The following is from the National Archives WO 170/864
In the early hours of 3rd Dec., the revolt was ordered to subside, and all ranks were confined to their billets. At about 09.00, both 11th and 17th Sig. guns, who were quartered in the centre of the city, opened firing from the vicinity of Constitution Square, the main barracks of Athens. On investigation, this was found to have been caused by the city police firing on a large Communist demonstration which had defied the Government's ban. Cavalry raided on both sides, and it was not until tanks appeared on the scene that any semblance of order was restored. British troops did not, however, open fire. The demonstration was not broken up, but it was decided to keep it on the move until it dispersed at nightfall, to block the entrance to the city to prevent any further infiltration of EAM sympathisers. The sign accordingly threw a cordon across the two main roads running from AELEM to the PIRAEUS. If one of these barriers, a procession of several hundred people attempted to force a passage, and the sign had to fire a few shots in the air to stop it from being over-ran by the demonstrators. The procession thereupon broke up with bed cruse.

In the afternoon of this day, the first fighting broke out, but this did not at that moment involve British troops. The noise of battle came from the direction of the Acropolis, and it was said that EAM were engaging the Nationalists in the area of the Temple of Theseus. A warning had previously been given that this area would see the outbreak of trouble, as both parties had strongholds in it.

A general strike was proclaimed this day, and all city services came to a standstill.

The next day heralded the EAM attack on the police stations, one of the first to be attacked being that in Imocratorus street. Here a patrol of 17th Sig. guns found the whole place surrounded, the police being held within by EAM. The British troops available were far too few to take any offensive action, which also, at that time, had not been authorised. They did, however, stay on the spot until daylight. On the same day, 11th Sign observed a large body of EAM in position surrounding the Head Office Depot, and that they were ordered to turn out at extreme strength to deal with them. The intention being to disperse. Then the strength of the EAM was observed, however, it was obvious that the force available to 11th Sign could not deal with the situation. The commanding officer then arrived and ordered the EAM to disperse, which they did, scuffling away in a rather sheepish manner.

Two other incidents occurred during the day which affected this regt. One was the shelling of a large body of Communists that had, by some means, got hold of the bodies of those killed during the firing in Constitution Square. After a service at the Cathedral, the bodies were taken to the cemetery in the south of...
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Atmosphere following the burial the crowd dispersed. The second incident was a small attack on the police station in Renton Maita, near our own barracks. A small group of about twenty HLS were seen to be creating up on this building with the obvious intention of attacking it, whereupon the Commanding Officer turned out the two HLS and strongly then to their homes. This was successfully accomplished entirely by the Commanding Officer and the HLS attacking them from the rear, armed with nothing more than clubs. They were then disarmed and told to disperse, which they refused to do until a little persuasion was employed. They said that if they returned without their arms they would possibly be killed. Later, a deposition from their own was sworn before the means to request that these must be given back to them, but this was refused.

At this stage no definite policy had been laid down for British troops. The only action they were ordered to take was the disarming of anyone not on duty exercising arms within the city boundaries. A rider to this order stated that this action was not to be taken unless it was assured of success. However, on the night of 3rd, a proclamation was issued by the British GOC to the effect that all HLS troops were to be out of the city limits by midnight on 4th Dec. They were to roll out in force of bodies after deposing British commanders of their arms, etc. At the same time as this order was published martial law was proclaimed.

During the 4th, the day small incidents, all building up to the general clash which was aptly red immediately, were dealt with by this regt, the action of these being the clearing of HLS elements who had provoked trouble for their IDs in Saracen Street. Earl’s stocks and trenches were exchanged between the rival factions, and it was thought that HLS were responsible for the incident. Troops of 7th ID under the command of Capt. G. Allen, ID, forced an entry into the building and occupied the HLS ID. This action was locally applauded by HLS on watchmen.

Great difficulty was experienced by the British troops in keeping the HLS crowd from attacking the disarmed HLS personnel, and troops had to be brought to the assistance of the薄um to restore order. Some of the action in the front of the crowd, who were by this time amply, because they interpreted our action as that of protection of the HLS, were financial, consisting of calling on the troops to shoot them when they were named that this would be the result of any attempt to break the cordon around the building. However, at 700 hours, the time of the curfew, the crowd armed up and later in the evening troops from the regt were able to brace the Nationalists from the building to safer areas.

