the 1st M.R. (Canterbury Yeomanry Cavalry), 8th (South Canterbury) M.R., and 10th (Nelson) M.R. A machine-gun section drawn from these regiments was also included, and sufficient trained signallers to form the Regimental Signal Section.

The squadrons wore their own regimental badges and were known throughout their service as the 1st, 8th and 10th squadrons. In later days reinforcements reaching Egypt were drafted to the squadrons representing the districts from which they came.

The ease and celerity with which the Regiment was formed, and the high standard of training it quickly developed, demonstrated in no uncertain manner the value of the Territorial training. The majority of the officers and men first accepted were Territorials, with a sprinkling of old volunteers and South African War veterans. Lieut.-Colonel J. Findlay (Reserve of Officers), who had a fine record in the South African War, was appointed to the command of the Regiment, with Major P. J. Overton, also a South African veteran, as his second in command.

The squadron leaders were Majors P. M. Acton Adams, P. J. Wain and G. H. Hutton of the 1st, 8th and 10th Squadrons respectively.

During this same period regiments were being mobilised on similar lines in Wellington, Auckland and Dunedin. The Wellington and Auckland Regiments, with the Canterbury Regiment, formed the N.Z. Mounted Brigade, under the command of Colonel A. H. Russell,* who at the outbreak of war was in command of the Territorial Mounted Brigade in the Wellington Military District, and who had served in the British Army.

From the 12th to the 16th August men came pouring into Camp from all parts of the Canterbury Military District, all creeds and walks of life being represented. The medical examination was the cause of many being disappointed in their endeavour to enlist. The one fixed idea of every man was to get away with the force now being mobilised, and by the end of the first week the Regiment was over-strength and had a waiting list that could have formed another regiment.

Equipment was at first a stumbling block, and to equip the force it was necessary to call in all the uniforms and rifles from the Territorial units. Horses were the next item. Many men had ridden in on their own horses; and, if suitable, these were taken over by the Government and re-issued to their former owners. Other horses were given, though many people had a vague idea only of what a troop horse should be. The remount portion of the camp could show anything from a draught horse to an unbroken outlaw. But in a week or ten days it was doubtful if any regiment had ever been better mounted. The C.M.R. horses from the very beginning were good, and the envy of other units.

With the issuing of all necessary equipment, training began in earnest. The Permanent Staff N.C.Os worked us till we dreamt of drill and rifle exercises, and they performed wonders in the short time at their disposal. The keenness and natural ability of the men helped, and they became a fairly efficient machine instead of a disorderly mob. Few

*Afterwards Major-General Sir A. H. Russell, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., commanding the N.Z. Infantry Division in France.

people have given much thought to what these few regular soldiers meant to New Zealand in those days. Most assuredly they trained us and fitted us for the great task that lay overseas. Discipline was strict, but there was no crime nor even minor offences. The warning that "anybody slacking or not playing the game will be left behind" was sufficient. We all knew there were numbers of good fellows waiting and hoping for a chance to join.

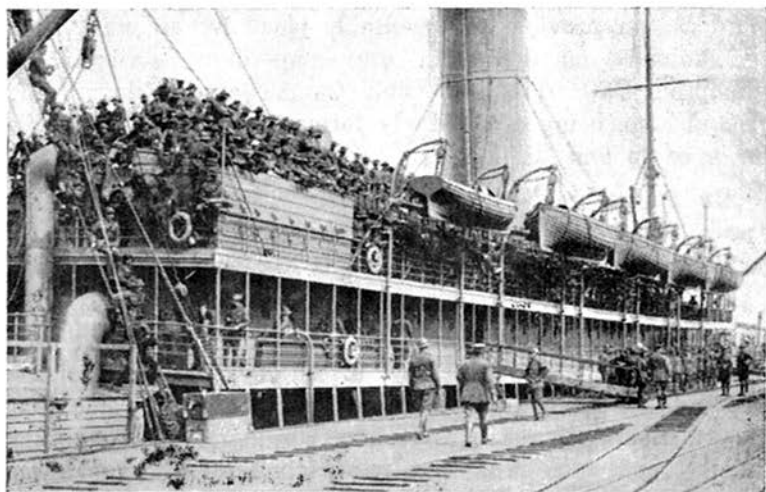
Addington proving an unsuitable place for so many men and animals, on September 6th camp was moved to the Plumpton Park Trotting Club Course at Sockburn; the ground here, being of a shingly formation, was more suitable for a camp and did not cut up with the continual traffic.

