









MORNING PARADE A.H.Q.





A FEW OF E.R.S. HABBANIYA  
1943





AT Y.M.C.A., ASHAR.



P.A.D. EXERCISES HABB: 1942



'NOBBY' CLARK



BILL APPLETON



BILL, 'JOE' AND MYSELF



MAGNETO REPAIR SECTION  
1942



'JOE' DELLER





HOME FOR A WEEK



'WILKIE'  
WITH MY PET  
SALAMANDER



R.A.F. LEVIES HABB



BAZAAR GUARD. ASHAR BASRA



SHAIBAH 'TULIPS'



BAGHDAD ROAD, SHAIBAH



BILL APPLETON



EN ROUTE TO BAGHDAD





TIMES PRESS, ASHAR



WILKIE AND MYSELF



SHORT BACK AND SIDES, SAHIB.



AMARA \* WORKER, ASHAR



BROWN  
CHIEF COOK





EVENING ON THE EUPH.



MACHINE SHOP ASHAR.



NATIVE POLICE



BAZAAR, ASHAR

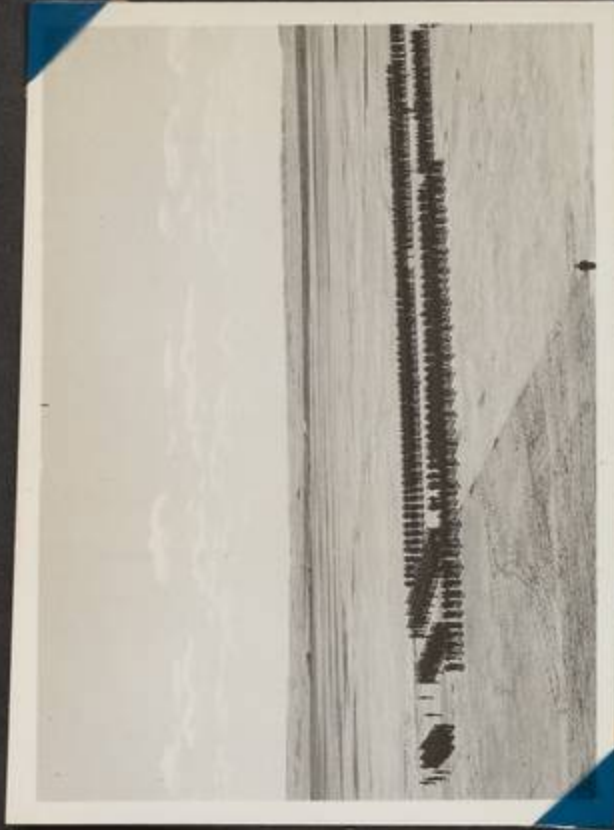
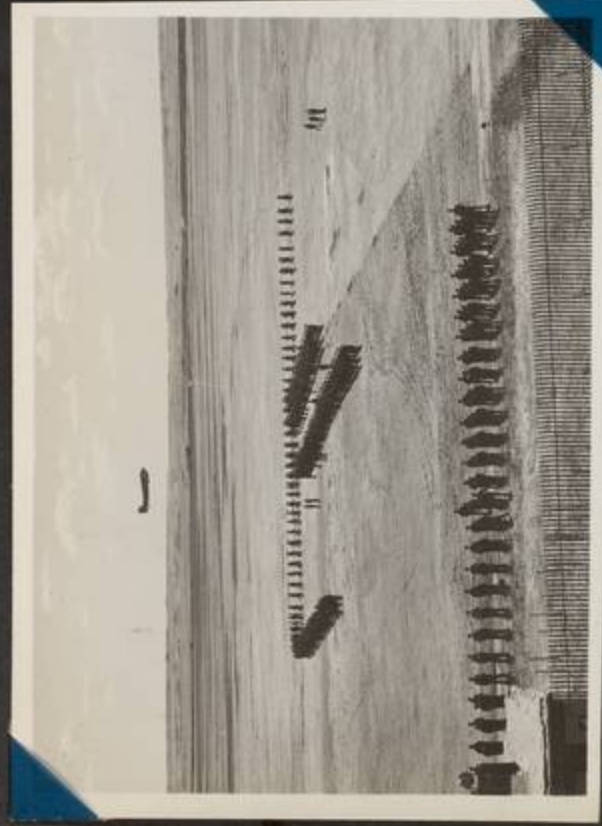


ASHAR CREEK.



ASHAR CREEK

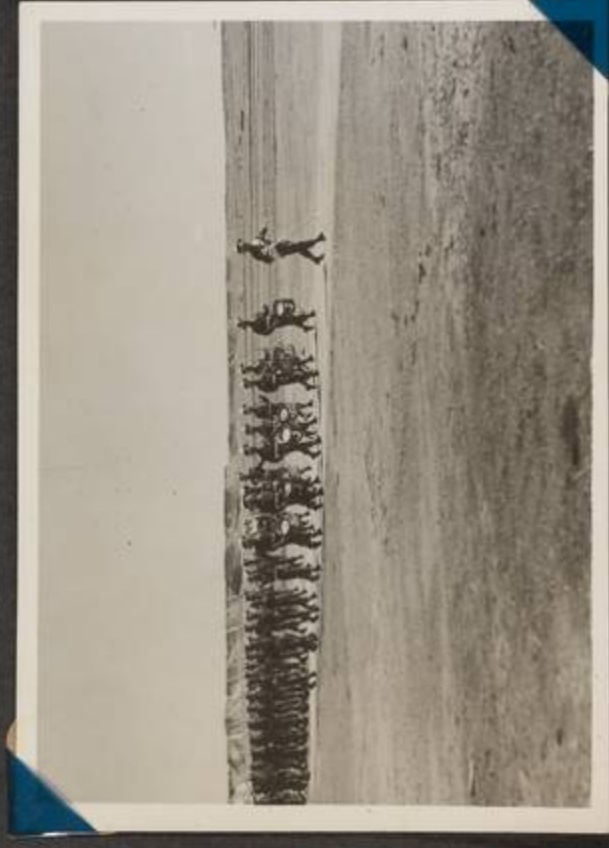




1<sup>st</sup> APRIL 1943 25<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE R.A.F.



HABBANIYA



IRAQ.





XMAS AT ZOUBAIR



ASHAR CREEK



COPPER BEATING



SID AND NOBBY UP THE CREEK



MOSQUE ON BANKS OF EUPH



MAKING NATIVE BREAD, CHAPATI





OPEN AIR CINEMA, HABB.



LAKE HABBANIYA



BELLES OF THE 'BLUE'.



CAMEL CARAVAN



LIGHTNING OVER HABB



BREYAH QUARTER.  
ASHAR.



A LONG, COOL, SMOKE



COPPER MARKET, BAGHDAD



A CORNER OF SPIKE'S BUNK  
SHARON.





PONTOON BRIDGE  
BAGHDAD



LION OF BABYLON



'BINTS' CARRYING DATES



MOSQUE, ASHAR.



KING FAISAL'S PALACE,  
BAGHDAD



'GUFFA'





BABYLON



CTESIPHON ARCH



SIR AMADIR



INSIDE MOSQUE

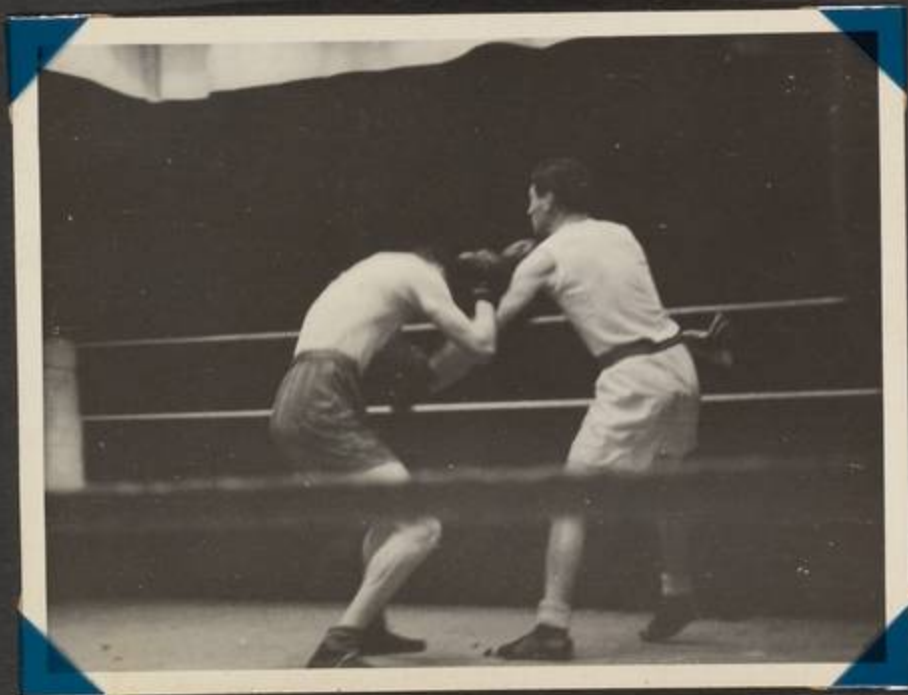
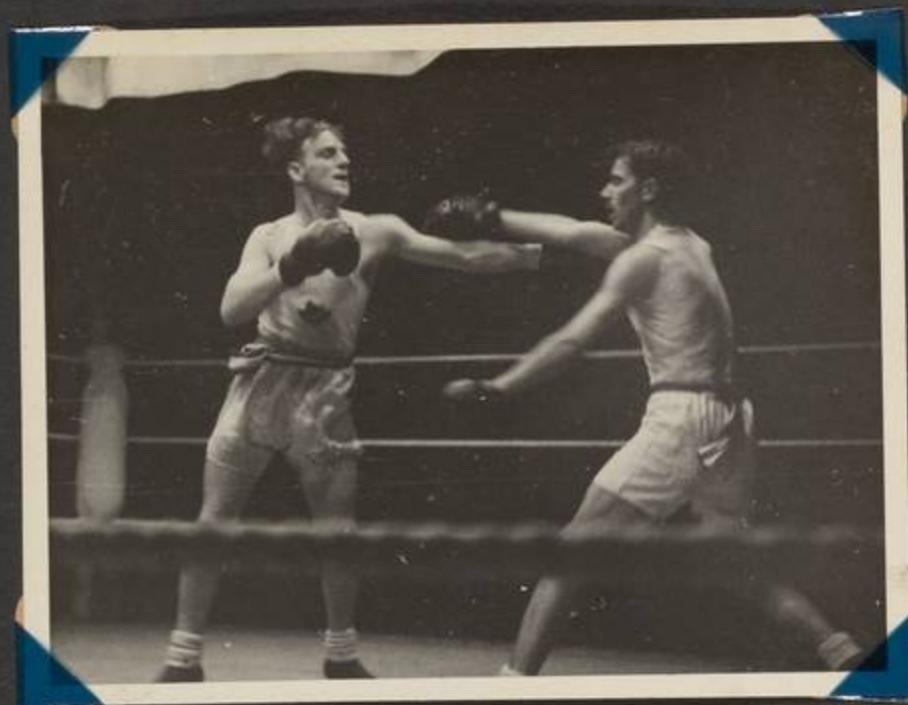
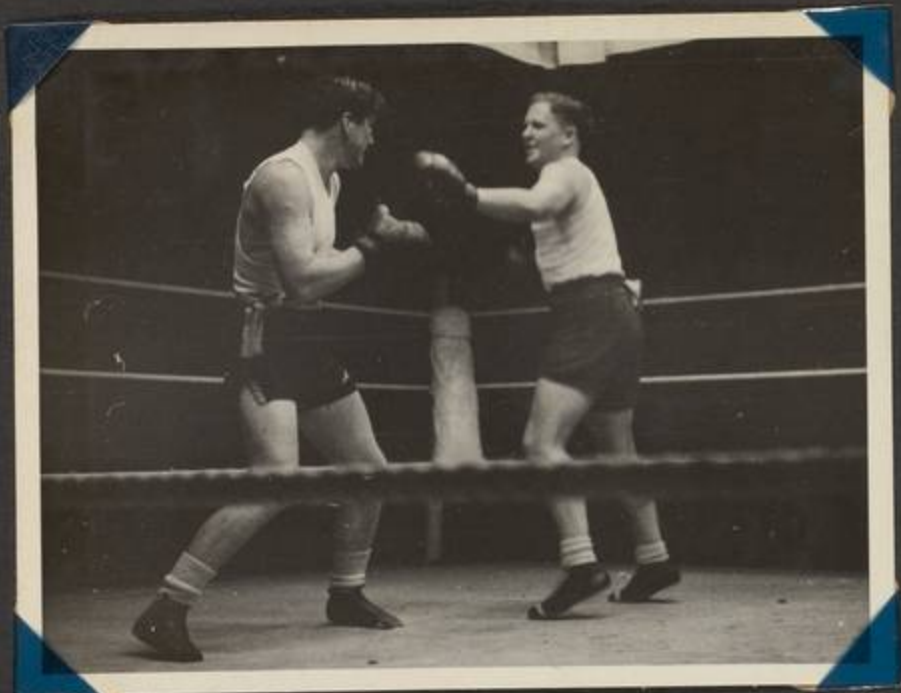


TRANS-DESERT BUS  
(NAIKN.)

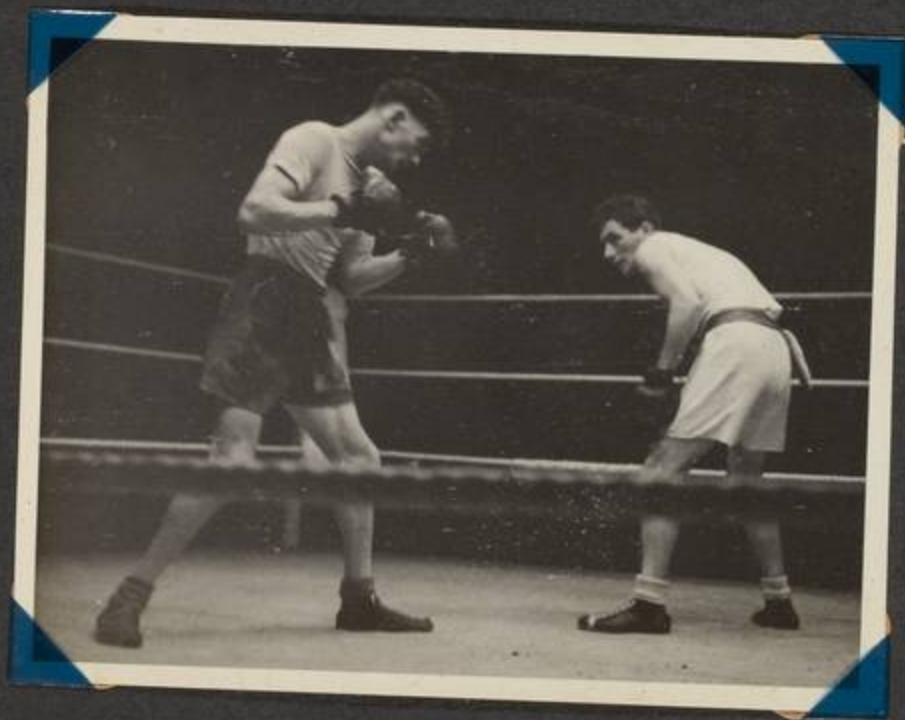
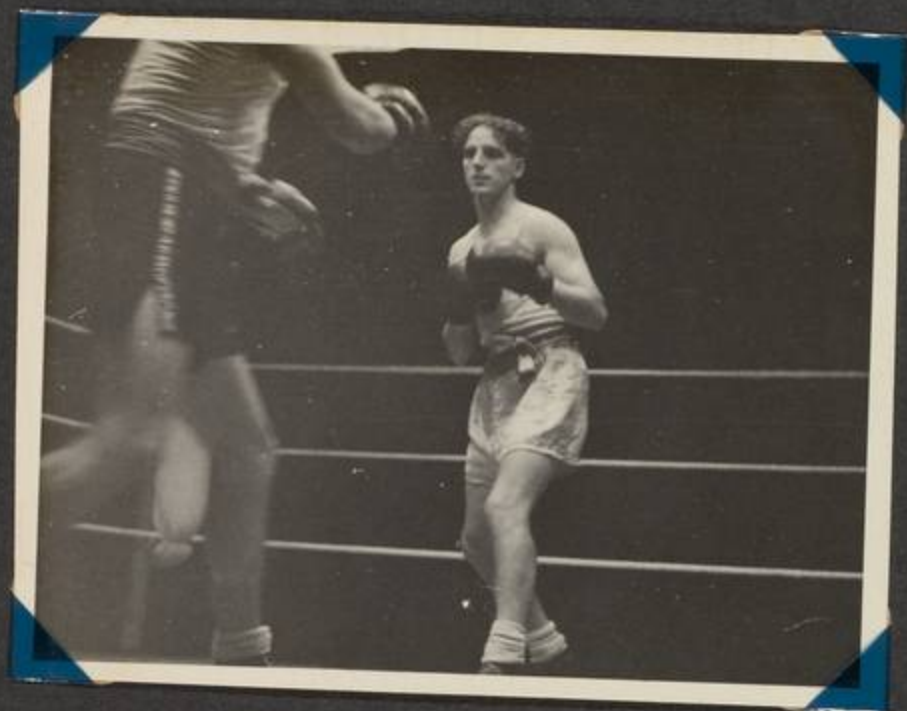


PYRAMIDS, EGYPT.