The Commanding Officer attended a conference this pm and later gave orders to the 3rd Bn. He said that with effect from this date a state of war existed between the British troops and HLS. HLS had been given every opportunity to settle the present dispute without force of arms, but they had taken no action to acknowledge this, and had provoked trouble on every occasion by firing on British personnel and by continually disobeying the 4-in-3’s orders.

As a result of these orders the regt were rouged during the night. 4th ID withdrawn from the front area and occupied Warms Square with three troops. One 4th ID remained in occupation of the Telegraph Office just south of this Square, another ID concentrated in the Zappion Building, less one troop which remained at the Zappion Building, while Security Battalion personnel. "D" ID, less one troop on Delphi Island, which was to remain, and one troop with a troop of "D" ID at the Zappion Station at Nea Liosia, concentrated in Kefal Street, from which location they were left in Agios Andreas. "D" ID was very much split. One 4th ID at Marathon, one at Zappian ID, and one with a troop of "D" ID at the Zappion Station at Nea Liosia and the fourth troop in reserve at Agios Andreas. Also under command of "D" ID was a large portion of the rear party of 4th ID, which was formed into a fifth troop and was committed as a guard on the Criminal Records Office in the centre of the city.

This re-routing was completed without incident, and all established themselves for what they knew would be the opening of hostilities on the morning of the 5th Dec.

The first task assigned to the regt was that of rounding ineffective the HLS ID, opposite ID in Kefal Street. This building was defended, and the only entry was through a strong steel door, which it was appreciated would require to be broken by a bomb. At 0900 hrs the attack was launched, using "D" ID 4/4, plus a troop of that ID and a troop of "D" ID drawn from Zappion Building.
The 2nd ENS troop had run into an ambush earlier in the day whilst attempting to get to Sennar, from where the attack was launched, by transport. They later made the journey uneventfully by going across the Old Palace gardens. Two tanks were employed, full, and thirty full were taken. One of this regiment's NCO's was killed, as was one ENS.

Early in the day, a unit of the 2 Para ENS joined the 6th ENS in the defence of Khartoum Square. This locality was a key point, and to deny the rebels the centre of the city it was imperative to hold it. During the weeks which followed this proved to be a very trying task, but one which was successfully accomplished.

It was also during this day that the first example was seen of ENS calling to recognise the Red Cross. This regiment's 15-odd ENS volvo, which was very cleanly marked, had a few rounds thrown at it. There were no casualties.

It had been decided to leave the garrison troops on Sennar Island. This decision was small, consisting only of a troop with two carriers, the whole being commanded by Capt. H. R. O'Sullivan, ENS. Capt. O'Sullivan soon appreciated the situation, however, and was not slow in causing the arrest of the head of both ENS and ELS on the island. The people were predominantly loyal, and very soon twenty of the assorted National Guard had been arrested and were acting under the orders of Capt. O'Sullivan. During the period that followed, a strong force was built up from various sources on the island and, with the help of the Royal Navy in the river, was soon able to report between two hundred and twenty-five and fifty under arms. Capt. O'Sullivan also instituted boat patrols around the northern approaches. These preventive measures were certainly stopped any ENS attempt to attack the island, a task which would not have been difficult, because only a few hundred yards separated the island from the mainland in the narrow area, which was very thickly populated with ELS. During the rest of the time that hostilities were in progress in the Atbara area, the force on Sennar had to call for 6th ENS aid only on one occasion, this being at a force of approximately 200 ENS had been concentrated near the mouth. This concentration was dispersed.

The ENS went into action on this day, 6th Dec, for the first time, in direct support of "D" ENS. A large number of the enemy were observed on the hill near the stadium, immediately south-east of the Stadium. The planes strafed it with cannon and machine gun fire to good effect.

At the end of this first day the regiment claimed ten of the enemy with approximately double that number wounded. These figures are a fair average for the whole of the period between 6 Dec and 6 Jan.

During the 7th Dec the major task of this regiment was the clearance of the area bounded by the three following streets: Ennau - Athens - Stadium. Until this task was completed the centre of the city was dominated by the enemy. Two troops each of "H" and "D" ENS were employed, and they were to form a strong point at the key junction of Ennau and Athens Streets. This strong point was made by 1000 hrs, and from that time onward until 2100 hrs pressure here had released, and the regiment relieved of the constant pressure. The troops in the position held a very hard time. They were frequently dynamited, ENS taking excellent care of the terror and the terror of the enemy. A very good use of the cover afforded by the very narrow streets approaching this area from Ennau, which was very strongly held by them, and suffered numerous casualties, which were partly compensated by far heavier losses suffered by the enemy.