On September 14th the Regiment was inspected by Sir James Allen, the Minister of Defence, who was evidently impressed by the steadiness and soldier-like bearing of all ranks.

During this period there had been daily expectation of departure, but now, a month after entering camp, it seemed farther off than ever. Day after day the old routine was gone through, and then suddenly the news came that the transports were in Lyttelton Harbour. All was now orderly confusion. Kits were packed and re-packed. It was marvellous the amount that could be crammed into a kit bag. Finally the baggage was got rid of and forwarded by train to the transports.

Early in the morning of September 23rd the Regiment rode out of camp for the last time, taking the road through Sumner to the ships at Lyttelton, and embarked immediately on arrival—Headquarters and the 1st Squadron on H.M.N.Z. Transport No. 4, *Tahiti*; the 8th and 10th Squadrons on H.M.N.Z. Transport No. 11, *Athenic*. Owing to there being insufficient accommodation on the transport *Tahiti*, about forty men and horses were sent to Dunedin to embark with the Otago Mounted Rifles. These forty men were drafted from each squadron and Captain H. H. Hammond of the 8th (South Canterbury M.R.) was placed in charge. The horses took to their confined quarters quietly. Some were on deck, but the majority were down in the holds.

The ships sailed in the evening, and after a quiet trip arrived in Wellington the following afternoon, where it was learnt, to the general disappointment, that all troops were to disembark. No reason was given at the time, for this hitch in the arrangements. Afterwards it was learnt that it was due to the presence of German cruisers in the South Pacific.



The *Tahiti* just before leaving Lyttelton.

On the 25th the *Tahiti* men went into camp at Lyall Bay, and those from the *Athenic* to Trentham, there to await the arrival of an escort capable of protecting the fleet of transports.

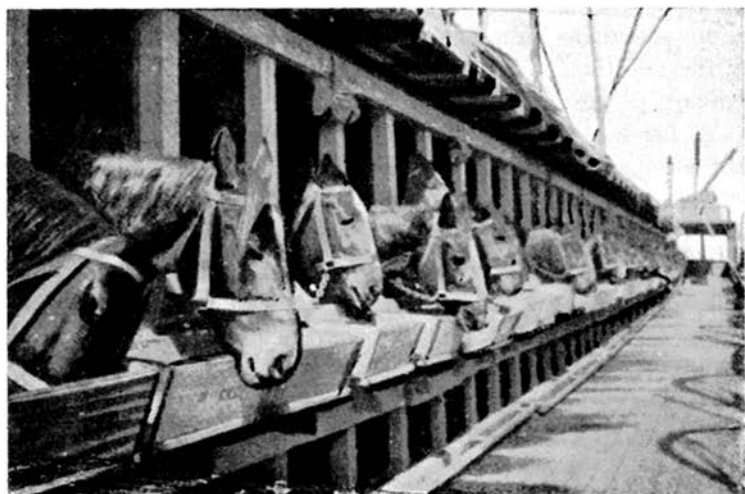
The time was fully occupied in looking after the horses, in some tactical training and in speculating on the probable date of departure. On October 14th the escort arrived—H.M.S. *Minotaur* and the Japanese warship *Ibuki*. By 3 p.m. the Regiment was again on board the ships, which immediately pulled out into the stream to await departure the following morning.

The fleet weighed anchor at 6 o'clock, the *Minotaur* leading, closely followed by the *Ibuki*. Some little time elapsed before the first of the transports followed. Then one by one at about five minutes intervals the other boats joined

in, following the leader in single file. Not until clearing land, at about 4 p.m. in the afternoon, was this formation altered; then the ships gradually formed up in two lines about half a mile apart and about three hundred and fifty yards between the stern and bow of each vessel. The escort also changed formation, the *Minotaur* being now about six miles ahead, with the *Ibuki* about the same distance on the right. The two small ships *Psyche* and *Philomel* of the New Zealand station of the Royal Navy, also joined the convoy, the former taking up a position on the left and the latter acting as rear guard. All the escorting ships closed in to about three miles at dusk. The first evening at sea showed the transports in the following formation:—

Arawa
Athenic
Orari
Ruapehu
Waimana

Maunganui
Hawke's Bay
Star of India
Limerick
Tahiti.



