Artillery in support of the Desert Mounted Corps, 1917

Dr Jean Bou
Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, ANU
Scope

• Contexts
  • Cavalry ops
  • EEF organisation
  • DMC organisation
  • The fire support system
  • Artillery equipment

• Beersheba
Contexts: mounted rifles, cavalry and mounted infantry

Key points:

The light horse (and NZMR) were mounted rifles, that is form of abbreviated cavalry.

This is a discussion about supporting cavalry operations in a combined all-arms environment.
Contexts: the Egyptian Expeditionary Force (EEF)

EEF

XX Corps

XXI Corps

Desert Mtd Corps

Lt-Gen. Sir Philip Chetwode

Lt-Gen. Sir Edwin Bulfin

Lt-Gen. Sir Harry Chauvel
Contexts: Desert Mounted Corps, Jul-Dec. 1917

DMC

GOC: Chauvel

Anzac Mounted Division

GOC: M-G Edward Chaytor (NZ)
1st LH Bde
2nd LH Bde
NZMR Bde
3 x MG Sqns
XVIII Bde, RHA
• Ayrshire,
• Inverness &
• Somerset Batteries

Australian Mounted Division

GOC: M-G Henry Hodgson (UK)
3rd LH Bde
4th LH Bde
5th Mtd Bde
3 x MG Sqns
XIX Bde, RHA
• Nottingham,
• A HAC &
• B HAC Batteries

Yeomanry Mounted Division

GOC: M-G George Barrow (UK)
6th Mtd Bde
8th Mtd Bde
22 Mtd Bde
3 x MG Sqns
XX Bde, RHA
• Berkshire,
• Hampshire &
• Leicestershire Batteries
Contexts: cavalry tactics & fire support ‘system’

**Cavalry tactics**
- Fire and movement, flanking an envelopment by mounted men
- Maximise rifle firepower for quick resolution
- Break off unfavourable engagements & use horses to manoeuvre
- Limited by establishments & need for horse holders
- Limitations on generation of firepower
- Limited capacity to seize & hold ground

**Fire support**
- Hotchkiss gun
  - 1 per troop = 12 per regiment (troop weapon until 1918, thereafter changes)
- MG sqns
  - 12 x Vickers = 3 x sections of 4 guns
- Horse artillery (RHA) batteries
  - Batteries of 4 guns
  - Battery ammunition columns
Contexts: equipment, 18- or 13-pounders?

A bit of both it seems – depends on battery and time and place.
Beersheba
Beersheba

Turkish 3 Cavalry Div and elements of 27 Div withdrawing towards Hebron

Aus 4 LH Bde after charge

Anzac Mtd

Desert Mtd Corps

XX

(Chauvel)

XXX

(Bir es Sqati)

Gaza

24 km

N

Hebron

25 km

Wadi el Ain

Wadi es Sabe

Wadi es Sabe

Ras Ghannam

Shegeib

Bir Arara

Bir el Hamam

Kashim Zanna

XXX

5 Mtd Bde

UK

XX

(Chetwode)

UK

7 Mtd

0

2 miles

4 kilometres
Tel el Saba
Charge and general advance

Capture of Beersheba

NOTE
ENEMY TRENCHES
DO
TENTS
DO

Palestine

Map 1A

Situation 1630 HR 31.10.17