ELS had not so far made attacks on the regimental strongpoint in the southern suburbs - those at Falluja, Hareba and Dina. On the 8th Dec Hareba troops took ELS full, but, to avoid opening hostilities in an area which had to date been quiet, these were released after being discretion. ELS threatened reprisals, but they were not forthcoming, and the locality was not attacked throughout the time it remained occupied by the regiment. Hareba troops were particularly useful during these first days, as they were able to report the movement of troops towards the Athens area. Their position appeared to be on the enemy's main supply route into the city.

Although fighting had taken place at Khartoum Barracks, the HQ of this regiment prior to the outbreak of the trouble, there had not been much incident. An ELS staff officer was captured, who attempted to destroy his papers on being apprehended. This attempt was frustrated, however, and the papers were subsequently found to contain a report on which rested on ELS division from the north to the Athens area. A second item of interest which took place in this area was the release of the 6th Dec of British ENS within a hundred yards of the barracks. No reasons were given to the prisoners as to why they were released, and they could only state that they had
been very well treated. This was later found to be the exception to the rule, as the general treatment of POWs during the fighting was very bad, except in isolated incidents.

On 9th Dec an extra troop was despatched to Marathon Det. This was the troop made up of 10 R. Personnel, and they went under escort without incident.

On the night of 9th Dec troops were received from Hara Darakos, as they were getting very isolated, and this plan was also accomplished without incident. A motorized force was left there to form an OF, as it had been found that an observable view of a great portion of ELAS territory could be obtained from one of the neighbouring buildings. No. 1 Sqn established itself in the University Buildings in the city.

Orders were received during that evening that troops would be withdrawn from the VT station at Ano Liosia after the station had been rendered useless. Extra transport was sent out for them under the command of Capt. E.H.C. Kepple. No incidents occurred on the way out, but on the return journey the column was ambushed near the station and took place in the north of the city. The front of the column did not halt, but drove on through the ambush. Unfortunately, two RPs were wounded, and vacated. The rear of the column did not-pass through, and it was feared that it had been captured. Two tanks were sent out to the area and on arrival at the VT Station found the missing troops. They had observed the trouble at the head of the column, had halted and turned round. Their appearance forced the tanks to advance to Athens by the tanks, who generally shot up the nucleus of the ambush area on their way through. ELAS casualties were nil.

During this same evening two troops of "D" Sqn were used to escort the remaining Correg and Italian F/JW held at South to Kalivan Airfield, for onward routing out of the country. This was completed without incident—a most surprising event, as the column passed through large areas denuded by the enemy.

10 Dec. During this an "D" Sqn RPs, plus one troop, were sent to reinforce the troops already at Pallini, the Marconi VT Station, from which all broadcasting to England and the outside world took place. They arrived without trouble. This left a troop of "D" Sqn in Athens, which was placed under command of "F" Sqn, who, during this raid, established positions to the immediate south-west of the hill, Likaviti, using a troop each from "F" and "G" Sqns to do so. This was the first building of positions which were to be the regt's responsibility during the greater period of the operations in Athens. A sector which was later described by a senior commander as 'the thin red line of black beads'.

This line eventually linked the base of Likaviti with the key position at Chronia Square, which was at this date held by the 6 Parri Det. To establish it, the regt had under command troops from the SSS, who remained for the whole time an area in the south. The 3 Corps TM Coy, REME and a FL Survey Coy, the two last-named doing all in their power to carry out a task which was so different from that of their normal role as the tasks of this regt were from those to which it had hitherto been accustomed. Then, at a later date, the regt was relieved of its commitment on another section of the perimeter front, these two units passed from command.

During night 10-11 Dec the troops at the junction of Athinas and Aivalos Sts were subjected to increased enemy activity, and as soon broke it was seen that the enemy had infiltrated much closer to the regt's positions. The force commander, Capt. U.E. Bond, M.C., was wounded during the night by a rifle grenade exploding in the room he was occupying. At 1000 hrs it was feared that the whole force in this area would have to withdraw, one of the section positions being not on fire and becoming untenable.