Horses on troopship.

A heavy swell was running, and all the vessels rolled considerably. Many men were suffering from sea sickness, but it was wonderful how they stuck to the work of looking

after their horses. The latter, poor brutes, had a bad time for a day or two, till they became used to the motion of the vessel.

Hobart was reached on October 21st, and left again on the afternoon of the 22nd. A route march was held through the town. Everybody was glad of this chance of exercise, as the quarters on board ship, to put it mildly, were a bit cramped; and the warm welcome given by the people of Hobart as they flocked in their hundreds to the wharves will long remain a happy memory.

The next Port of call was not known, but the probability pointed to Albany or Fremantle. It proved to be Albany, where the convoy arrived on the 28th. Here were the Australian transports.

Wherever one looked there seemed to be troopships, and all were packed with men in khaki. The New Zealand ships sailed again on November 1st, following immediately after the Australians whose great fleet of 28 transports passed out of the harbour first. The combined fleets now numbered 38 transports, and in addition to the warships which had accompanied the New Zealanders the escort was now increased by the addition of the two Australian cruisers *Melbourne* and *Sydney*.

A foreign tramp left just before the convoy sailed, but was stopped by H.M.A.S. *Melbourne*. A short conversation between the two boats followed, and the tramp returned to port. She was still there when the Regiment left.

All hands soon settled down again and had very little time to think of their troubles, if they had any, for looking after horses on shipboard is a never-ending job, and as the tropics were being entered the horses required even more particular care.

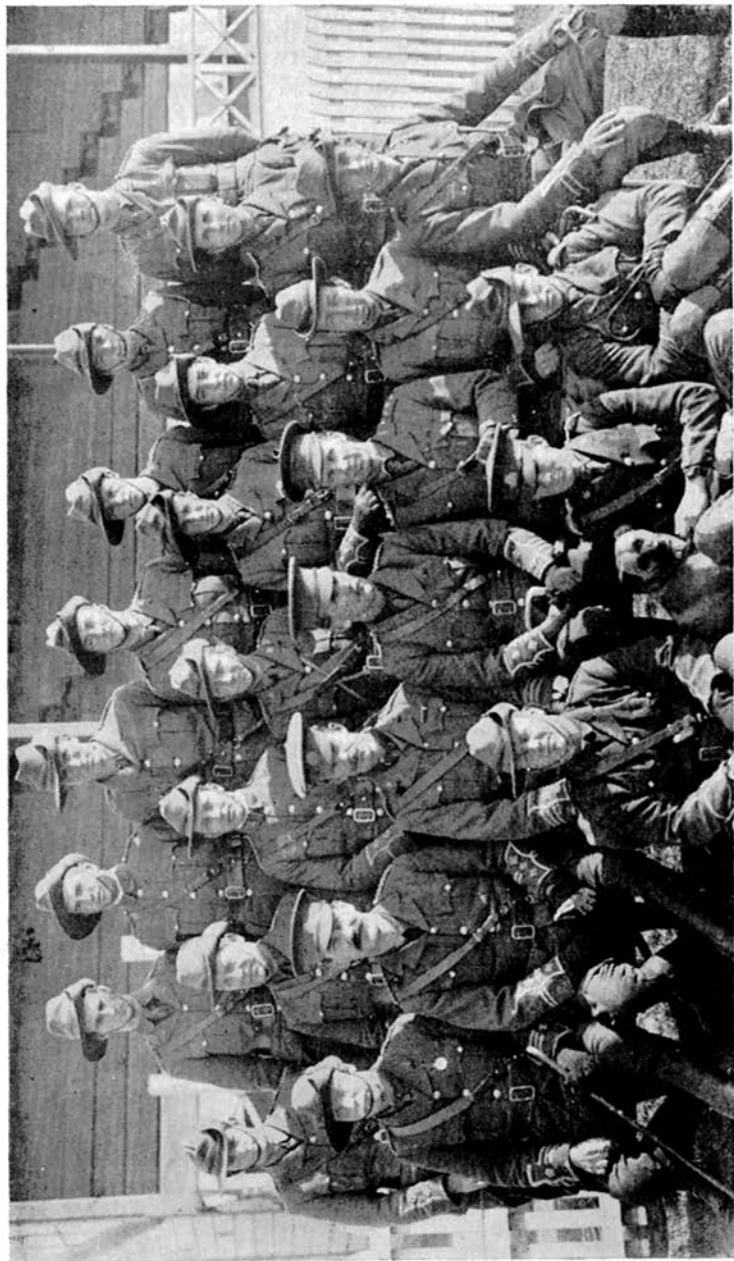
The food was good, and small luxuries could be bought at the canteen on board. There was sufficient fresh water for drinking purposes, but the habit of drinking water was not encouraged. Fresh water is always a serious question on a horse boat, owing to the quantity carried being limited, a ship's daily consumption being roughly 26 tons a day. For all washing and bathing purposes salt water was available, and soap, to lather