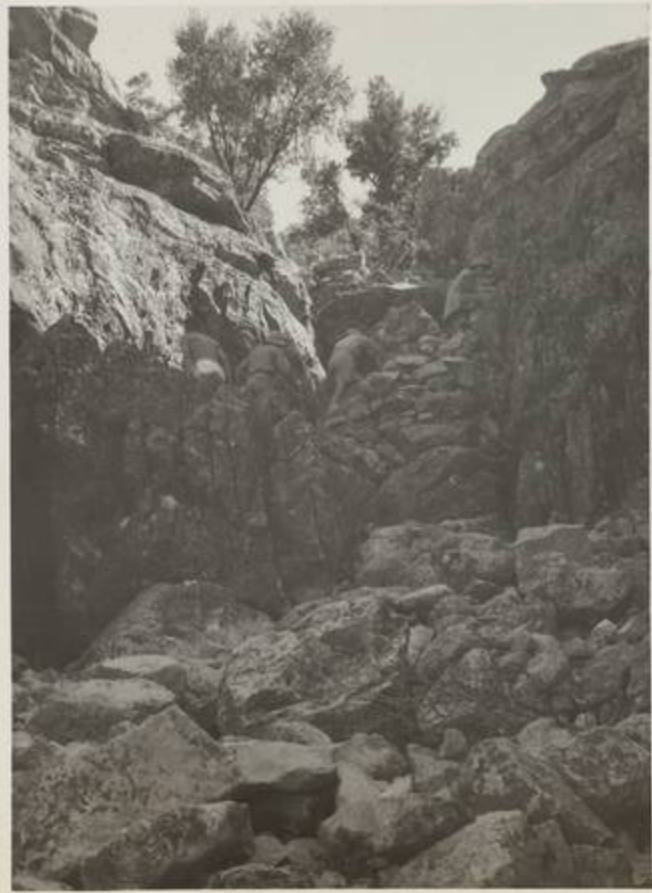








SCENES  
AROUND  
SIR  
AMADIR.  
NORTH  
IRAQ  
—  
AUGUST  
1943







DURAJI





NATIVE CHICKS IN SWIMMING HOLE. DURAJI

HALF WAY. CHAI UP.





HOW ABOUT A QUEVE CHUM?



ASC. WITH VILLAGER.  
DURI.



MAIN STREET IN THE VILLAGE OF AMADIR







RESTING THE MOUNTS







MOUL



TRANSPORT  
FROM AMADIR





VIEW OF THE  
CAMP



WHOA!















STATION CINEMA



SHARJAH  
SAUDI ARABIA







'A' FLIGHT GROUND CREW. MASIRAH  
ADEN COMMAND



BASE FLIGHT GROUND CREW  
SHARJAH 1943



BILLET AT SHARJAH. 1943





N.A.F.I. SHARJAH









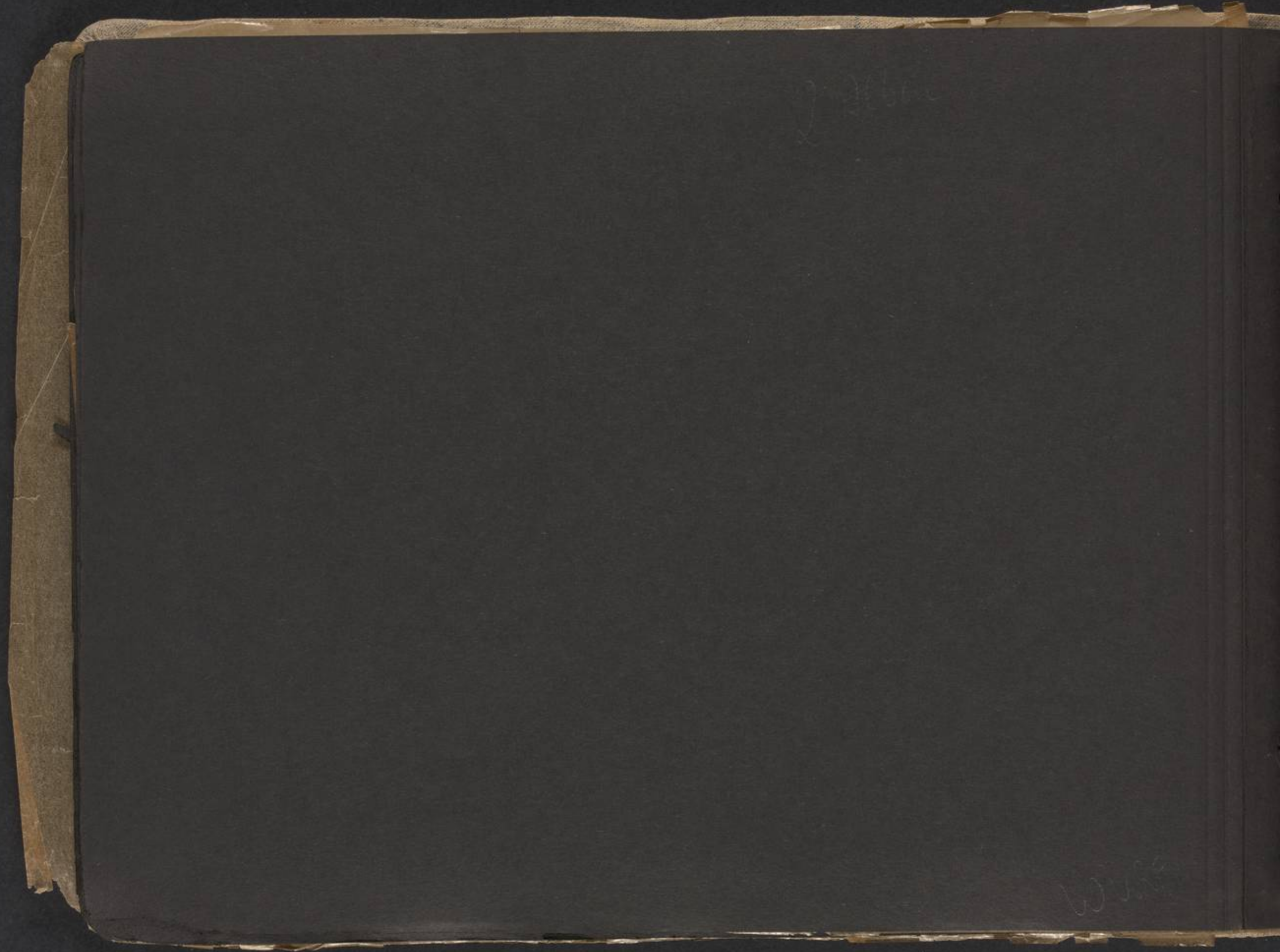








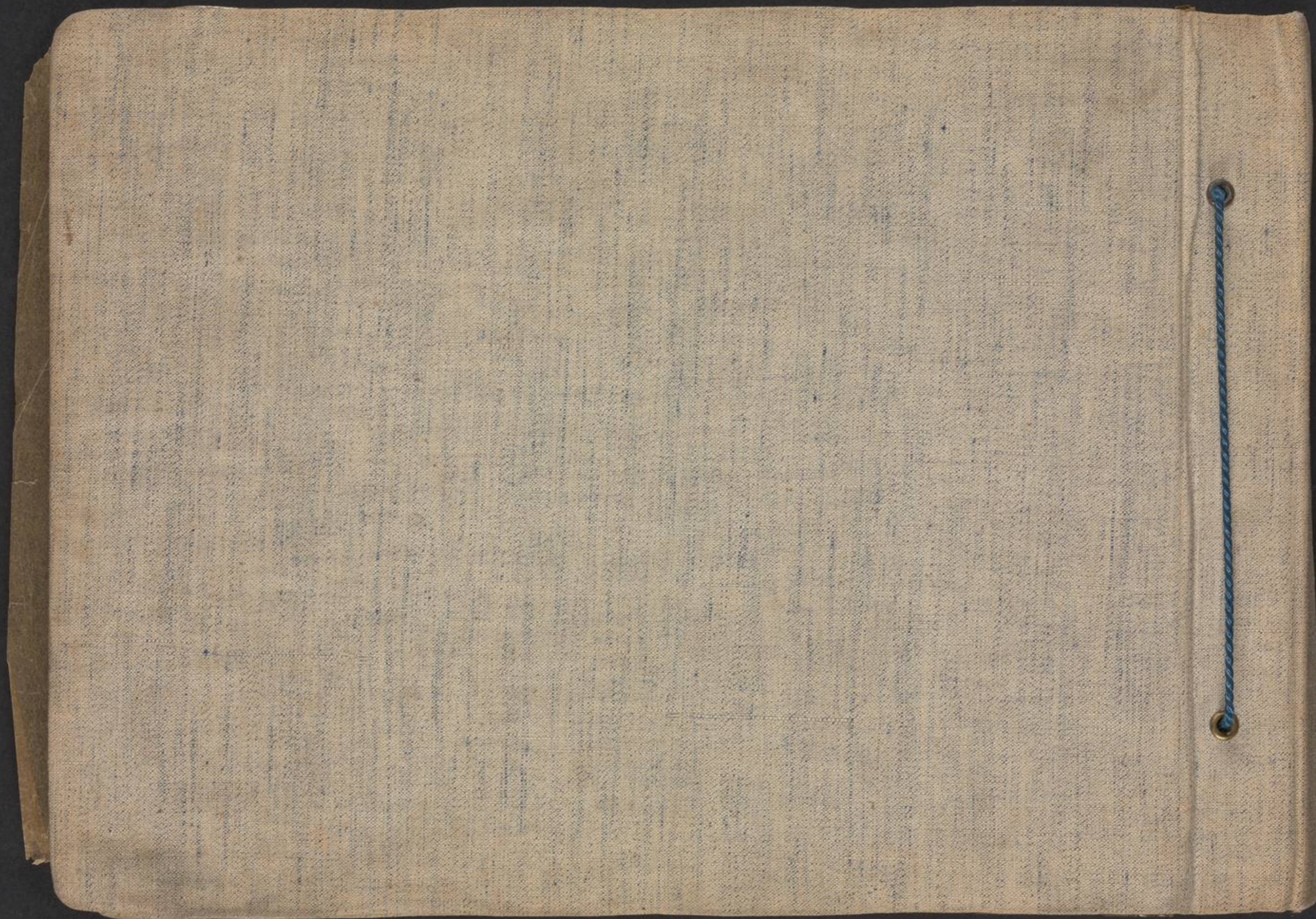














## **"HOW TO BE HAPPY AT HABBANIYA" SO WHAT!**

(With apologies to the official publication.)

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Well, here we are in Habbaniya—we've been. We've had it. But for you who have not yet gone crackers here is how to be happy at Habbaniya. But first of all a bit of Gen about the Country.

Iraq is the back garden of Allah. It is the cradle of mankind, and not having been aired since, it smells pretty awful. The country is completely covered with the finest dust in the world and is as popular with the Air Force as a skunk at the Vicar's Tea Party.

In the beginning God gave it to Cain since when it has been inhabited by Nomadic tribes of murderers, thieves, rogues and vagabonds. From their earliest years the natives who are by nature over-sexed and lice ridden are taught every unsanitary code so that they may become a debit to the country but a credit to all dishonest practices. These lewd fellows go about in night shirts with dusters wound round their heads. They are experts at coughing and spitting, worshipping Allah and beating their donkeys. They prefer rape to ordinary seduction and young boys to all the charms of the female.

So alone in this wilderness of sin stands Habbaniya where you have been posted to. The people who paid for it don't even know it exists for to them Stepney is the Far East, so what goes on 3,572 miles from London is just a mirage and after all they only pay their Income Tax to save going to prison. But you know it's real because you're here. You've had a look round the place. You've dried your eyes and found



the canteen closed and now you sit down and think. But that is the greatest mistake you can make, for in this place you must never think if you want to retain your sanity.

You must realise that "Habbaniya" is not the Arabic for Salt Lake City. Oh, no! for here you live like monks only you dress differently. You don't go about in dressing gowns with big dogs and make liqueurs, but apart from that you live the same life of gaiety and sport.

Oh, yes! sport is well catered for in the different messes and canteens and of course the folks at home are only too pleased to hear from you. Other ways of spending the time first of all, the collecting of insects. The Arabs only collect lice, so the rest are yours, and you will find this a very interesting experiment. Every abominable creature that walks, crawls, or flies is here in abundance and even when you are sober you can still see scorpions fighting tarantulas, beetles the size of orchids, cockroaches the size of peaches and flying atrocities that defy description. They are all yours! You can have them!

Another interesting hobby is to study the temperature chart. You can watch it go up and up boys, and if you have a licence you can open a book on it. They say it is the shade temperature, but as there's no shade they take it in the ice box and that kids you on it's not so hot after all.

Photography is another hobby you can take up. There is always plenty of sun and you get some lovely views of the desert to show your scout troop when you get back home. The boys would be delighted to see what damn all covered with sand looks like and you can show 'em.

Another hobby to cultivate is saluting. It's easy. All you need is a mirror. First of all you let the mouth hang open (not over). Then you bring your right hand over your right eye, palm turned outwards, fingers pointing upwards, i.e. towards your hair, and thumb behind the seam of the nose. Practice it before the mirror before trying it on the S.M.O. It's a nice hobby and it might get you sent home.

A hobby that may appeal to you is to do the 55 miles through luxuriant tropical scenery composed entirely of sand



to Baghdad. The "H" by the way is silent as in Habbaniya or the "P" in bathing. There is a hedge all round this cess-pit and after crossing the British-built bridge over the Tigris you come into the main sewer with lots of little drains running into it. The main sewer is called King Feisal Street and it is entirely surrounded by brothels. Before going to Baghdad you should go to the M.O.'s. office and see his chart. There you will see some areas marked with a red pencil, others with a blue pencil. The red pencil areas are out of bounds. Those with a blue pencil (not blue ointment) are in bounds. The M.O. will show you how to get there and what to take with you, in fact he will show you everything except what to do when you get there.

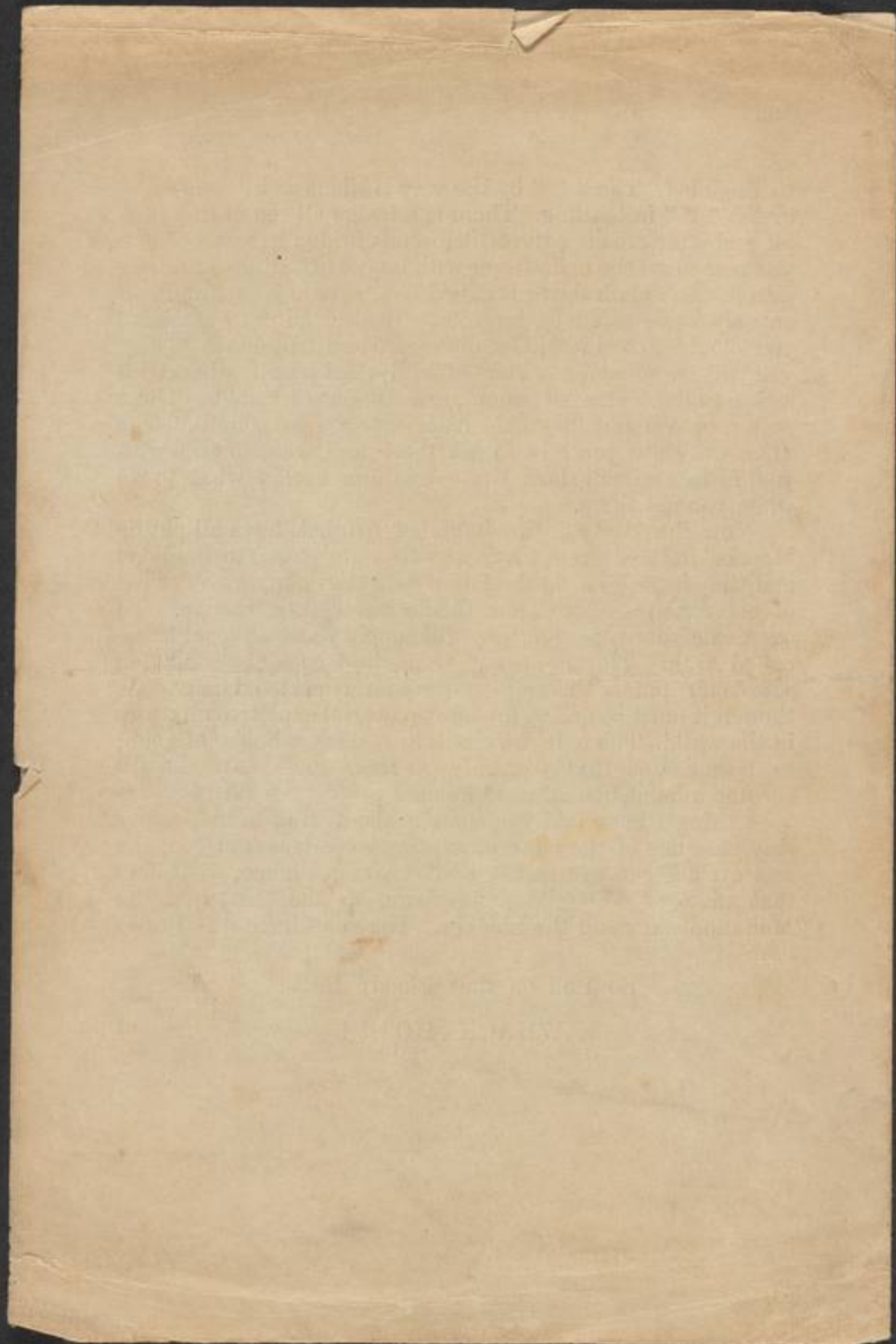
Now the Bints in the Baghdad Brothels have all put up "blacks" in the Harem that's why they are posted to Baghdad and they have been on the job so long they can do every kind of perversion except make themselves look attractive. To overcome your repulsion they will supply you with local booze called Arak. This is brewed from dead cats, old boots and petroleum and is therefore not recommended officially, although it must be one of the most powerful explosive mixtures in the world. The only drawback to making a hobby of going to Baghdad is that you only go there once, so it doesn't become a habit like all good hobbies.

I think I have told you enough about 'Iraq to make your stay here one of the most interesting experiences of your life and even if you are certified when you get home, what does that matter? You have left 'Iraq to the 'Iraqian's, the Mohammedans and the Shiekhs. They can have it! You've been.