The position was finally restored, however, and the only place evacuated was the section position on the south-west corner of the road intersection. This gave the enemy possession of the buildings to the west of the junction, leaving a no-man's-land at this point until more than thirty feet wide. For days to follow the situation was critical, but all enemy attempts to dislodge our troops failed, and the position continued to be held, thus denying the enemy any chance of infiltrating in strength to the centre of the city, which was only a few hundred yards away. Later in the day two missions of 11 ELAS were under command of this regt and moved to the road junction area. Major E.E. Cowkin, M.C., took command of the force.

During the evening of 11th Dec an ELAS officer, under a white flag, approached the regt's forward locality on the north side of the perimeter line, stating that he had orders to attack and hold, if necessary, engage any British troops standing in his way. He was told that our troops felt very much in the same mood, as he would
and if he attempted to carry out his orders. Following this, the fighting on the front continued in earnest.

14th Dec proved to be the most critical day as far as the sector was concerned. By this time a perimeter had been formed around the centre of the city with the lines now fixed to the east and also to the south. This perimeter, with its centre approximately a kilometre square, covered an area of about 700 yards, and was very thinly held. The norm in which it was held can be seen from the fact that each sector held sections of the perimeter at the following points of the ravine - one sign at 360°, one at 270° and a third at 150°. This state of affairs was unfortunate as the present stage was unsuitable, as prior to the commencement of the insurrection troops were not disposed about the city tactically. To give additional points to this unfortunate situation, even above the plumes held by signs on the perimeter, further sections were held at widely divided locations. The group of 1/12 Sig were in occupation of the Telegraph Office, which was in the forward area between the road junction previously mentioned and Classic Square. During 14th Dec this building was subjected to heavy fire from the rebels, and in the evening a section of 6 Prm 11 was sent to reinforce.

During the afternoon of this day Lieut. R.L. Wilson, of 0/12 Sig, was shot through the brain whilst on the steps of a hospital. He was killed instantly. He was investigating a report that E.M.S. were in occupation of this building despite the fact that it remained covered with the red areas. Following this incident, E.M.S. occupation was intensified, and as his body was dragged inside, his battle dress removed and his revolver taken, the hospital was then evacuated, but after it was re-occupied and was subsequently attacked by our troops towards the end of the battle within the city.

This day was the most critical of the war, when the city was checked there, and proved itself most useful. They had seen heavy reports of large movements and had received reports of all returns to the area of attack. However, it was decided that the time had come for them to be withdrawn, as they were now in an isolated position about 1,000 yards outside the perimeter. They were warned to be ready to evacuate this night, and a troop of mounted men was sent to get them. The next day, Lieut. A.D.L. Corrigan, completed the task without incident, although much difficulty was experienced in getting past the numerous road blocks which had been erected by both sides.

By 12th Dec the perimeter was established, and the centre of the city, held by British troops, except for armoured vehicles, which could still get along the main road to the sea at Parnon, which was never cut out of our hands. The perimeter locked troops and many gaps were left. During the day many reports came from the regiments forward troops to the effect that E.M.S. were infiltrating towards the centre of the city. Undoubtedly infiltration was taking place, and everything was done with the troops available to counter the threat. As every day passed our position got thinner, and the chance of an E.M.S. attack succeeding grew correspondingly thinner. If they had attacked during the first half of Dec they could have carried the city, but no co-ordinated action developed.

Although by this time fighting was progressing most fiercely in the city, our positions at Marathon and Marathon had not been relieved, except for two or three very minor incidents.

It can be said at this date that substantial reinforcements were on their way to Crete, and everyone began to think of tank reinforcements, which would mean the re-equipping of the entire brigade. On 14th Dec, the regiments believed that this was to take effect, and everyone was pleased. For although much experience had been gained in the infantry role, all had tanks and tank work at the back of their minds, and the whole time and felt a little jealous of the sister unit that had already been partly re-equipped.

On 14th Dec, the first move was made to concentrate the rest on one section of the perimeter. 11 E.M.S., who had arrived from the north some days previously, were to take over that part now held by 0/12 Sig, based on the Alexandria Broadcasting Section and facing the Stadium, which was most strongly held and which consisted morning and reports and was a concentration area for E.M.S. 0/12 Sig, who had not had very much actual fighting to do, had nevertheless had a most unpleasant time in a war of nerves caused by civilian reports which could not be ignored.
Throughout the time that fighting took place civilian reports continually came to this unit. Some were undoubtedly most accurate, and some most alarming, but it was impossible to give every one of them the attention which was warranted had they all been true. At this time one building which the unit occupied in the north of the perimeter was reported as due for blowing up by the enemy every night. This, however, never materialized.