in salt water, was provided, but it was not very cleansing, and one always had a sticky feeling afterwards. Big canvas baths filled with sea water were erected on deck and full advantage was taken of them.

As all port holes were sealed at night to prevent the appearance of any lights, the atmosphere in the sleeping quarters became so stuffy, that as many men as were able slept on deck. Wind-sails to divert the air below decks were made use of, but in a following wind they were useless. From the time of leaving Albany to the port of disembarkation, the temperature between decks was seldom below 80 degrees, and in the Red Sea reached 98.

On November 9th came word of the battle between the *Sydney* and the *Emden*. As the news had been received the previous day by wireless of the destruction of Admiral Cradock's squadron at Coronel, the *Sydney's* brilliant success was specially acceptable.

It appears that at 6.30 a.m. the operator in charge of the British Wireless Station on the Cocos Islands sent out a message "strange warship approaching"; this message was picked up by the signallers on duty on many of the ships and passed on by the *Arawa* to the *Melbourne*, which was now the senior ship in the escort, as the *Minotaur* had been ordered away the day before. Further messages were jammed by German wireless. But the senior Naval Officer on the *Melbourne* evidently guessed who the strange warship was, and by 7 a.m. the *Sydney* was steaming full speed for the Cocos Islands, which had been passed just before daylight. A period of intense waiting ensued, accentuated by the movements of the Japanese warship *Ibuki*, which came across from the right flank, around the head of the convoy at full speed, ploughing through the long blue swell with white foam leaping from her coal black sides and her great battle flags streaming in the breeze. No sound could be heard and nothing could be seen, for the *Sydney* was soon beyond the horizon. Hour after hour passed by, and then the tension was relaxed when at 11.30 a.m. came the message, "enemy beached herself to prevent sinking." Cheer after cheer went from ship to ship, and as the "*Emden* beached



Orinival Officers Canterbury Mounted Rifles, Addington Camp, August, 1914.

Back row—Lts. L. Chaytor, Taylor, Barker, W. Deans, F. Gorton, Hayter, D. S. Murchison.
 Second Row—Lt. Marchant, Capt. Talbot, Lt. Blackett, Capt. Hurst, Capt. Hammond, Lt. Free, Lt. Bruce.
 Sitting—Major Wain (O.C. 8th Sqd.), Capt. Cody (Q.M.), Major Overton (2nd in Command), Lt.-Colonel Findlay (C.O.), Capt. Blair (Adjutant),
 Major Acton-Adams (O.C. 1st Sqd.), Major Hutton (O.C. 10th Sqd.),
 Front Row—Lt. Gibbs (Signalling Officer), Lt. Davison (Machine Gun Officer), Lt. G. Dailey.

and done for am chasing merchant collier" came in, it broke out in renewed enthusiasm with the reality of the identity of the "strange warship."

A few days later Colombo was reached, and here, as the ships lay at anchor, the gallant *Sydney*, filled with wounded German sailors, and bearing obvious marks of battle, was received with all ranks standing quietly at attention, out of respect to the enemy's gallant defenders.

No leave was given at Colombo, but a few lucky men got ashore to assist in getting stores for the canteen, and the 8th and 10th Squadrons landed for a route march; but no breaking of ranks was allowed.

Leaving here on the 17th, the Indian Ocean was traversed in beautiful weather advantage being taken to exercise the horses in many of the ships by leading them on the deck on coconut matting. Several large transports were passed loaded with Territorials from England, who were proceeding to India to complete their training and to replace British troops required elsewhere.