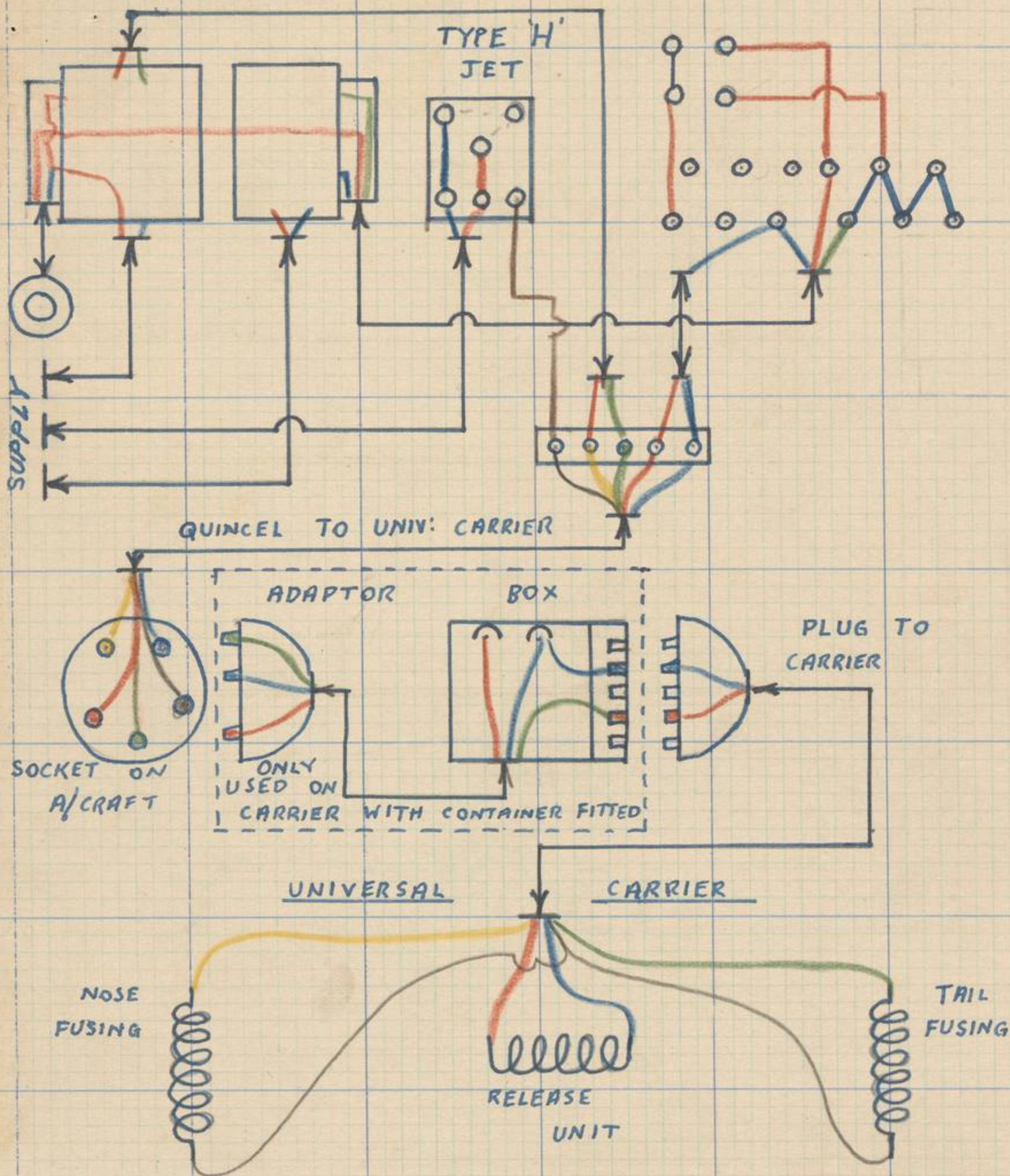
So Roll on that Bloody Boat!

WHACK - HO!!!





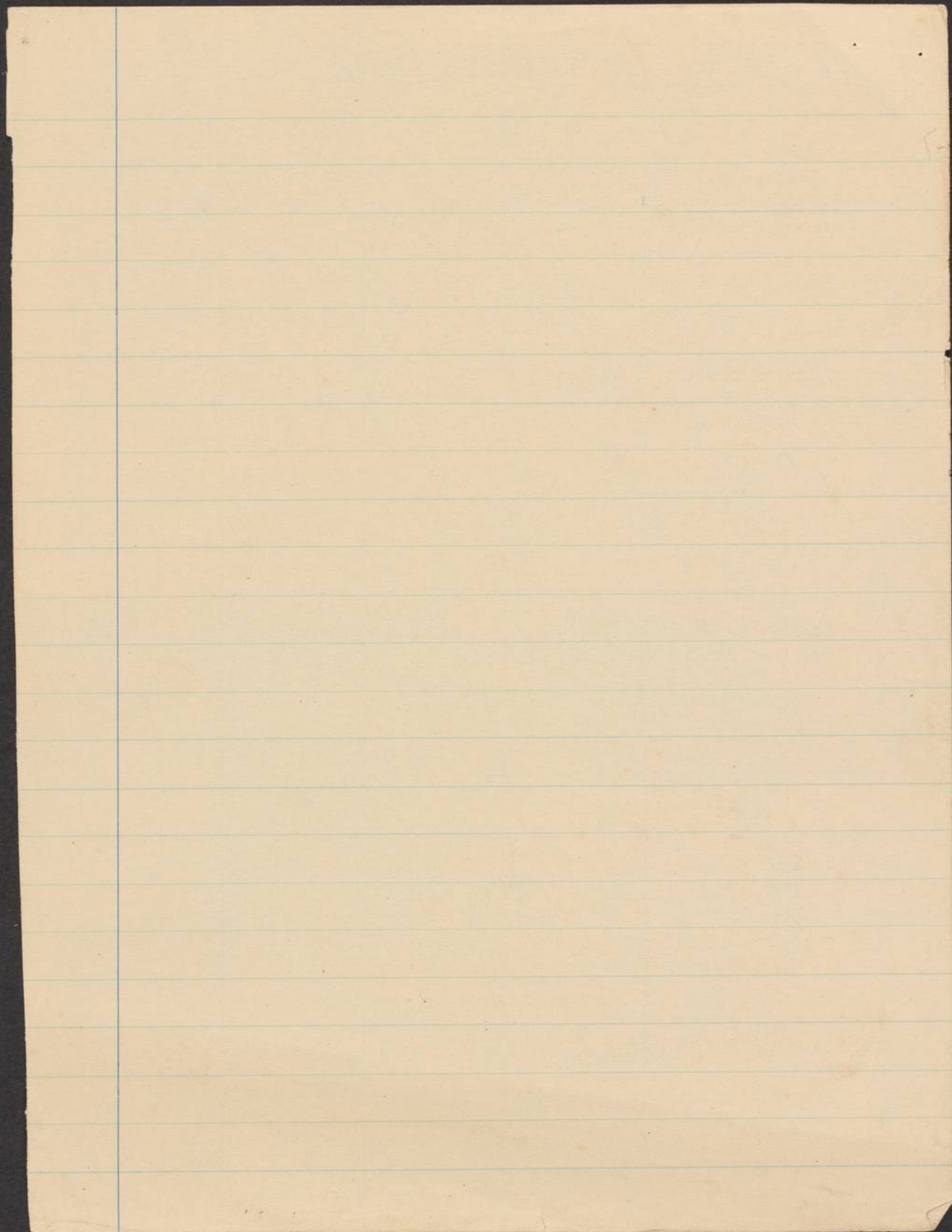




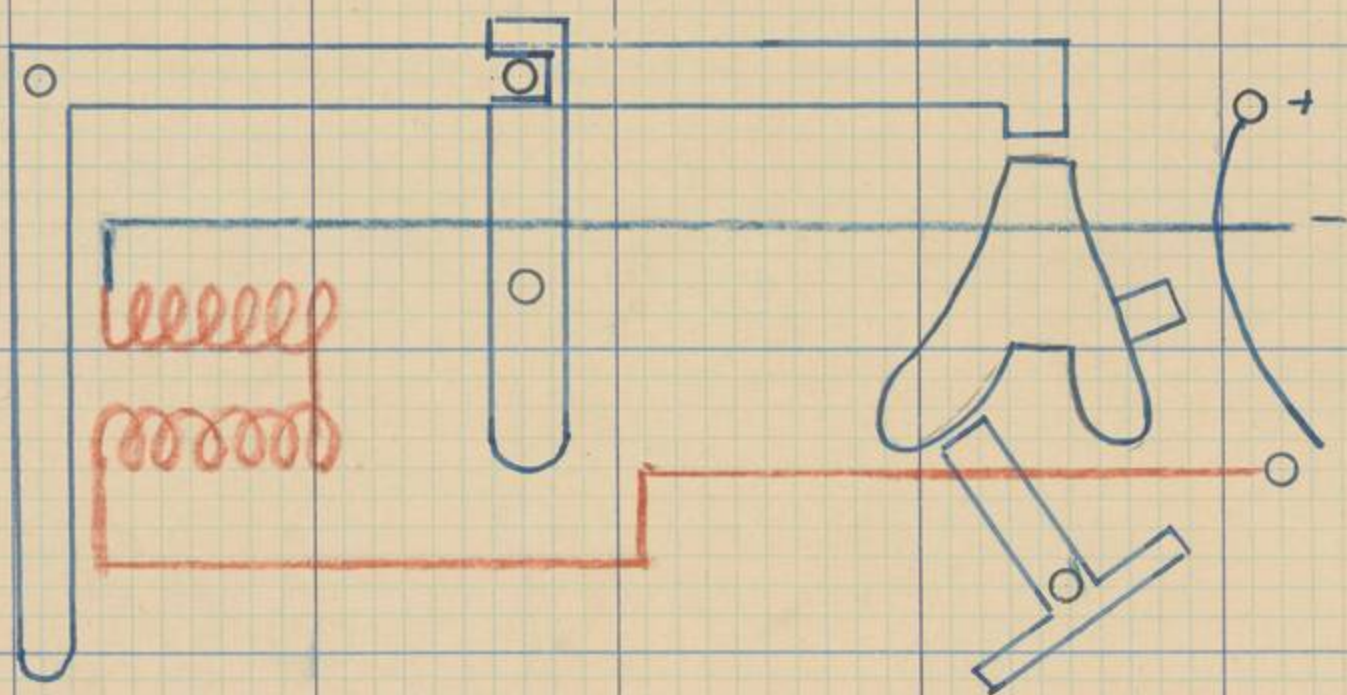
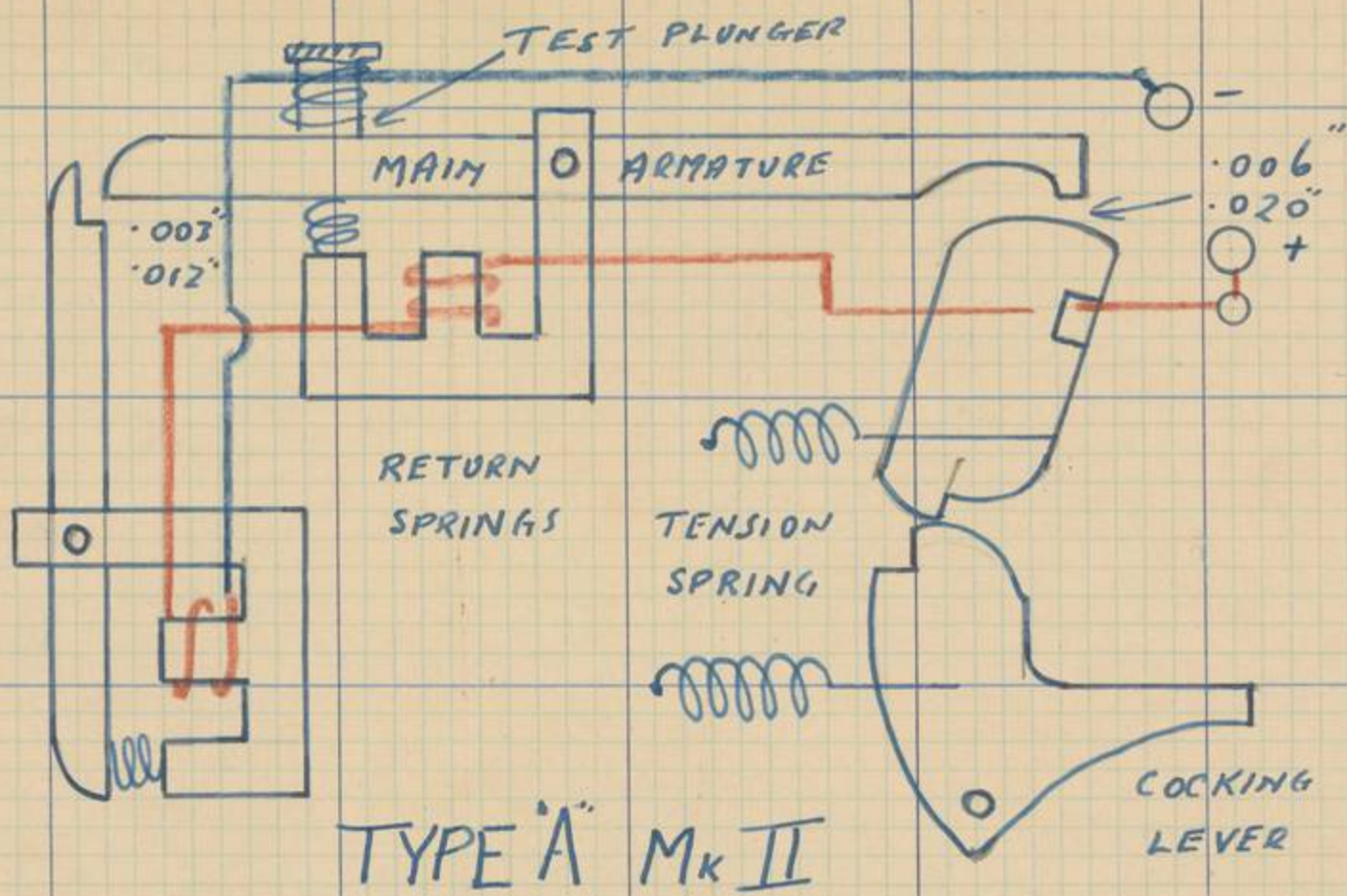
INCENDIARY BOMB CONTAINER