By early evening 14th Dec the relief of "B" Sqn at the Egyptian Building was completed, and they had moved and taken over the left flank of the unit's positions, between Council Square and Likovitos. This relieved certain attached troops, previously referred to, who were now able to return to their normal occupation.

The LRD were this day ordered to Rouf Ordonnance Depot to service certain vehs at that place. The depot was located outside the perimeter and held as a separate position. The LRD were given an armoured crew district to get them to it, but this, apparently thinking that a heavy recovery vehicle could do thirty miles per hour, set off far too quickly and did not maintain contact with the column behind. This column was accordingly upset very heavily from all sides as soon as the armoured crew went on ahead. The control by the unit's REO, Captain Rhodllin, was, therefore, stronger than ever before, which was found to be most useful. However, with no periscope, the column of armoured vehicles made their way through EELM-infested neighbourhoods and eventually arrived at the depot with small casualties. In the tanks that followed the LRD performed its task admirably, and although 122 shells fell in their area, it allayed its work. These facts are borne out in letters of appreciation from the commander of the depot.

By 15th Dec EELM pressure at the junction of Envoi and Athinae Streets had grown less, due to action on either flank of the EELM District by two un of the 2 Para BN. It was deemed possible for the two troops of "F" Sqn there to be relieved by two platoons of the Greek National Guard, whose positions were, however, less well known. It was felt that a platoon of the Greek National Guard, under command of, and supported by, a section of "E" Sqn, could be relieved by a platoon of the National Guard, under command of, and supported by, a section of "F" Sqn.

During the evening of this day the unit heard that the first two of tanks would arrive very shortly, and at a "squad's" conference the next day, "D" Sqn, by winning a ballot to which the question was put, received the allocation. It was decided to withdraw them from the line and replace with "E" Sqn. It was necessary to leave the troop of "E" Sqn at Scoulou, and this was done by sending the troop of "E" Sqn and half left in Athens. This troop had not been in Athens since 18th Nov.

The rest patrolled most actively at night during this period. Although unexpected, such aggressiveness was put into it, which bore fruit, as the results attained were highly satisfactory. This patrol work was very necessary, as it was impossible at this stage to put in an attack of any size, and had we not continually probed the enemy's line, giving him no rest, he might have realised our weakness and acted accordingly. As it was, the enemy was constantly kept on his guard, never knowing where these fighting patrols would strike next.

On the morning of 17th Dec the first part of the relief of "B" Sqn by "A" Sqn took place. A troop of "A" Sqn passed through the main positions with a tank in support and established themselves in a building at 3754545. This relief was completed without incident, although "F" Sqn lost one OR killed in the area during the day.
It was on 17th Dec that 02 Bty forces reported the latest position on Salamis Island. There were total British forces there was about 95, but through the good will which the Island provided, the commander, who was most popular on the Island by virtue of having secured for the people all the aid they required, was freed of 250 armed men now existed, all having placed themselves under command. They were in a position to report that they were confident of being able to deal with any emergency which might arise and that they considered the Island secure. A most notable feat, accomplished by the personal initiative of the commander.

After last night 17th Dec 02 Bty Sign were completely relieved by 01 Bty Sign and went into reserve, awaiting the arrival of their tanks. When these tanks arrived, the Sign was to come under command of a British Division, who were all now ashore, and whose task it was to clear the road from the coast. The Commander Officer decided to give 01 and 02 Bty Sign each tank to use in close support of infantry and have two tanks as a reserve reserve in 03 He.

During 18th Dec the rest intensified its patrolling, and both 01 and 02 Bty Sign achieved notable success. L/Cpl K.H. Williams, who was himself wounded, was killed during the course of 18th Dec 02 Bty Sign which resulted in the wounding of 70 soldiers. During an airmen check a 56 Mills grenade exploded in a room where a group was assembled. Due to the presence of mind of their Group Leader, L/Cpl K.H. Williams, who was himself wounded, no one was killed. During the course of 18th Dec 02 Bty Sign were ordered to move to the coast at Pallasion to take over their tanks. They were to move along complete and after collecting their tanks go into billets in the same area. Their subsequent actions until the end of the month are covered separately. They collected their tanks, as did the crews from 9th, 03 and 01 Bty, which latter returned to the rest in Athens in support. Up to this date tank support had been given to the rest by 02 and 01 Bty.

