

From Jerusalem, the road which is a masterpiece of road engineering drops rapidly down to the Jordan Valley. First the ruins of the Good Samaritan Inn are passed. Then a lone sign board standing at the side of the road announces that you are at sea level and you suddenly realised that you have dropped 3000 ft since leaving Jerusalem and it is becoming very much warmer. The final drop of another 1300 ft below sea level to the Dead Sea is through a deep and barren gorge until suddenly the valley appears before you with the Dead Sea looking still and blue and the Jordan Valley barren and burning hot.

As the columns moved through Jericho and across the valley to the Jordan River, huge dust devils spiralled up into the sky. The Jordan was crossed and Trans-Jordan entered at Allenby Bridge. Once again we were free to put aside our personal weapons and feel we had cast off the cares of Internal Security duties for at least five weeks.

The road from the Jordan to Zarqa is narrow and dangerous as it winds its way up the valley of the Wadi Shaeb and the 4000 ft climb through Es Salt to AMMAN put the transport to its sound test of the day.

Amman was by-passed and the columns joined the main road to Mafraq and Iraq by the King's Palace.

Trans-Jordan has been ruled by H. M. King Abdullah since the formation of the Kingdom after the 1914-18 War. For several years after he became King he lived in tents on the borders of Amman which had a population of about 4000. Today, an inspiring palace stands outside the city.

By dusk, the majority of the Battalion had reached Zarqa and experiencing their first dislike of Trans-Jordan dust. The camp had been pitched by our predecessors on ground which rapidly pulverised into fine dust which lifted with the slightest breeze. For five weeks we were to live in dust, eat and sleep in it.

The Battalion Carriers moved up in separate columns in two stages, and came through without a fault.

4. TRAINING.

For the first time in 18 months the Battalion was able to carry out any form of collective training.

Faced with the prospect of a Battalion live firing exercise in the fourth week and a three day Brigade test as the culmination of all trg there was no time to waste. A series of demonstrations by each Coy was the opening gambit followed by platoon and company training.

On the 1 Oct, General Sir John T. Crocker KCB, CBE, DSO, MC, C in C M.E.L.F. visited the Battalion and watched training. He was particularly interested in an inter platoon battle of wits and spent much longer with the Battalion than had been intended.