JETTISONING CIRCUIT

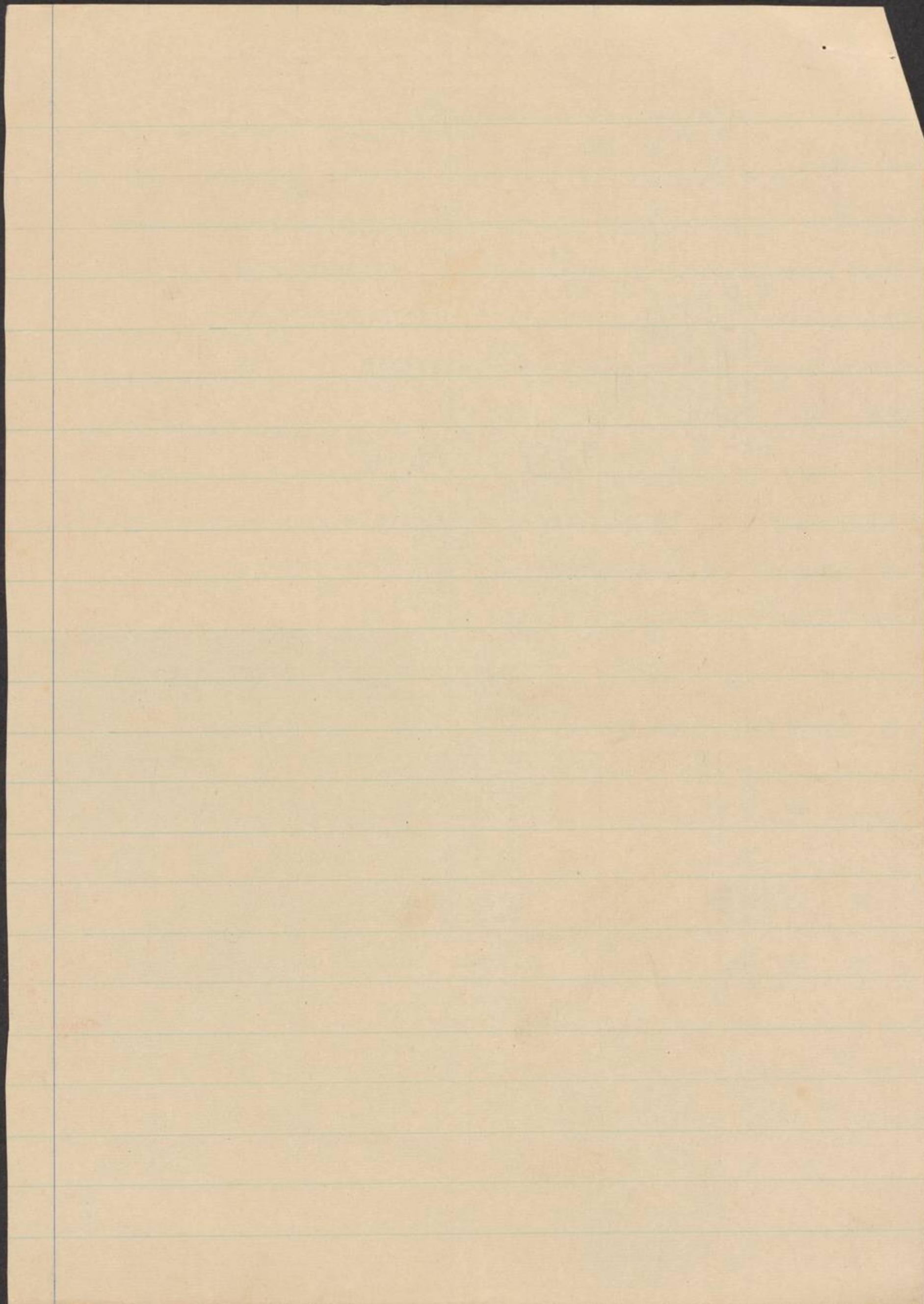






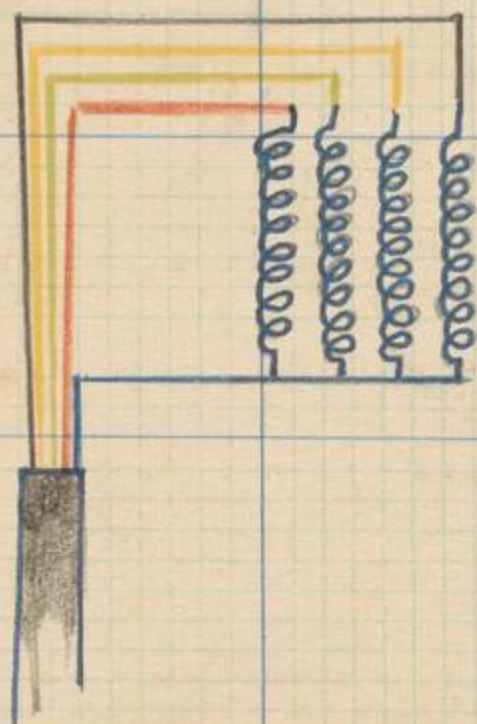
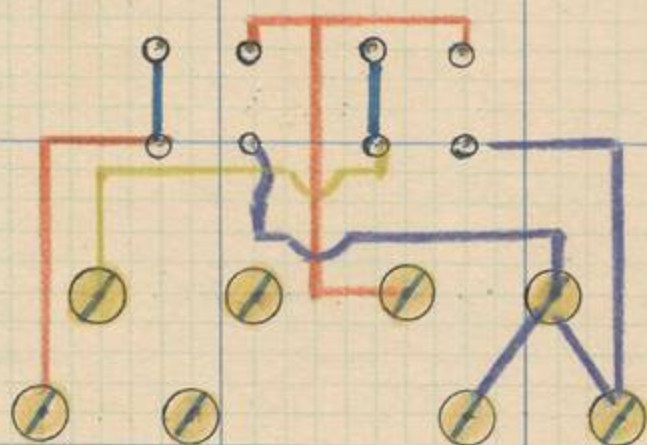
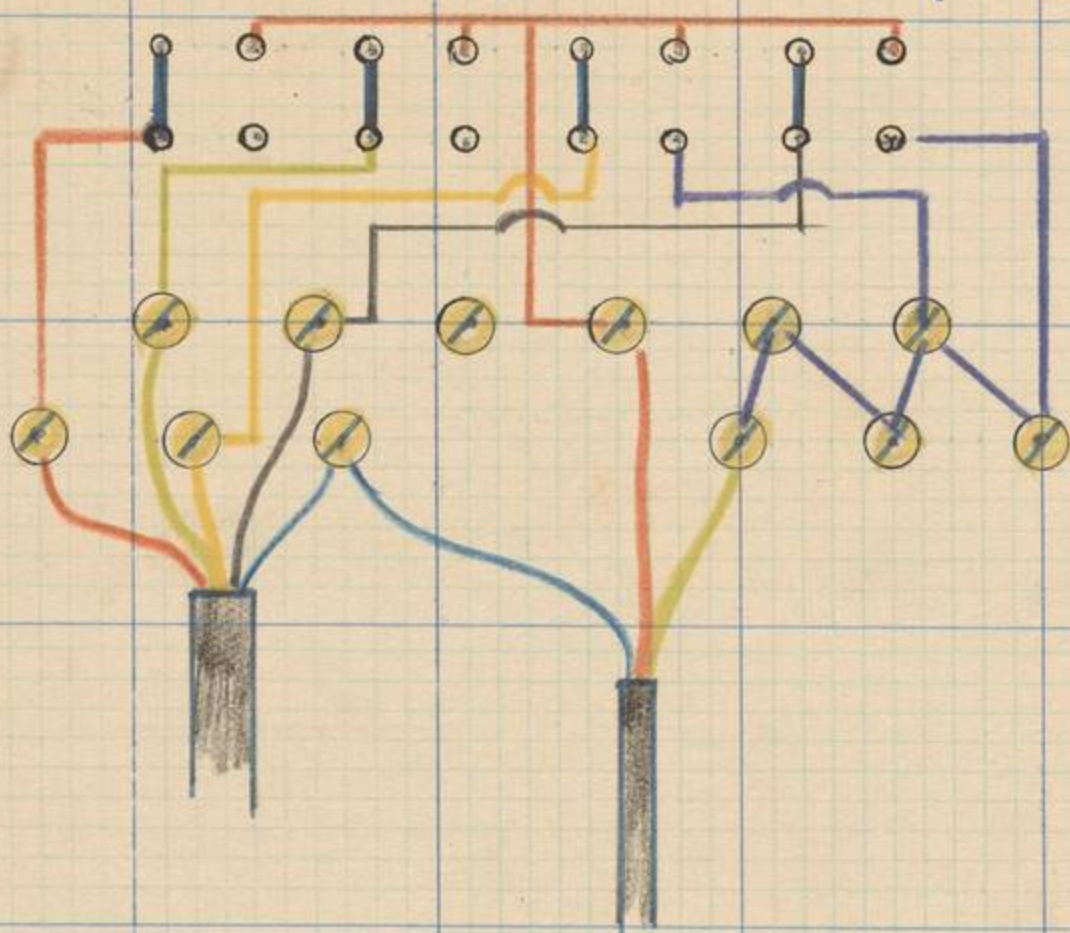