For the first time dynamite throwers made their appearance on the rest's northern front. 02 Bty Sign, using borrowed tanks and armoured cars, stoned a building, known as the unfinished building, which was located in Argyroupolis and contained then. Armoured cars were put into action by the German armed forces to stop any ELS attempts to escape through the back of the building, and dynamite was thrown from an upstairs window at one of them. Dynamite was ignited in various ways; one example being as follows: a German stick grenade with additional blocks of dynamite tied to it, making a very effective demolition charge. A later Wally was wounded on one of the grenade, a fuse worked into the charge and the whole town with rope. It would then be lit and rolled to the target, which was usually a wall. This was used both in an effort to destroy our positions as well as a terror weapon.

20th Dec was quiet, but marred by an unfortunate accident. The Signals Sergeant out with all his party well within the area held was shot dead by a Greek sentry at the Telegraph Office.

An unfortunate accident had just previously taken place at 02 Bty HQ, which had stayed as an isolated post to the north of the city. The result of this action was that only ELS personnel remained at 02 Bty HQ. This made the higher command concerned for the position both of Salamis and Marathon, at both of which places the rest had two troops. At Salamis, 02 Bty HQ was also established. The rest was warned that evacuation was probably going to be ordered, and the best way for their return was discussed. The men were told not to return, and all 02 Bty Sign was killed during the afternoon of 21st Dec by a sniper.

On 23rd Dec a plan was evolved which required the use of two of the rest's tanks, with a carrier containing a crew able to deal with mines. Much ELS activity had been reported in the area surrounding the prominent features named Lofos Strofil, which was in the rear of the enemy's lines facing this rest's positions. Only very little
The drive action had been taken against ELMS in this area, except for the petrol station, the reason being that at this stage the higher command were not prepared to push forward in the north until the south was the line of communication were broken. It was felt that ELMS were possibly suffering under the illusion that they dominated this sector of the front, and, accordingly, in order to show them out of this area, the commanding officer decided to take a small armed force under his own command north along Division Street and then turn east along Lefkosia Avenue, in the direction of the Jerud Prison at 0647. Roadblocks had been reported on this route, but not of a very substantial nature, although they were known to contain mines. With the colonial commander one tank and Major E. W. Jenkin, M.C., commanding another, this small force set out into ELMS territory and made havoc of all they met. The crew of the carrier II was very fine work. Then roadblocks were encountered they demolished from the carrier and, covered by the tanks, removed mines, which were numerous. This operation was performed satisfactorily three times, but two of them were killed by a sniper at the fourth roadblock, which was in the vicinity of the prison. The force returned along the same route and were engaged by ELMS machine guns. This group certainly made ELMS think hard, for they sent out great care to ensure that a repetition would not occur.

This day also saw the first of the official ELMS representatives who, from now on, were to present themselves regularly to the rear's post in Christodoukous Street. Their visits were so regular, indeed, that this became known as "negotiation hour". Some things that passed over this barrier took the form of dirty pieces of paper addressed to the British Prime Minister. It was through this post that ELMS representatives passed on reports to the conference which took place on Christmas Day.

In the early hours of 23rd Dec Licut. M.A. Chappell took a patrol of "A" Section into the enemy lines. They lay up for a long time and waited for ELMS to appear. Eventually a small company of the enemy was seen in a trench slightly below ground level. The trench was a great gap, two or three paces wide and must certainly killed four or five. Our troops suffered no loss. This was typical of the minor actions which were fought by the rear during this period. Never to give the enemy rest or a feeling of security - that was the intention.

On 25th Dec all was comparatively quiet in the Athens area, and nothing which happened was either overlooked by the presence of the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary in the city. This did not mean that fighting did not take place on this day, which was certainly not the case, as can be seen from the following account of an action fought by troops of "D" Section based on Pallini Station.

Major R. Andrews, CO "D" Section, received a report from a civilian that there were some British troops being held by ELMS in the village of Pallini, about four miles south of Pallini. He therefore sent out a troop fighting patrol under the command of Licut. C. B. Tutt, whose orders were to investigate this report and, if it were true, to attempt the rescue of the prisoners.