Aden was reached on November 24th, a most uninteresting place to look at from the ships. Nothing could be seen but a huge mass of yellow rock and sand shimmering in the intense heat.

Sailing on the following day the convoy arrived at Suez on December 1st. Here orders were received to disembark at Alexandria, orders which gave general disappointment, for nobody liked the thought of staying in Egypt on garrison duty. First impressions of the country as viewed from the ships were decidedly unfavourable, and later it was agreed that on a closer acquaintance there was no improvement. On arrival at Alexandria on December 3rd the Regiment quickly disembarked, the horses walking down long gangways to the quay. Many were very groggy on their legs, but their relief at finding themselves on land again was plain to all; it was impossible to stop them from rolling in the sand, kicking up their heels, and even breaking loose in their delight at being on land again.

Disembarkation completed, the Regiment entrained for Zeitoun, near Cairo. It was dark when the weary men and horses arrived, but as guides had been asked for, no anxiety

was felt as to quick arrival in camp. But all that could be found was sand and more sand, and, after much wandering, an iron fence to which the horses were tied. No baggage had arrived and it was bitterly cold. Men tried to sleep huddled up together, or walked about to keep warm. But everything was soon changed. Next day a few tents appeared, and in a week it seemed as though a new town had grown. Mess huts and canteens appeared as though by magic, and outside the camp area the ubiquitous Greek erected shops and stores of all descriptions, and the Egyptian native hawked his wares—"Oringies" and "Eggs-e-cook" to all and sundry.

CHAPTER II.

Of the Training at Zeitoun.

“How long are we to stay here?” was a question often asked, but nobody attempted to answer it, though there was intense disappointment at not getting to France.

“The powers that be” evidently decided that the Regiment knew nothing of what a soldier ought to know, and drill began again in a manner which demonstrated that training in New Zealand was “child’s play” compared with the drill at Zeitoun. The horses were not fit to be ridden for a fortnight, and daily they were led out for exercise, and walking and leading a horse was also beneficial for the man, and hardened him during the four months’ training. The work was grumbled at generally, and it was thought that not even men with cast iron constitutions could stand it; but the result was magnificent, for it is doubtful if there has ever been a fitter body of men than the New Zealanders by the middle of April.

Days were long and the usual programme read as follows: Reveille 5 a.m. Stables till 7. Wash, shave, and breakfast. Parade again 8.30. Drill till 11. Stables till 12. Dinner. Parade 2 p.m. till 4 p.m. Stables till 5.30 p.m. Then the time was your own if you were lucky enough to escape guard or horse picquet, which came one’s way every third or fourth night.

Four or five hours a day spent grooming, handling and feeding a horse, seems a lot to the uninitiated, but the horses were a credit to the Regiment, who were justly proud of them, and the extraordinary endurance they showed later in the desert proved the wisdom of such treatment.

It may not be out of place to give some idea of the food horses get in the East. Barley, crushed if possible, but more often uncrushed, is mixed with a chaff of barley or wheat straw, known to us as “tibbin.” Tibbin is made by dragging a rough wooden frame furnished with three or four knives, not unlike those of a disc harrow, over the straw laid out

on an earthen floor. This machine is hauled usually by cows or donkeys. The resulting mess consists of straws from half an inch upwards in length. Besides barley, Indian corn and a small hard grain (millet) fed to camels, was sometimes issued. The total amount of grain allowed was about 12 lbs. per day and as much tibbin as a horse would eat. The hay supplied was of first class quality. A small amount of green food was also issued. This was called "berseem," and is very like lucerne to look at, but is shallow rooted. It stands frequent cutting and requires a lot of water, but makes excellent hay, and later on was put up in small bales for camel transport and sent out to the Regiment in the desert.



Brigade Headquarters at Zeitoun.

The 1st Australian Light Horse Brigade had now been attached to the New Zealanders, forming, with the N.Z.M.R. Brigade, the N.Z. Infantry Brigade and the N.Z. batteries, the Australian and New Zealand Division under the command of Major-General Sir A. J. Godley, K.C.B., K.C.M.G.