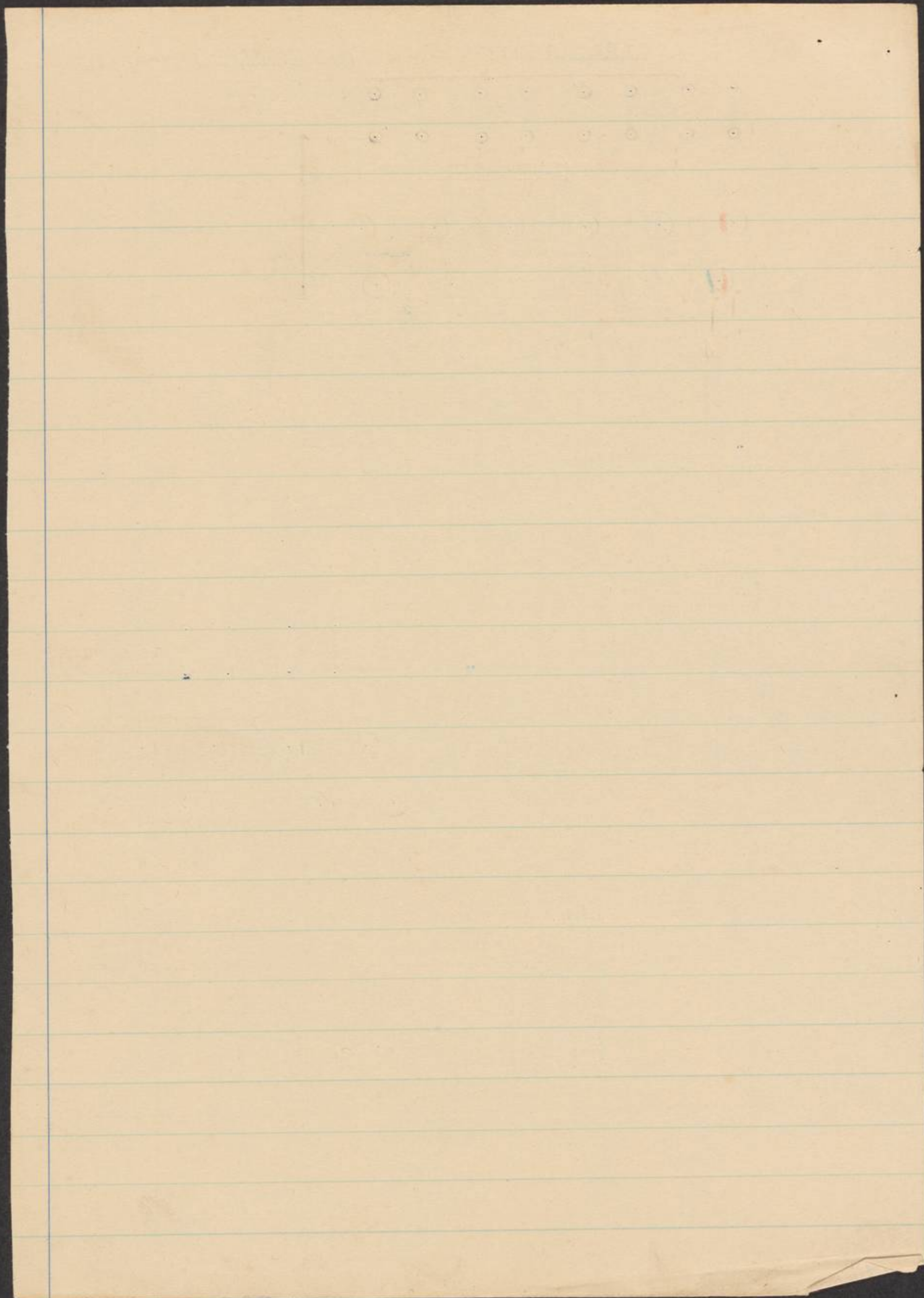




# 4-WAY SELECTOR SWITCH BOX (INTERNAL CONNECTIONS)

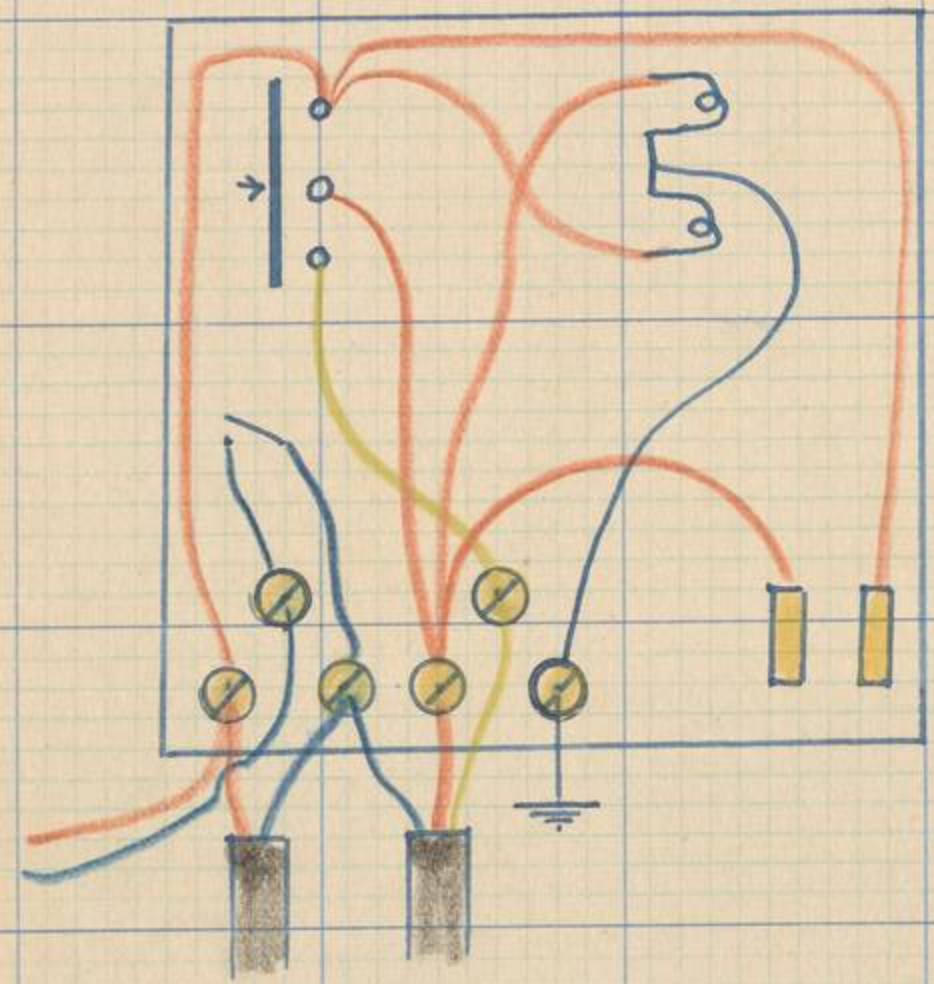




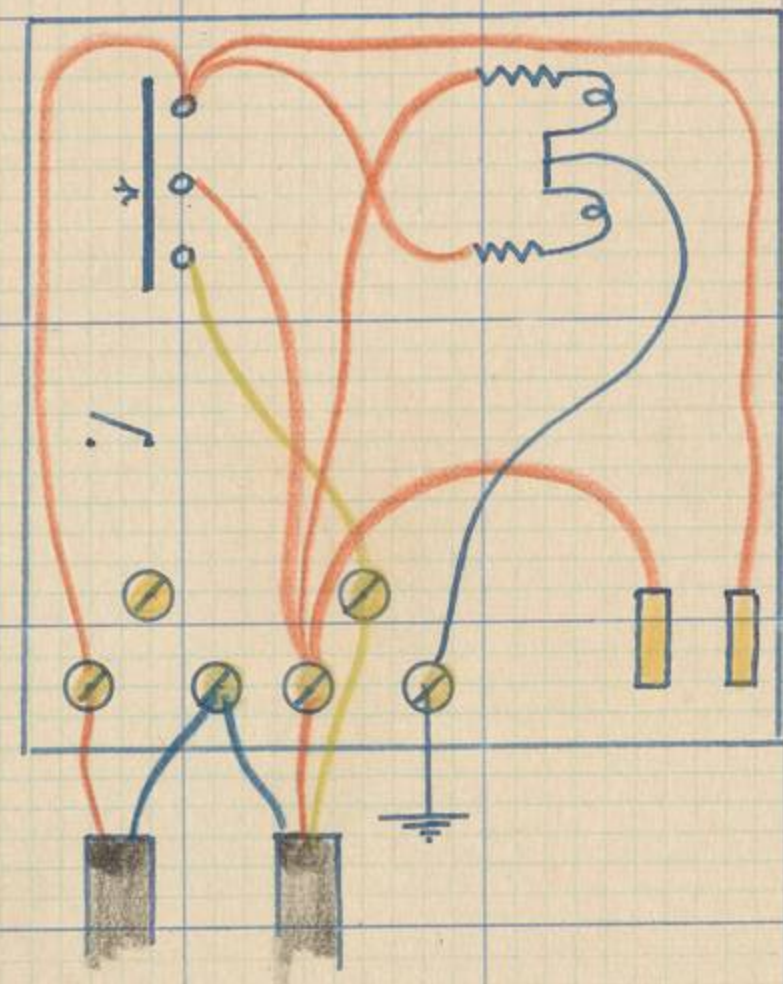




TYPE E 12V

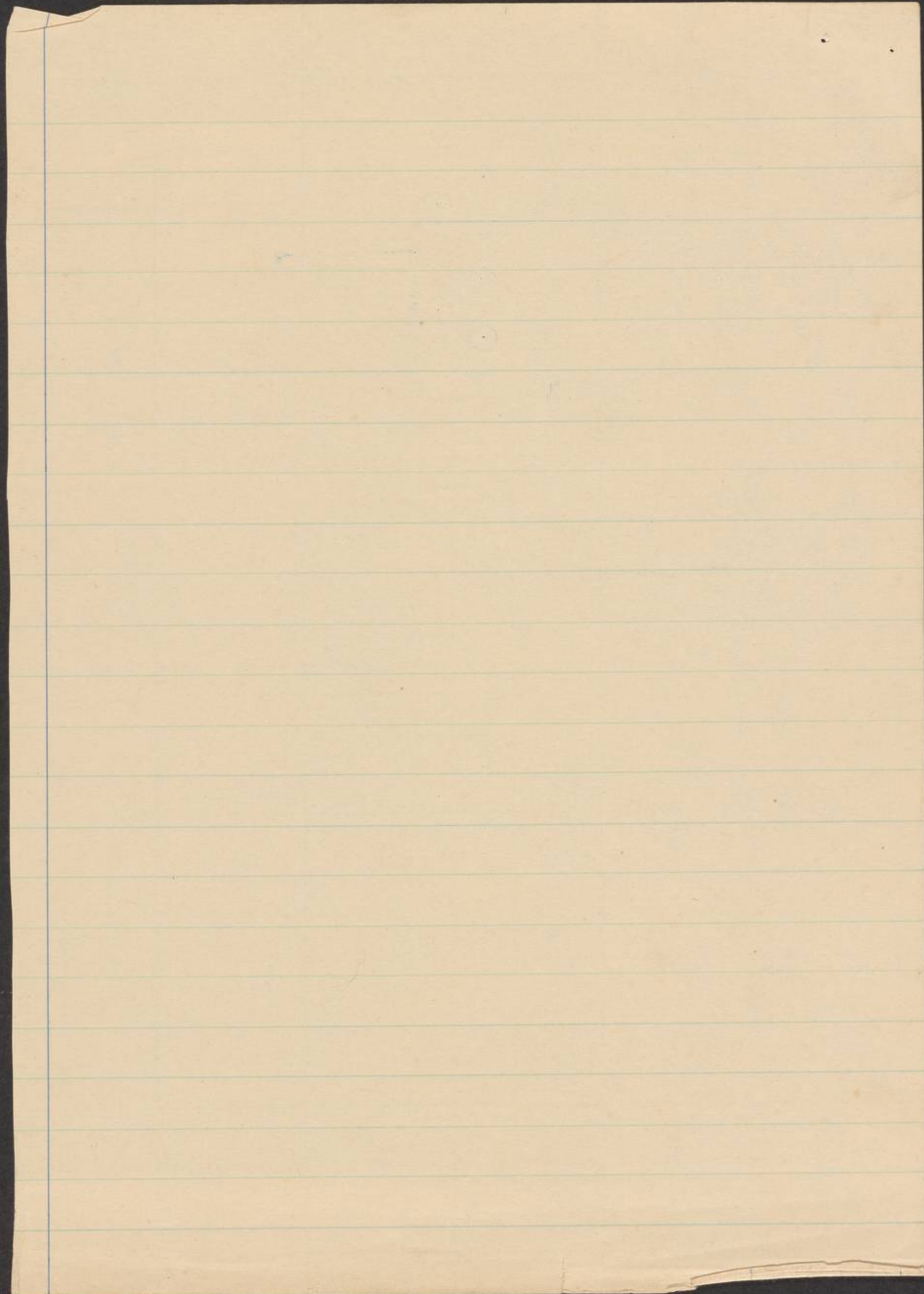


TYPE G 24V

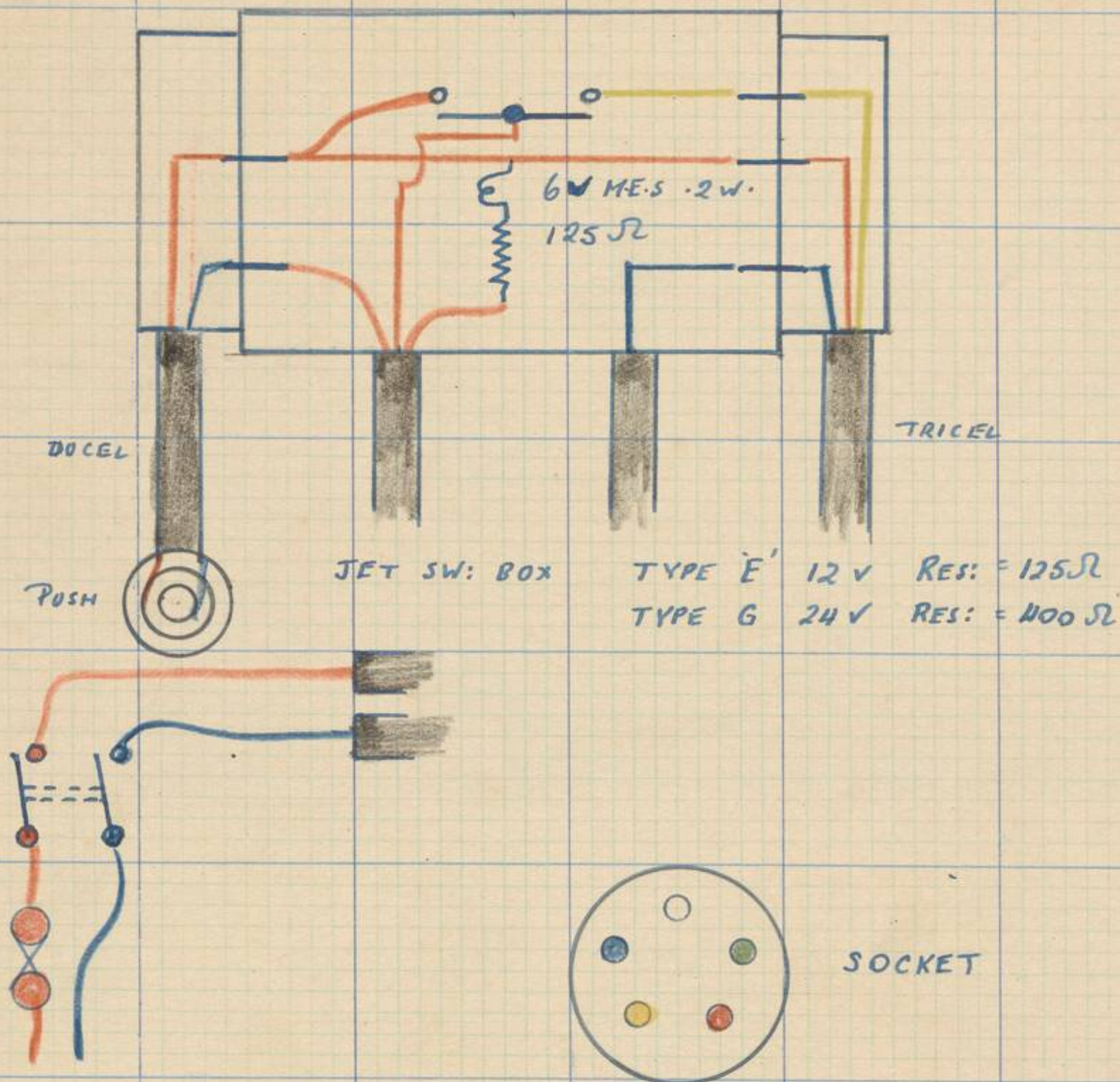


JET: SWITCHES

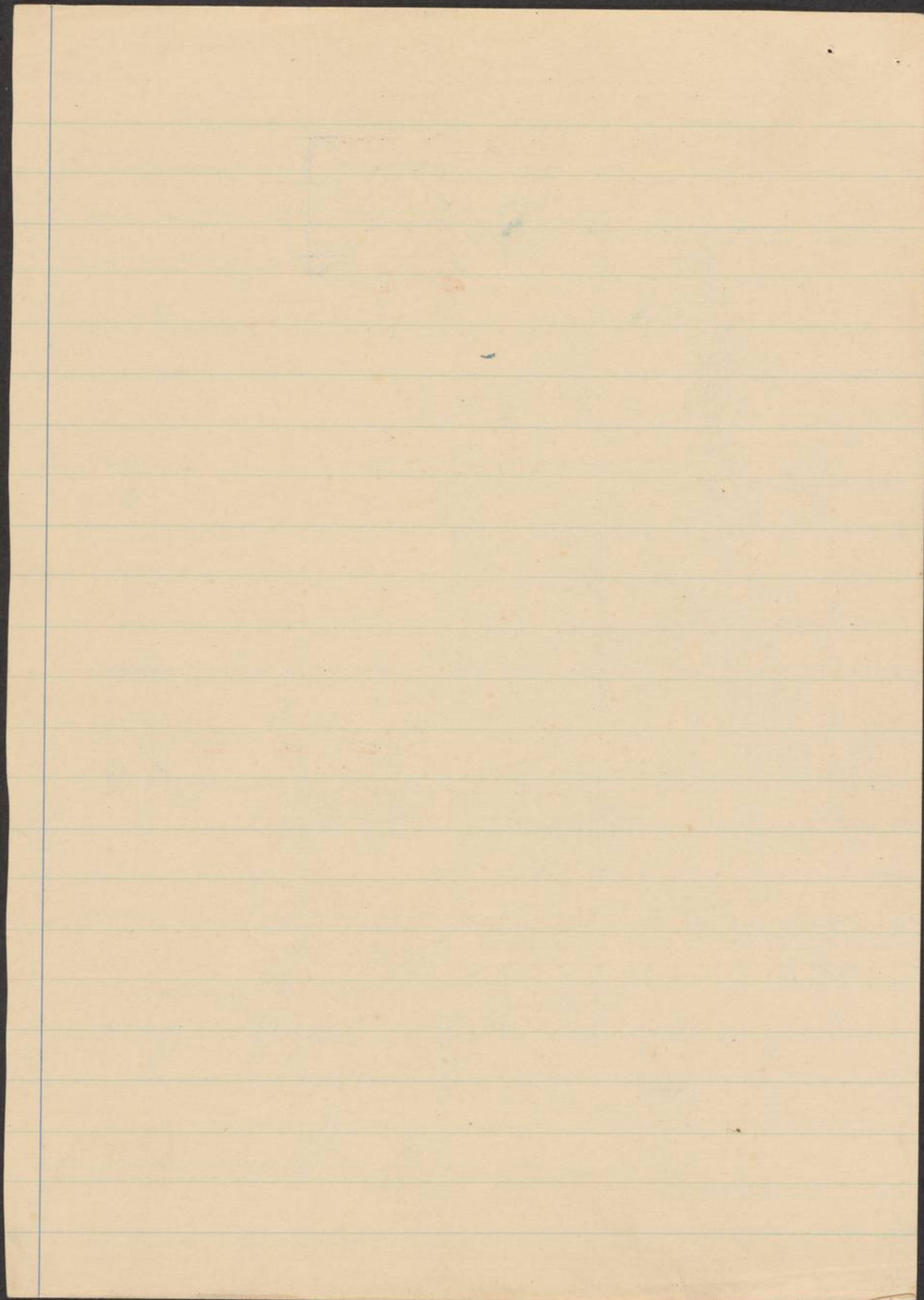