The house in which the prisoners were held was pointed out by a civilian. Licut. Tutt left a section to cover any withdrawal whilst he took the other two sections to the house, surrounded it and called for its occupants to surrender. They did without further ado. He had been reported nine British soldiers were held inside, who were released. Their ELMS murals were taken into custody. The released soldiers were then to be seen from another rear in our own brigade, the 11th BMS, and they had been captured during an attack by their rear on an Italian, south of the Egyptian Building.

Licut. Tutt withdrew at the covering party and whilst crossing the square was fired on. This fire the troops returned as they made their way from the village.

The return journey was made across country, and all went well until the troops attempted to cross a road. They were about half way back when this attempt was made. An ambush was encountered and heavy small arms fire was directed upon them. The ELMS prisoners made away. To elude, Licut. Tutt decided to get small parties out one at a time. This plan was successful, and by turns and throws the party returned to Pallini. One of the released BMS soldiers failed to set in, and it was assumed that they had been captured. The result of the action was that seven very grateful British soldiers were released from the enemy. They could not, however, return to their battalion in Athens, as road communication was impossible, except to a strong force. They were therefore rescued and returned to Pallini.
At about 09:30 hrs on 28th Dec. activity broke out around building No. 106 on the Athens City Map. This building, a laboratory, was occupied by a troop of R.A.S.A. in a key position on the sector and attacks by E.R.A.S. upon this locality on the northwest face of the building which did little damage but, apparently through sympathetic detonation, all the heavy trepos laid by this pack around the building exploded. No E.R.A.S. wounded were found, but the attack did not develop.

On 28th Dec. the R.A.S. was wounded whilst returning to a forward position. He had visited this post to attend to a wounded mum. The soldier was being carried back by a party of which were 2 R.A.S. One of these was one that they were fired on and the soldier badly wounded by an explosive bullet. The wounded soldier was a desin hit and killed.

On the morning of 29th Dec. the belt of of "B" at Marathon ceased activities. It had been decided to destroy or render unserviceable all heavy equipment which included a three-ton truck. A scout car was to attempt to reach Pallini along a road round the north of the town, then south down the coast through M. Nektar to Pallini. The crew of the scout car were the driver, who could not walk due to illness, and a corporal of 38th Bn, who was also unwell.

One hour before first light the walking troops left, striking the south across the Marathon bundaries to join Pallini. At 0500 hrs this force arrived at Pallini with only three of its missing. Three had fallen out, an ex-serviceman, and their intention was to rest, lay up and then move on the next day. They were unfortunately captured by E.R.A.S., however, and subsequently released during the truce which followed. One of the naval crew's name was heard until some weeks later, when the crew recovered. They had been taken prisoner whilst attempting to get round a road block. The story of the time spent by the driver in captivity is attached to this diary.

During the night of 27-28 it was noted, through civilian information, that E.R.A.S. were attempting to cause a hole north of a house in Salonika St., with the intention of causing a position by first light at 0700hrs. and so destroy a new area. They worked under a heavy schedule, and when troops were brought to bear with this activity it was found that E.R.A.S. had succeeded in their plan to such an extent that only one area still required attention. The enemy went off when attacked, leaving behind him much evidence of his work. Following this, at 0900, the troops involved, made a strong point at 375454 to counter up another area in the north. This position proved to be a good one, for by 1030 hrs five killed had been made from it.

The R.A.S. dropped the first supplies to Pallini garrison during the pm. The troops from Marathon had had to leave the greater proportion of their kit, which had to be made up and so certain items, plus more rations, were dropped. The dropping was carried out successfully.

Civilians reported this day that the enemy intended to make an attack on the north sector in Athens on or at 10-23. This was not a new rumour or report, however. R.C. 50th were ordered to put out positions in rear of the front line to block the defence, but no attack developed.

In a look of over-enthusiasm Pallini was shot up by fighters of the R.A.S. during the night 28-29. They had apparently seen a light and had issued it to be the enemy. Luckily, casualties were slight, as no one was hurt.

During the following night a large fire broke out in the block of buildings at 375425 on the Sotira sector near Polytechnic St. This fire burned so fiercely that it burned the forward post in the other side of the road and to the west, taking up new positions at 375454. Unfortunately, prior to this withdrawal, a building was dynamited, and as a result three of our own troops (one from this report the National Guard) were killed. The bodies were recovered later.

In the early evening a rather lowly individual presented himself to the barrack under a white flag. He said that he wanted to see the head officer. He was Serhan, a former E.R.A.S. adjutant minor. The request was to higher authority.