Though work was hard there were compensations. Free leave was granted from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. nightly, and every Sunday from 1 p.m. to 10 p.m. If one had any definite excursion in view it was possible to get away by 9 a.m. on

Sunday. Visits to the many surrounding places of interest filled in spare time. The Citadel with its glorious view of the surrounding city and country, Museum and Gardens, drew the men frequently, while the Pyramids and Sphinx were a never-ending source of interest. Visits to the "Mousky" and native bazaars took all spare money. At first, whilst the money which had accumulated on the voyage lasted, the trip to Cairo was taken in style, in "Gharrys," the native carriage, but it was soon discovered that trains and electric trams were much cheaper, faster and more comfortable. There was an excellent train service from Zeitoun to Cairo, a distance of about six miles, and the fare was one piastre ($2\frac{1}{2}$ d.).

Ceremonial parades were frequently held. The first, and probably the most important, was the march through Cairo on December 23rd, the salute being taken by Lieut-General Sir John Maxwell, G.C.B., K.C.M.G., C.V.O., D.S.O., commanding the troops in Egypt. This parade was held to impress upon the native population the strength of the British Empire. There is no doubt it succeeded in its object and staved off the revolt that even then was threatening. A similar display of force would probably have squashed the revolt that broke out in later years.

Christmas passed quietly, and on December 30th the Division was inspected by Lieut-General Sir W. R. Birdwood, K.C.S.I., K.C.M.G., C.I.E., D.S.O., who had taken over command of the Australian and New Zealand forces, now called The Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, or abbreviated A.&N.Z.A.C., from which came the word ANZAC. The Corps consisted of the following:—

- (1) Australian Division, commanded by Major-General W. T. Bridges, C.M.G.
 - 1st (N.S.W.) Infantry Brigade.
 - 2nd (Victoria) Infantry Brigade.
 - 3rd (Australian) Infantry Brigade.
 - Divisional Troops.
- (2) New Zealand and Australian Division, commanded by Major-General Sir A. J. Godley, K.C.B., K.C.M.G.
 - N.Z. Infantry Brigade.



Regimental Headquarters on the march through Cairo, December 23rd, 1914.

4th (Australian) Infantry Brigade.

N.Z. Mounted Rifle Brigade (Auckland, Wellington, and Canterbury Regiments).

1st (Australian) Light Horse Brigade.

Divisional Troops (including Otago M.R. and N.Z. Artillery).

(3) Corps Troops (including 2nd Australian Light Horse Brigade).

On January 9th, 1915, a parade was held, and the men were addressed by the Hon. T. Mackenzie, High Commissioner for New Zealand, who came to Egypt to inspect the troops.

Training went on just the same, usually in the desert, but sometimes through the cultivation that stretched for miles to the north. Everybody grew to hate the sight of Nos. 2 and 3 towers, the watch houses on the ancient Cairo-Suez road. But no matter where one went the dust was there. While on the move one could see perhaps three horse-lengths ahead, and everybody became thickly coated with a grey death-like mask of dust which clung to the skin. There is nothing in New Zealand to equal it. As a part of the training, drinking before mid-day was prohibited, and on long field days, when choked by dust and scorched by the sun, this seemed an unnecessary hardship. But there is no doubt it was a good training. Many would have finished the last drop in their water bottles during the first hour. As it was, the bodies of the men were trained to require a minimum amount of water.

Night work was also engaged in during this period.

A great deal of musketry was carried out, and the Machine Gun Section, under the fine training of Captain P. B. Henderson, grew daily more proficient, enlarging their target practice to include the tactical handling of the gun and night firing. On January 28th the whole Regiment spent some hours in the desert in a tactical exercise with ball cartridge, engaging targets at unknown ranges as the squadrons advanced, culminating in the repulse of an attack by cavalry.

On February 3rd news was received of the attack upon the Suez Canal by the Turks, in the repulse of which the N.Z. Infantry Brigade took part.

After passing from the regimental drill to brigade and divisional manoeuvres the work became uninteresting, so far as the men in the ranks were concerned, but was of course necessary for the training of the officers. It must not be forgotten that many officers were unversed in active service conditions, though most of them had received a sound Territorial training which was invaluable to them and enabled them quickly to assimilate the higher training which these "dismal days" gave them. An average divisional day may be described as follows:—

Move out of camp some time between 4 a.m. and 8 a.m.; proceed leisurely for about two hours; halt when found to be mixed up with other troops; wait here half to three-quarters



The Brigade awaiting Inspection by Sir Ian Hamilton.

of an hour; move on for half an hour; halt one and a half hours (good sleep); move quarter of an hour; halt; told to put nosebags on horses; in five minutes ordered to move at once; move rapidly quarter of an hour; halt one hour; make dismounted attack on sand hill three miles away; move at the double across the sand for two miles; fall down and fire off half a dozen blank cartridges; fix bayonets and charge remainder of distance to hill; find hill occupied by staff who make audible remarks about slowness; horses brought up by horseholders who ask if it was hard-work running in the sand; officers fall out to be lectured by the General; men mount and return to camp by shortest route, the R.S.M. in charge.