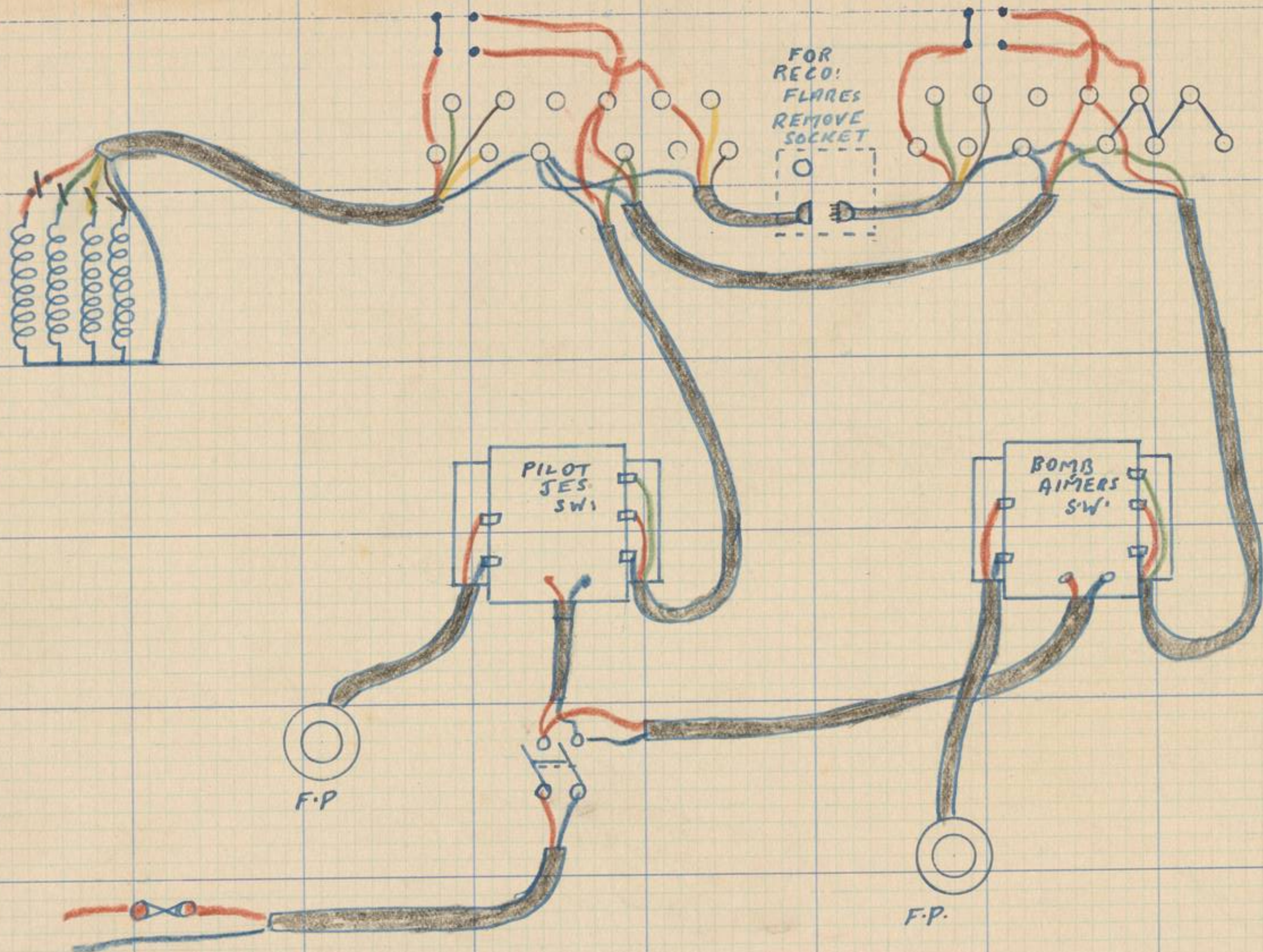




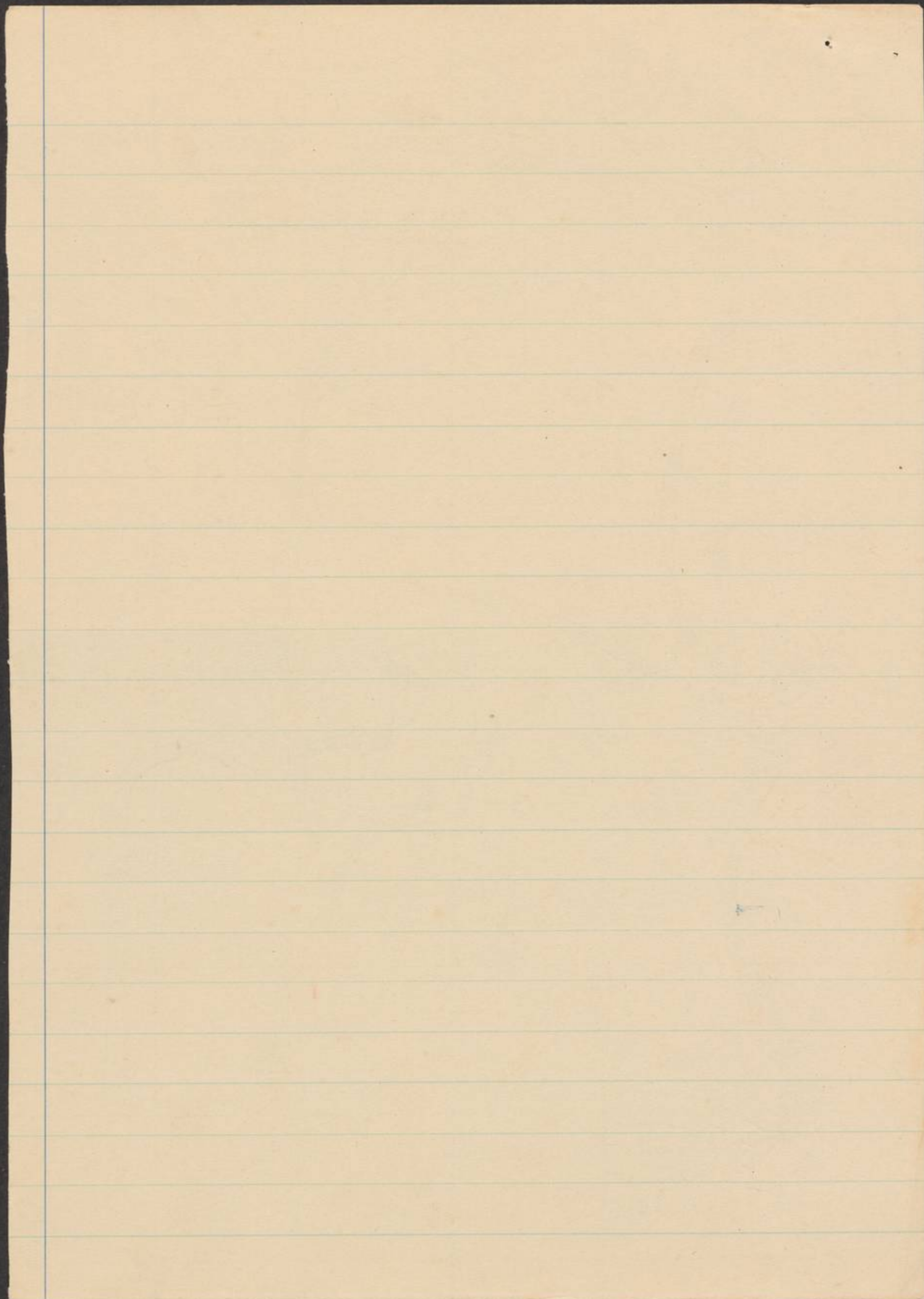




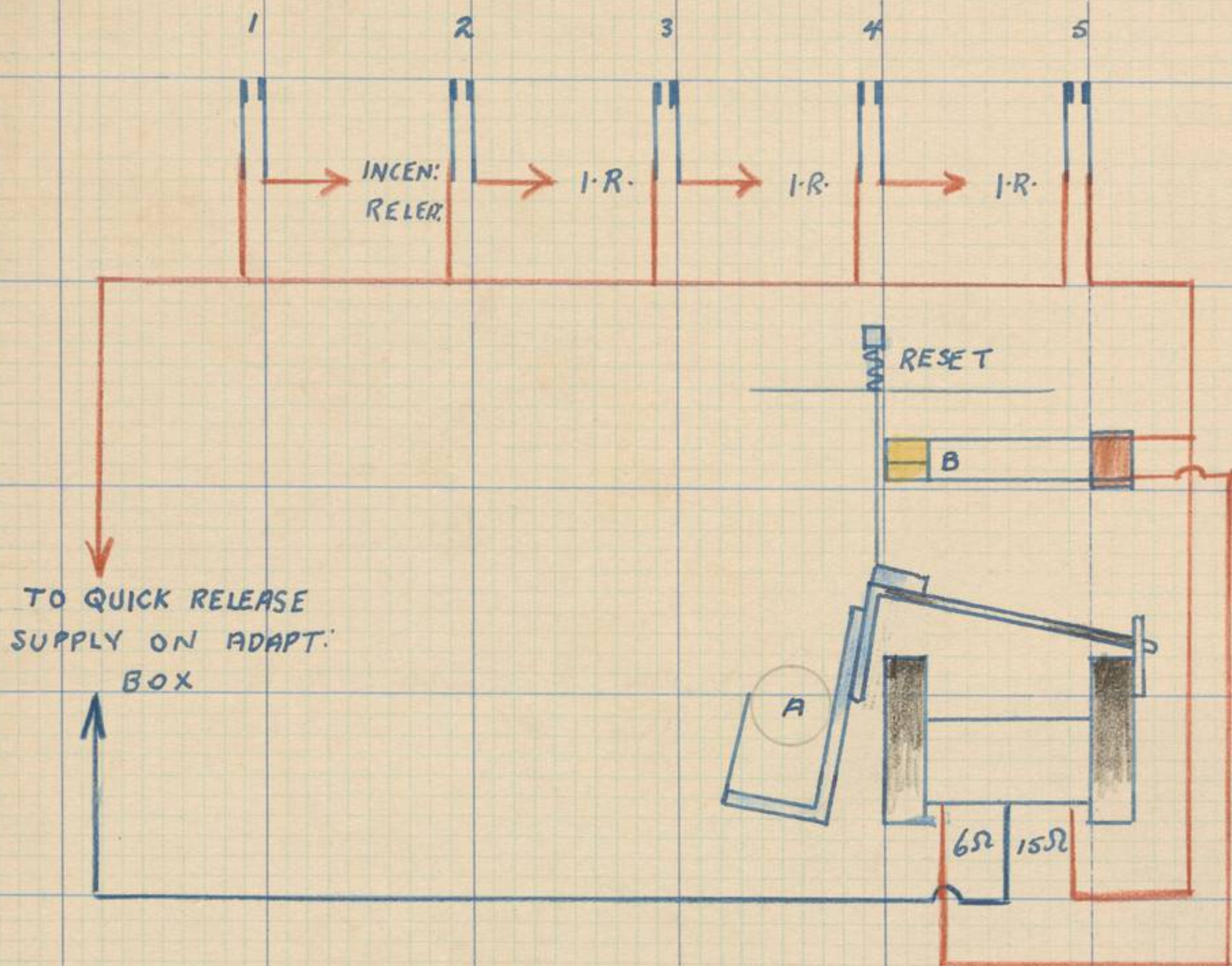






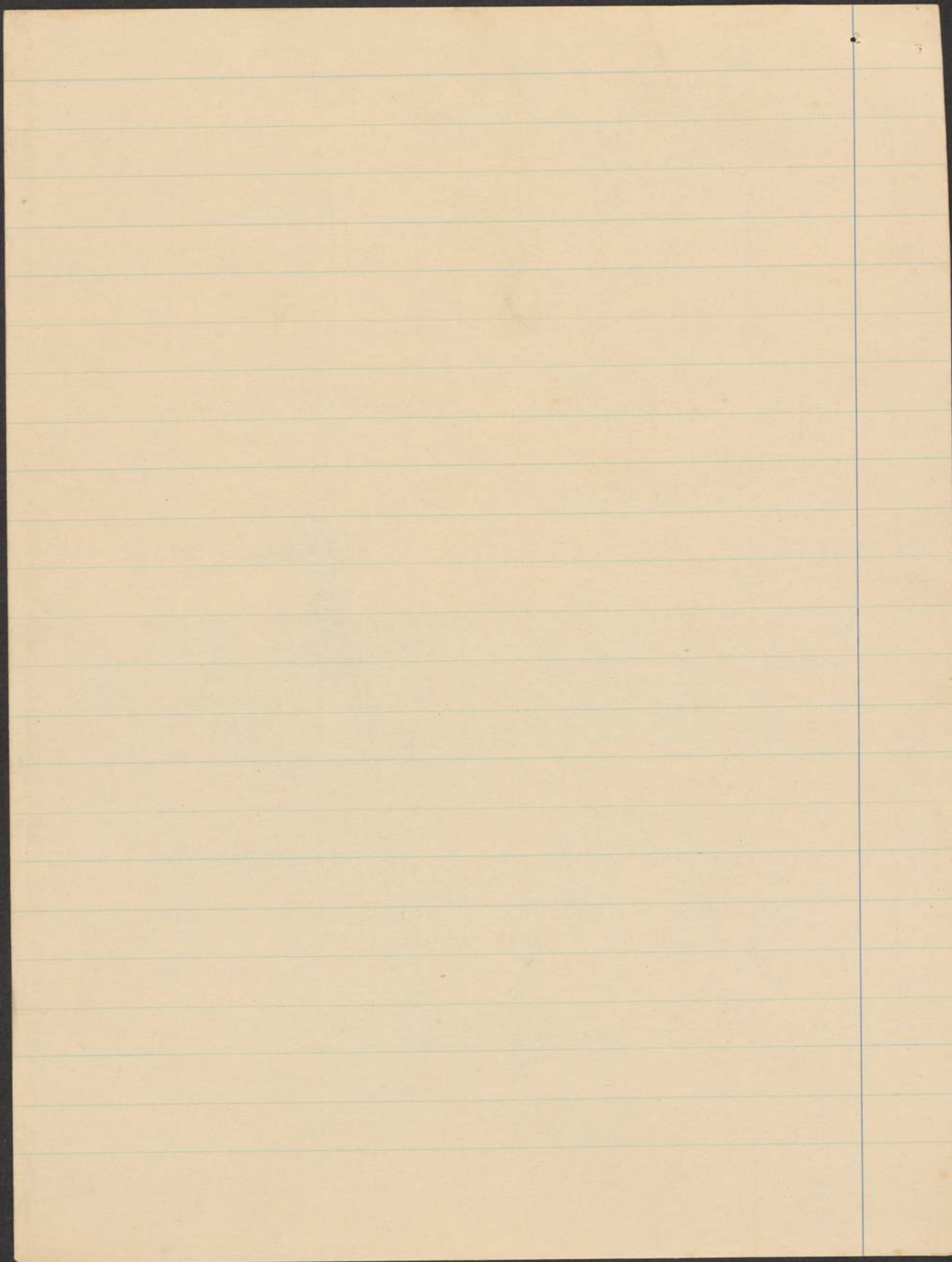




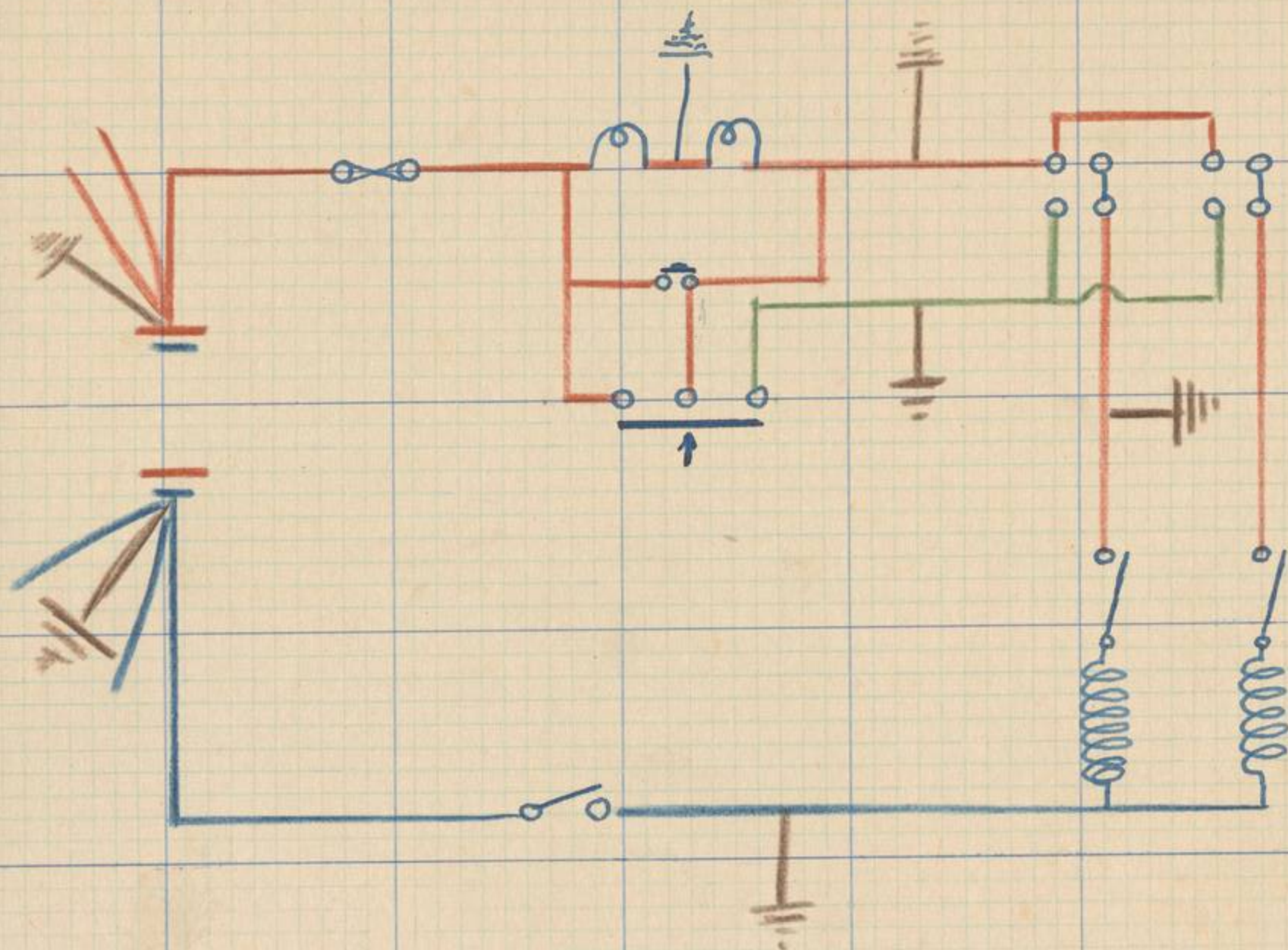


1,2,3,4 MAKE IN SUCCESSION 5 MADE ALL THE TIME  
 5 OPEN TIME  $\frac{1}{3}$  REV OF 'A'  
 6Ω & 15Ω IN PARA: DURING ATTRACT  
 6Ω OUT OF CIRCUIT WHEN ATTRACTED 'B'