During early on 31st Dec. a report reached the rear through O.c. and Wireless Convey, that some installations near Pallini were burning, to the effect that an attack had been put in on that station during the night. The telephone line was out of order and the request could not reach them on the wireless.
Later in the morning communication was re-established and Pallini reported that they had been attacked at midnight by approx 50 EELs, supported by an armoured car. The attack had been most determined, liberally supported with automatic weapons and by an 8.8 gun firing HE.

The armoured car was one which had previously been captured from the RAF at Khilazin. This vehicle was attacked with great determination by Sgt. Pink, one of the men attached from EELs some days previously. However, in very close to the car and scored a direct hit with a PIAT. After a few seconds the car blew up. Later, it was confirmed that, apart from its normal load, it carried a considerable quantity of ammunition. The attack was finally beaten off at 0430 hrs, with casualties to British troops as follows: officer and four NCOs wounded, one of the latter subsequently dying. EELs left behind three enemy dead.

Whether the break through the telephone line to Athens from Pallini was in any way connected with the attack or whether it was pure coincidence is not known. However, as the line had been cut, the commander of the land forces decided to evacuate Pallini, since the station could no longer be used. A column was formed under the command of the officer commanding EELs to protect this evacuation and escort 11/11 Sqn, and returned at 1000 hrs, its task completed without incident. The equipment at the station was rendered useless.

Although the force at Pallini guessed that the station was now unnecessary, it was considered unwise to leave the area. While the troops were withdrawing, a force was seen moving in the direction of Athens, but a force from the 11/11 Sqn acted to drive them off. A force from the 11/11 Sqn was then sent to the area to draw a corresponding number of blankets. Some thin lines were driven back to Athens and used in subsequent operations in direct support of the infantry troops of the raid.

The tanks had come straight off the ship and were from Italy. From their appearance it was evident that they were in poor condition, and one of them burnt out a clutch in the first few hundred yards. It was thought that the road would probably be in a pitiful condition, but we were satisfied that we could have withstood a powerful attack. They were also well stocked with food.

11/11 Sqn, who had been instructed already in this narrative, were the first to arrive of the regiment to be re-established in an armoured role, moved down to the coast near Pallini on the 19th Dec and completed the majority of their tanks by 2000 hrs on that day. In addition to the seven tanks allocated to 11/11 Sqn, four were formed from the other units of the rest of the division, and were in use as a counter-attack to a corresponding number of blankets and a large number of EELs personnel that had been cut off in a factory area at Indios, 10th Dec. This was carried out by two troops of 11/11 Sqn, who operated under command of EELs.

The main attack accomplished during 20th and 21st Dec was the evacuation of a large force of EELs personnel that had been cut off in a factory area at Indios, 10th Dec. This was carried out by two troops of 11/11 Sqn, who operated under command of EELs.
...the tanks used HE can with delayed fuse, bouncing the rounds about ten feet in front of the block, so that the explosion took place over the heads of the defenders, resembling air bursts.

The area of this advance was far more open than had previously been the case in the fighting, and consequently the tanks were able to engage the enemy with HE at long ranges. This type of shooting took the rebels by surprise, and their reactions in the maintenance to panic and run, thus presenting "17pdr's with easy kills."

On 21st Dec one troop of the gun knocked out a 65mm gun at 36h41.

Up to 20th Dec the gun had been operating by troops on the scale of one troop per battalion. This in normal circumstances would have been inadequate, but a greater number of tanks were not available, and although it meant no rest for the crews, support was given to the infantry on every occasion it was asked for. On 20th Dec the gun was felt to operate on a more liberal scale, large areas had been cleared and the situation was open. The division then turned its attention to districts in the north of Athens which were known to be rebel-infested. It had been assessed that this area would prove difficult, but this proved to be wrong, and district after district rapidly fell to the advancing troops. By this time it was apparent that resistance in the southern part of the city had ceased, and large areas fell without resistance. At the end of the year 4th British Division had completed its task in the south and was preparing for future operations, the first being a drive from east to west across the northern front of the perimeter. "17pdr's were scheduled to continue their support in this new attack, and the last two days of the year were spent in maintenance and rest, preparatory to fresh action.

The diary of the regt's activities in the Athens fighting does not end with the termination of the year, and the final phases of the fighting are described in the January section of this narrative of events.