Towards the end of February there was a four days "trek" under service conditions to Bilbeis via Nawa. About 25 miles was covered each day, and except for the dust the change from camp life was enjoyed, as the route lay through the rich green Delta. Leaving camp at 9.30 a.m. the Brigade marched through the green lanes of Matarieh, passing by that ancient well called the Virgin's Well, where tradition says Joseph and Mary and the Child rested after their flight into Egypt. Here were great banks of purple Bougainvillea climbing the shady trees arching over the road, which, leading out through the green fields, passes the ruins of On, that ancient seat of learning where Moses was educated. Here, still standing, is a solitary obelisk of red granite, close upon 100 feet in height, with its sides covered with clear sharp-cut hieroglyphics. This obelisk stands straight and tall as it stood when erected nearly 4000 years ago, but looking down now upon a country shorn of the glory of the Temple of the Sun, whose high priest was the father-in-law of Joseph. And looking across the green fields over the city of Cairo, there one saw, even as Joseph and Moses looking towards Memphis had seen, the Pyramids in the distance against the western sky.

The route followed by the Brigade crossed the Ismailia Canal, which forcibly brought to mind the immense importance of England's hold upon Cairo, for a hostile force in possession of the city could with the greatest of ease cut off the fresh water supply of the whole Canal Zone, and so starve out Port Said, Ismailia and Suez.

At the end of the second day's march through the green and smiling Delta the force camped at Belbeis, on the very spot occupied by Lord Wolsley after the battle of Tel el Kebir. Two days were taken on the march back and the Brigade "fought" its way successfully into Zeitoun through a defence put up by the 1st L.H. Brigade.

In March the troops had their first experience of a "Khamsin," that hot dry wind filled with minute particles of dust from the great Arabian desert which is the dread of the people of Egypt. Being fit and well with conveniences in the way of shower baths and tents, the Regiment did not mind it much. The strong hot wind raised an enormous grey pall of



Officers Football Team.

sand, through which the sun shone redly. Inside a tent was no better than outside. The very atmosphere consisted of hot sand. But the Regiment was now used to sand, and, beyond an insatiable thirst, suffered little discomfort. In later years, under different conditions, it learned the power of this terror of the desert.

After experiencing the khamsin it was decided to send each squadron in turn to the "Barrage," giving a complete change to men and horses, of green grass everywhere and the most glorious gardens and trees. The mosquitoes were annoying during the evenings, but the men could stand that. The Barrage itself claimed special attention. From it the whole of Lower Egypt is irrigated. The Nile divides here into two the Rosetta and Damietta branches, and both streams have been dammed. Each dam is over 500 yards long. Two main canals run off these streams, and water is turned into them as required.

The whole water supply for the Delta is thus controlled, and lower down the rivers are again dammed, but naturally on a very much smaller scale. The Barrage Gardens are one of the show places of Egypt, and provide a wonderful illustration of what the Nile waters mean to this country. Advantage was taken of camping beside the Nile to practise swimming the horses across the river. A small party of men were rowed across taking with them the end of a long rope. This was then brought back to the starting bank about a chain away from where the rope entered the water. The ends were joined up and a party of men on each bank kept the rope moving, rotating it as it were in a circle. The horses were then brought down one by one, attached quickly to the moving rope and urged into the water. Led by its halter the animal had no option but to swim. A squadron's horses, by this simple means, were crossed safely over in 15 minutes.

On March 22nd the troops were reviewed by Sir Henry McMahon, High Commissioner for Egypt, and Sir John Maxwell, commanding the Army in Egypt. There was a frightful dust, and very few of the men saw the saluting point as they rode past. This day was the first on which locusts were experienced. The sight was an extraordinary one. Flying