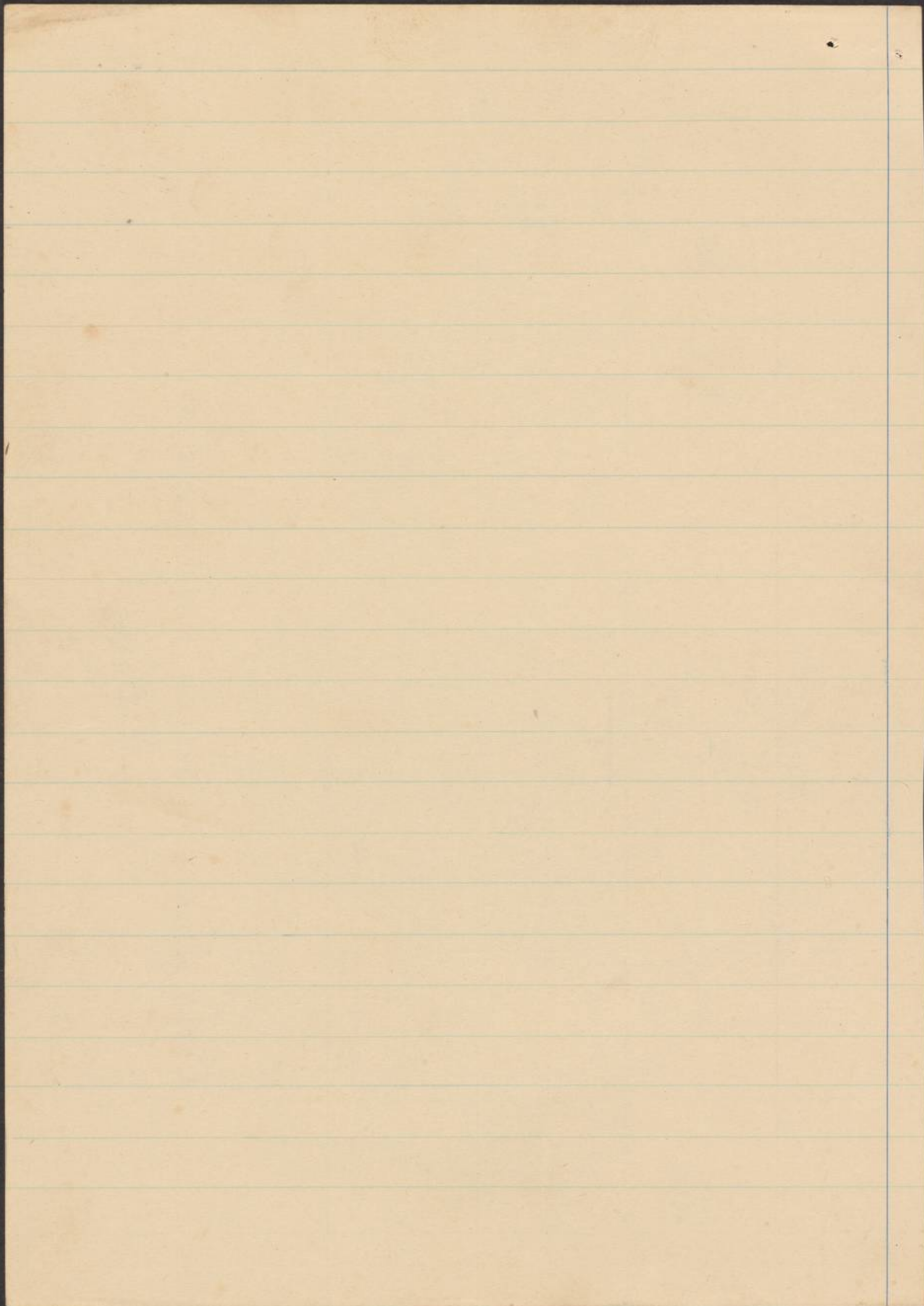






EARTH INDICATION SYSTEM ON TYPES C AND F  
JETTISON BOXES

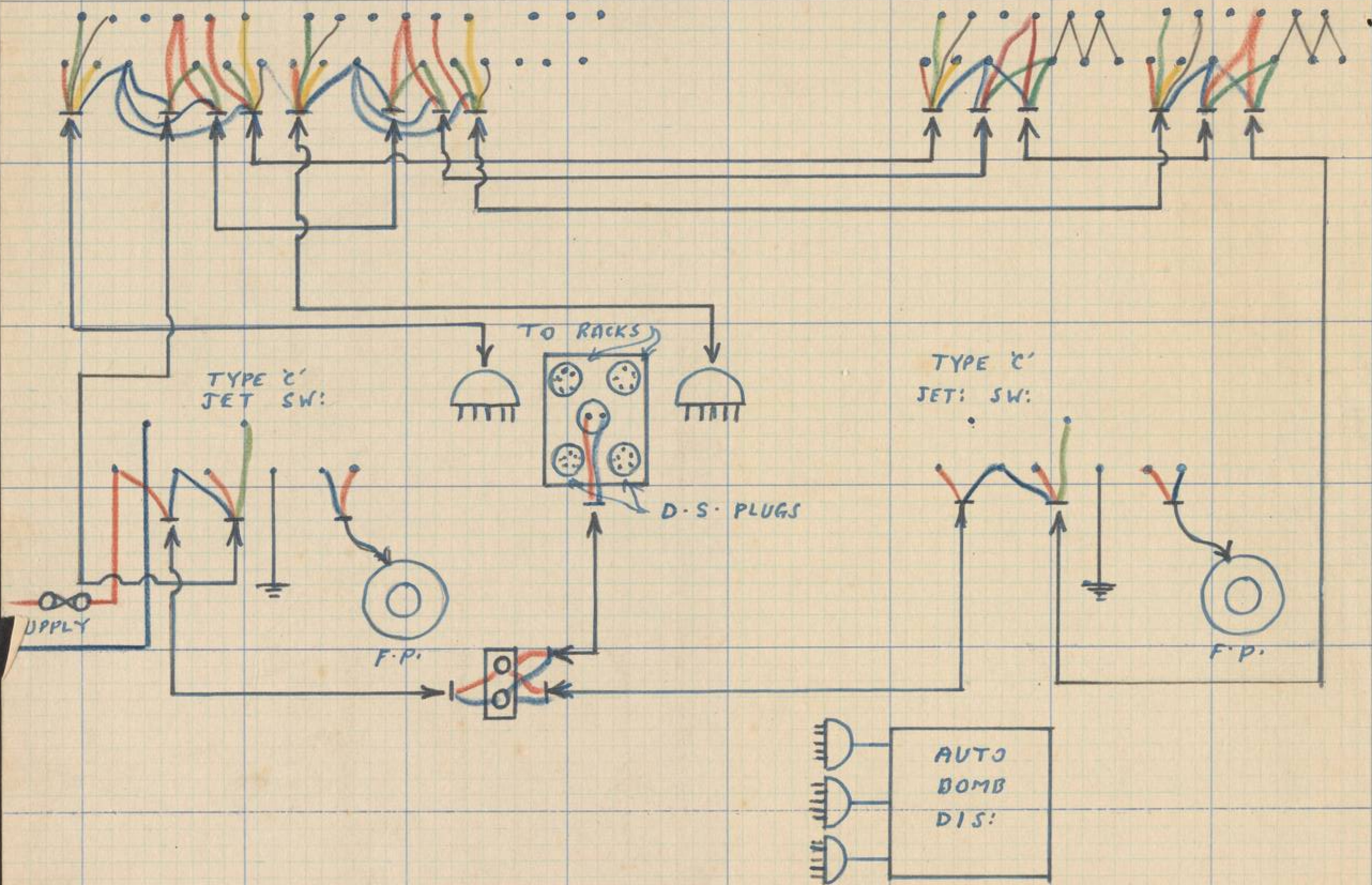




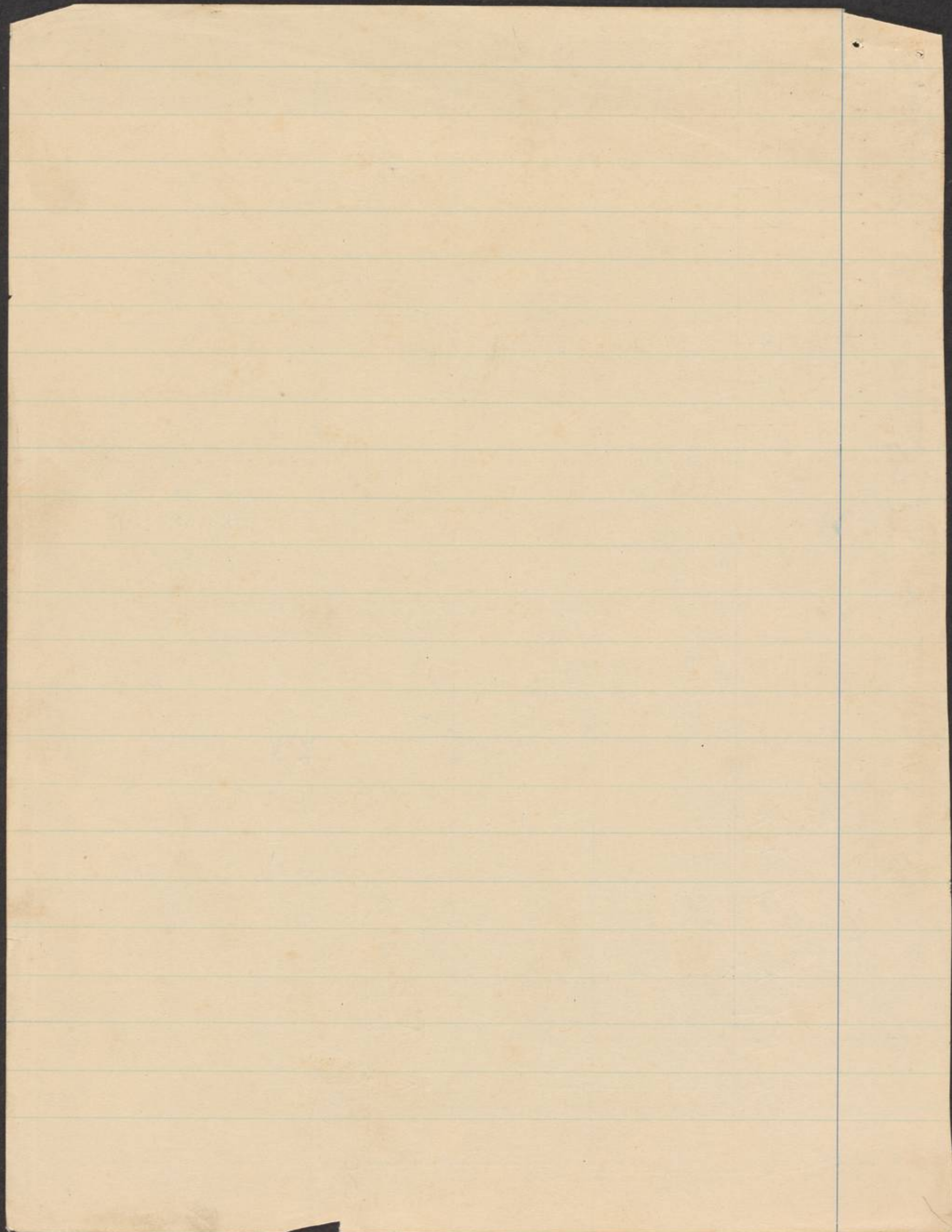


PILOT'S POSITION

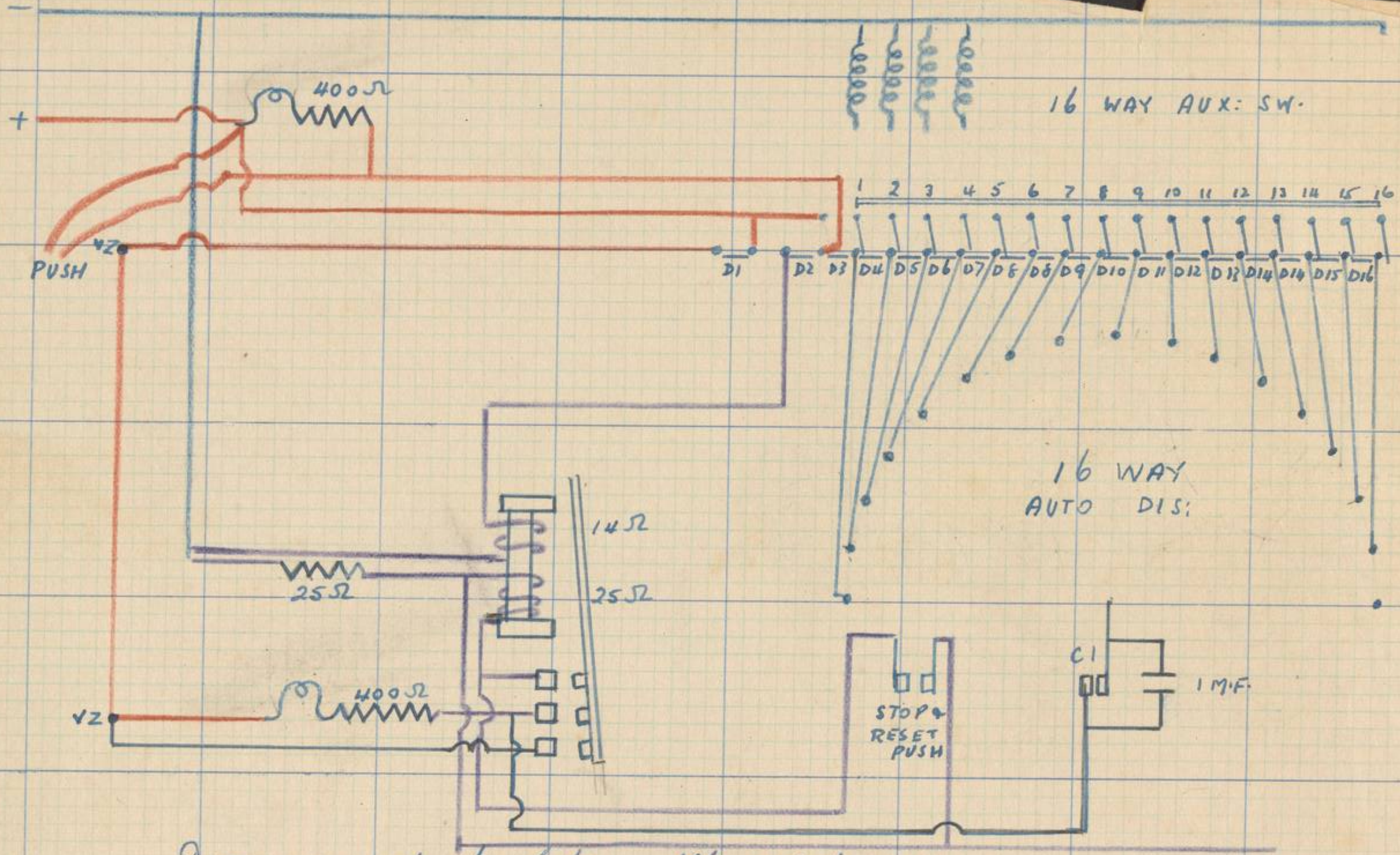
BOMB AIMERS POSITION





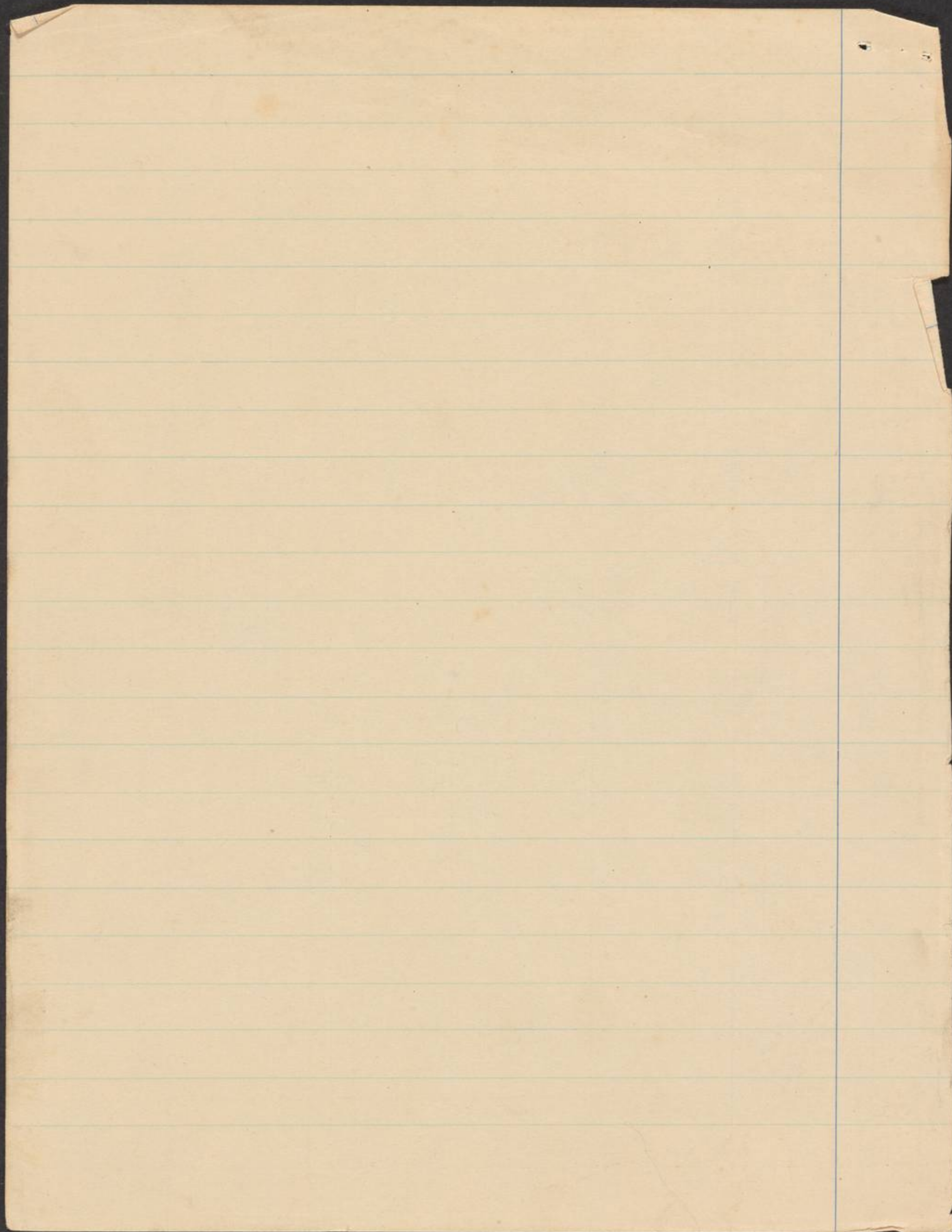






Drum sw: set, at: Safe = all contacts open  
 Single Salvo = D3 - D18, D1 - D2 open  
 Distributor = D1 - D2 closed D3 - D18 open  
 Containers = D3 open D1, D4 - D18 closed







I was with the "Raf" at Sharjah  
In December forty three  
When over came a "moggie"  
And dropped her load on me  
It caught me a tidy wallop  
And put me in the dock  
But for this dose of malaria  
The M.O. had a shock  
He dosed me up with Quinine,  
And pills called M and B  
And blasted that dose of malaria  
That the "moggie" dropped on me

Now at last I'm fit and well.  
Of moggies I will beware  
For the next time one comes to drop her load  
She'll find that I'm not there.

W. J. Sainty, LAC  
22/12/43

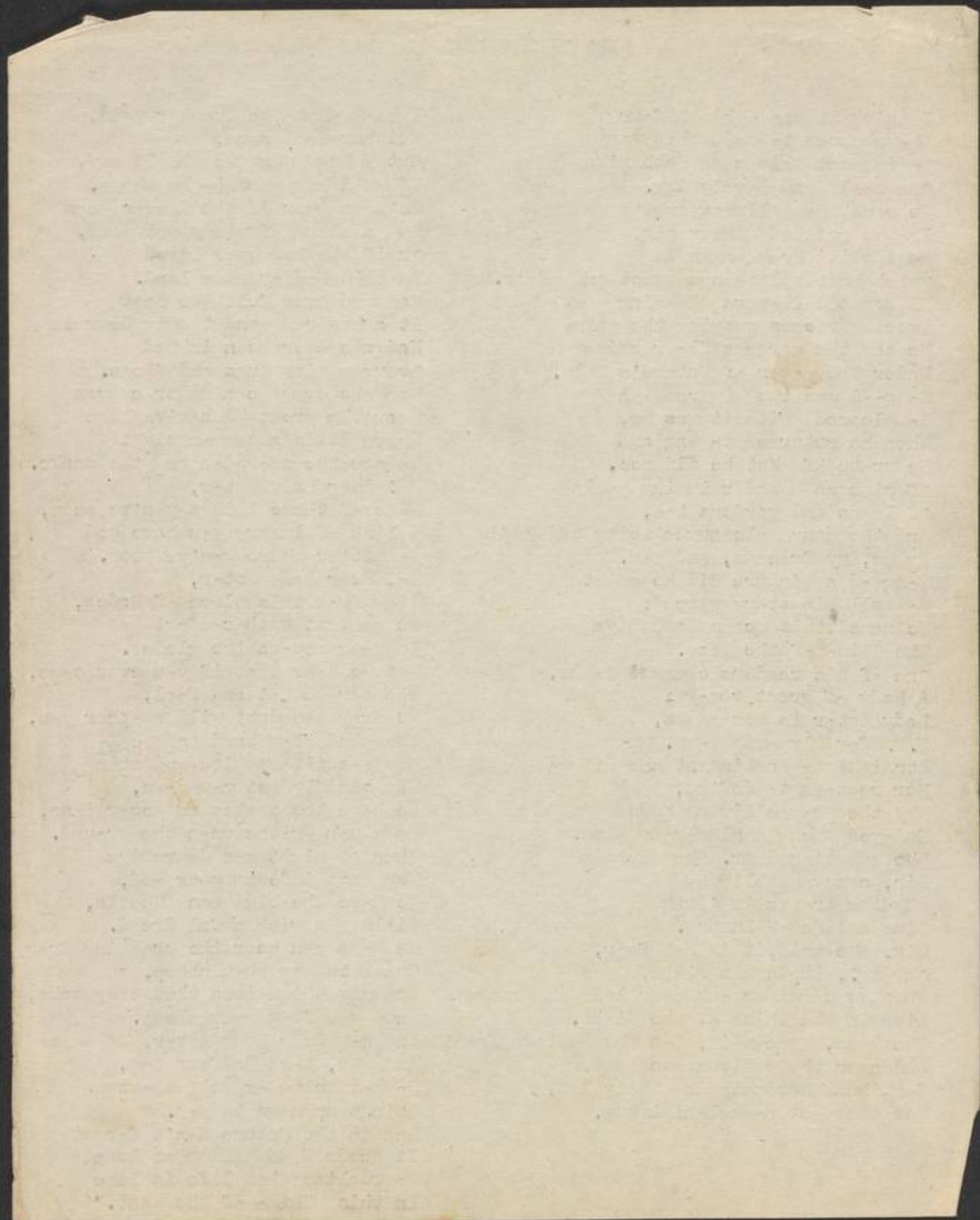


# LIDO OF THE EAST

I think it was Lord Balfour  
 Who chanced to come this way  
 To inspect this camp Habbaniya  
 One cool and lovely day.  
 He came when all was pretty  
 In the scented winter air,  
 He saw it from an angle  
 which made all things sweet and fair.  
 He saw the flowers blooming  
 Sweet breezes swaying the palm  
 He saw the gardens flourishing  
 Under the power of Nature's balm.  
 So good was the impression  
 So pleased with it was he,  
 When he returned to England  
 He wrote of what he did see.  
 of cinemas and swimming pools  
 of lawns and gardens too,  
 And the many pleasures being enjoyed  
 By me, my friends, and you.  
 So good a picture did he paint  
 So well his story pieced,  
 He named this camp Habbaniya  
 The "Lido of the East."  
 One of his readers chanced to be,  
 A Lady of great renown,  
 Lady Astor is her name,  
 M.P. for Plymouth Town.  
 Straight to Parliament she did go  
 Her reasons to define,  
 Why the people living here  
 Enjoyed such a glamorous time.  
 She questioned Mr. Chamberlain  
 Sir, can you tell me  
 Why the troops in 'Iraq  
 Live a life of luxury.  
 Sir, she said, it is not fair,  
 Oh Sir!, it is not right,  
 When we consider our poor lads in France  
 Live in the thick of the fight.  
 The lads, she said, on the western front  
 Endanger their lives each day,  
 Continual hardship is their lot,  
 Yet they get no colonial pay.

I know what the Premier said,  
 Neither do I care,  
 But I know what we should say,  
 If we'd happened to be there.  
 We'd ask her if she'd ever been  
 In a storm of windswept sand,  
 Or if she had ever lived  
 In this Godforsaken land.  
 Had she ever felt the heat  
 At a hundred and twenty degrees  
 Had she ever been in bed  
 Overrun with bugs and fleas.  
 Had she ever been under canvas  
 Near the great Habbaniya Lake  
 Where it is a common sight  
 to see the scorpion and the snake.  
 No! dear Lady Astor,  
 None of these things you've seen,  
 A life of luxury you have had  
 No matter where you've been.  
 So, dear Lady Astor,  
 Stay from this place of Hades,  
 Be content with comfort  
 In your Devonshire glades.  
 But we hope that if you ever come,  
 The air be hot and foul,  
 We pray the dust will smother you,  
 The wind blow hard and howl  
 May mosquitoes bite and sting,  
 May sandfly get you down,  
 We hope the snakes and scorpions,  
 Make you writhe upon the ground.  
 When at night you do retire  
 May bugs infest your bed,  
 We hope the big back beetle,  
 Fills you with awful dread.  
 We hope you hear the croaking frog  
 Crickets may thou cheep,  
 And may the noises that they make,  
 Keep you from your sleep.  
 And now dear Lady Astor,  
 And you, Lord Balfour too,  
 Do not write or tell about  
 Things unknown to you.  
 And in the future don't forget  
 It needs THREE YEARS at least  
 To realize what life is like  
 In this "Lido of the East."







## MEN ENGLAND FORGET!

Far away across the ocean, lies a land so fair and free,  
Rugged hills and winding valleys, with their homes so small and neat;  
Once a land so free and easy, home for England's fighting sons,  
Now the home of Poles and Frenchmen, Yankees and Canadians.

In its towns and country homes, here we used to love and walk,  
You can hear their boast and swagger, using brave and bragging talk;  
What they'll do when they get started, how they'll finish off the war,  
What they're going to do do Jerry, but we've heard it all before.

In the meantime in the Desert, far from sweethearts and wives,  
Britian's tough and hardened heroes, fight like madmen for their lives.  
Tied and thirsty, scorched and blistered, blinded by driving sand,  
Some forgotten by their people in this God forsaken land.

See them waiting every evening for their highly treasured mail,  
Knowing well what they'll find in it, once again, the same old tale;  
Oh!, how often have I watched and seen that agonizing face,  
Something in that letter tells --- someone else is in his place.

Can we curse those rank outsiders, can we give them all the blame,  
Or should those impatient women hang their heads in shame.  
I'm not blaming everybody -- just those few unfaithful ones,  
In a way they're worse than Jerry, do more harm than all the guns.

Remember then, you wives and loved ones, when you feel you cannot wait,  
What a man has got to live for, after he has lost his mate;  
After all, you have England, all the world's most promised land,  
But without you and our country all WE have is burning sand.

-Masitah-June-1944



For every corner the corner, there found no light and love,  
 Jagged hills and winding valleys, with their waves no well and no;  
 Once a hand no firm and easy, how the spirit's living soul,  
 For the love of life and love was, found no and no love.

In the town and a quiet corner, hope was no love and love,  
 For every heart beat and answer, with love and love and love;  
 But the love was no love, how the love was no love;  
 But the love was no love, how the love was no love.

In the mountains in the forest, for the love was no love,  
 For every heart beat and answer, with love and love and love;  
 But the love was no love, how the love was no love;  
 But the love was no love, how the love was no love.

For every heart beat and answer, with love and love and love;  
 But the love was no love, how the love was no love;  
 But the love was no love, how the love was no love;  
 But the love was no love, how the love was no love.

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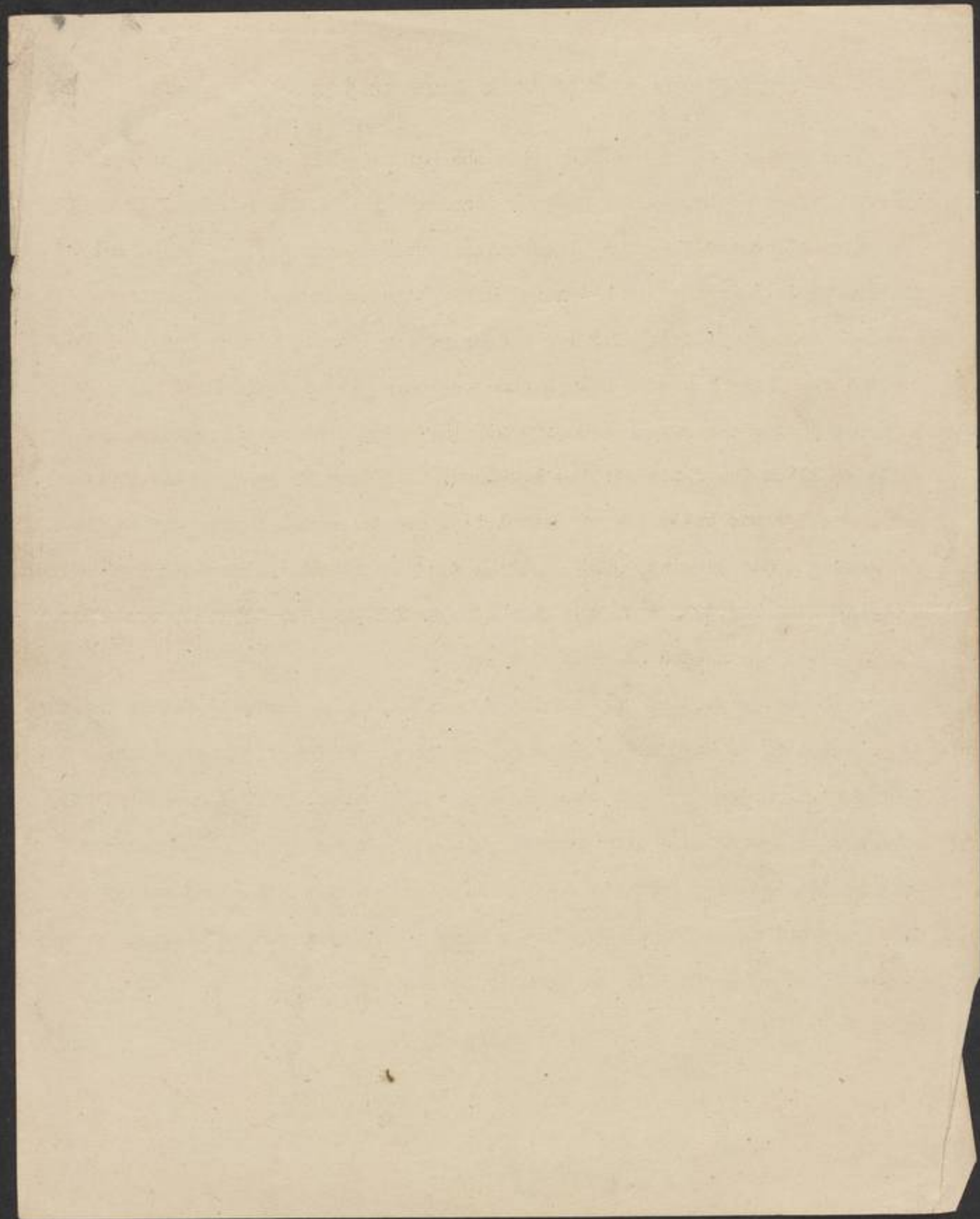
EXTRACT FROM "THE LISTENER" DATED 18-5-44

Ivor Newton has recently visited the Persian Gulf area with Miriam Licette, Nancy Evans, Walter Widdop, Dennis Noble and Alfred Cave. He said:

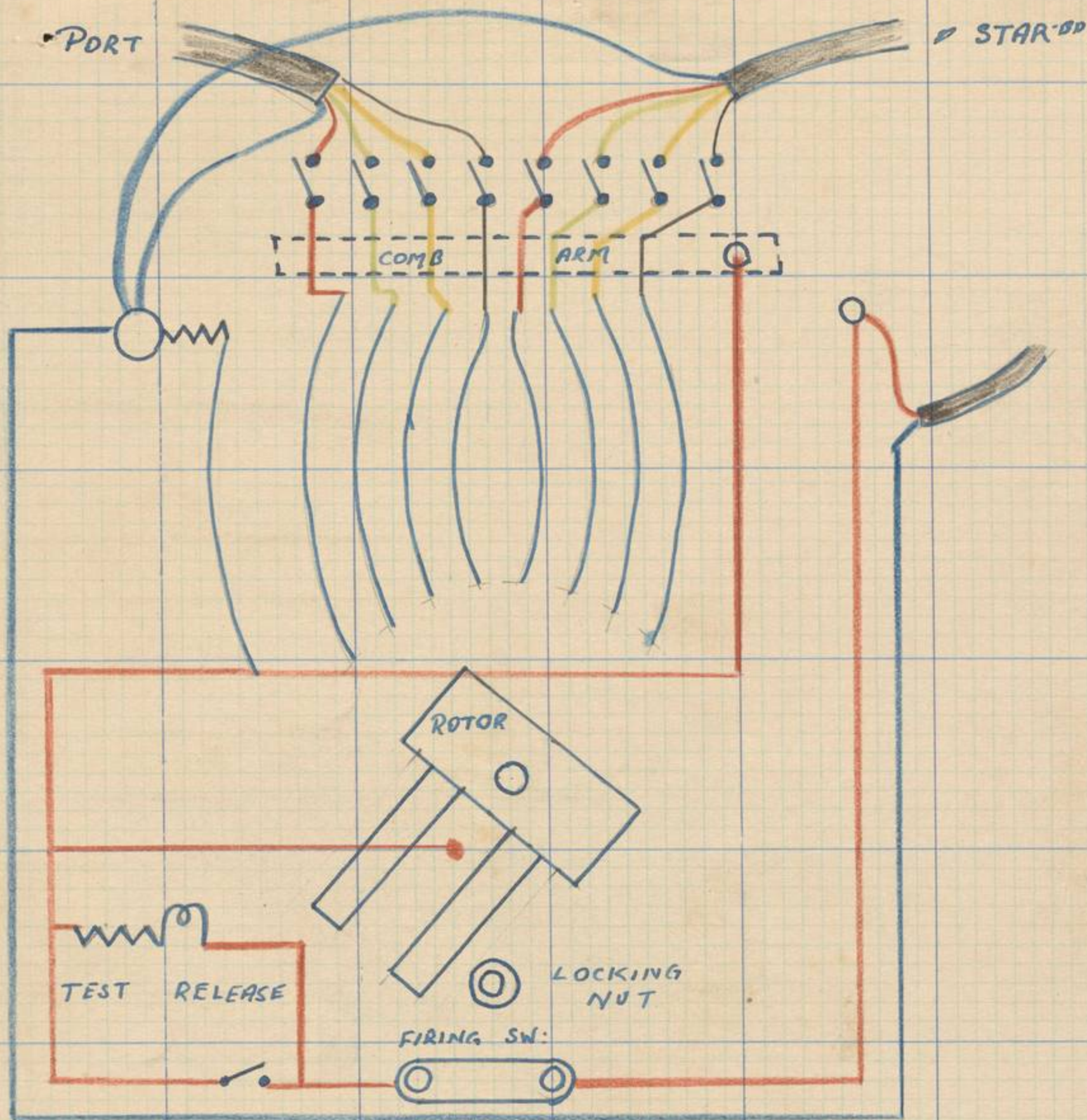
"I shall never forget a place called Sharjah--there are jokes about it all the whole length of the Persian Gulf. It's seven hundred miles from anywhere and summer lasts for ten months of the year. It's so hot that the men out there say there is only a sheet of paper between them and hell. I remember during one of our concerts at Sharjah it took me all my time and skill to flick the flies off the keyboard. We played in an open air Theatre and our stage was built out of petrol tins and concrete. Every seat in the sweltering Auditorium was just a petrol tin. Every man in the audience carried a bundle with him, which turned out to be an old coat or blanket: those tin stalls certainly needed some upholstery!!

"When we arrived at the Island of Ussirah, where Captain Kidd's treasure is supposed to be buried, my piano was sadly out of tune. I was lamenting this to a young American officer standing by. 'Gee!' he said 'if I could get hold of a socket wrench from the aircraft guys I might tune your piano for you.' This he did and made such a good job of it that I asked him 'But surely you must have had something to do with pianos?'. 'I guess so' he replied 'perhaps you've heard of my family. My name is Steinway.'"





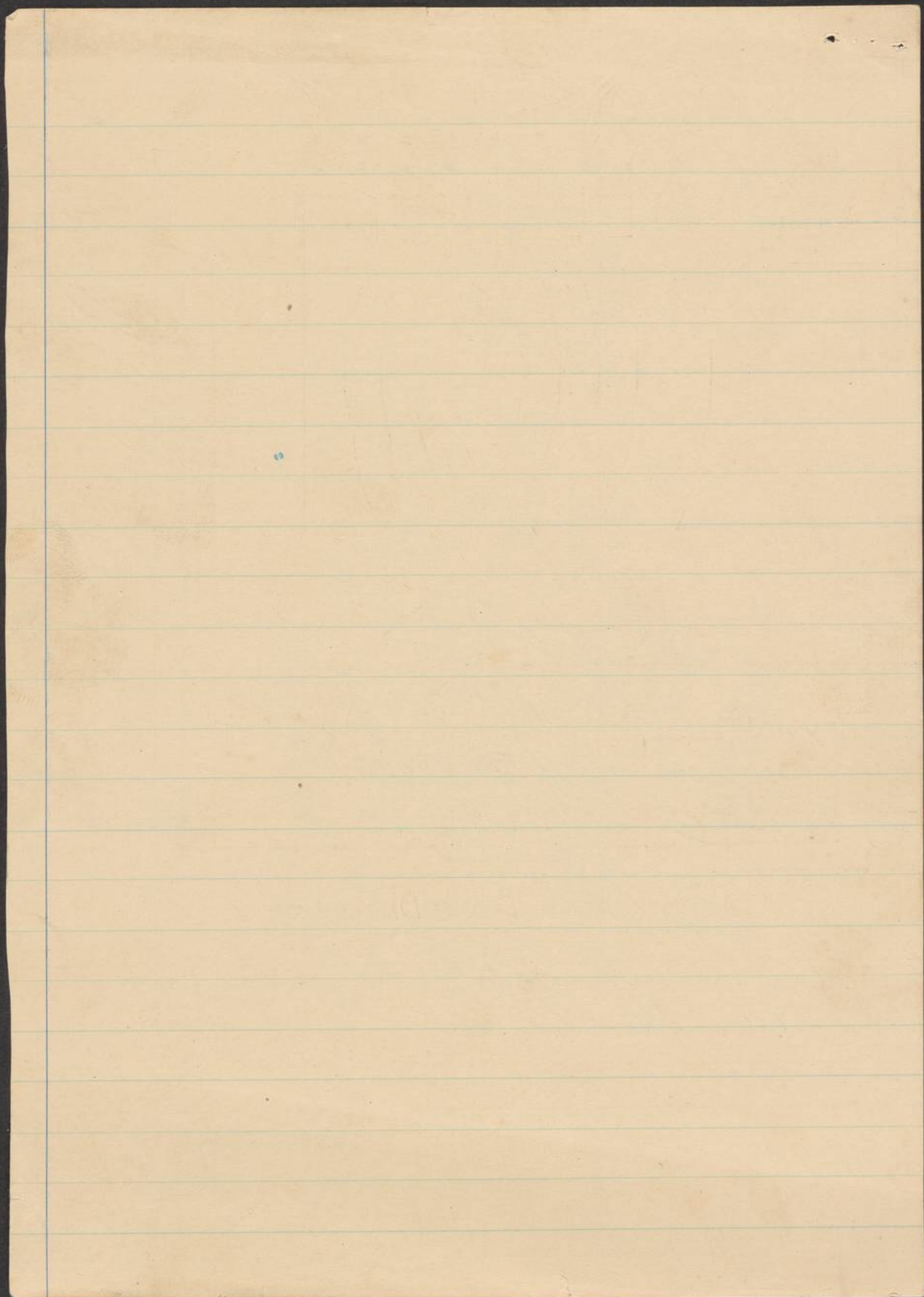




8 WAY AUTO. BOMB DISTRIBUTOR

Test:- 2 arrows in line. Switch in 'Test' position. 4 secs.  
 between first & last seq:  
 N° 1 & N° 8 SW 'ON'







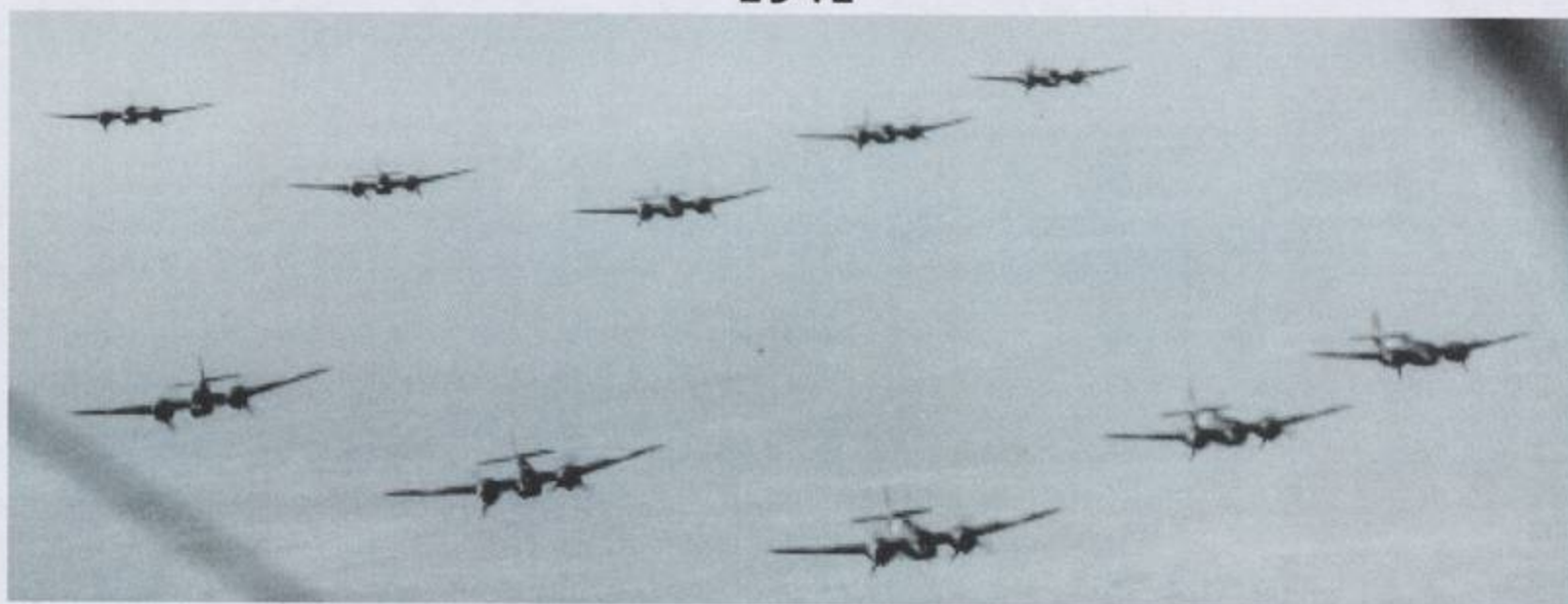
Assyrian Levies were a British army unit made up of Assyrian Iraqi's (Christian) and Kurds who fought against the Iraqi army which was aligned with the Germans.

## ASSYRIAN LEVIES

RAF

Battle for Habbaniya

### The Battle for Habbaniya 1941



30-4-1941

It had been realized for some time that the Iraqi Army might attempt an attack on this camp and other British stations in Iraq. Consequently our defenses were continually tested, air reconnaissance's were made and all measures, such as having an observation post by day and a listening post by night manned by Assyrian Levies on the bluff at canal turn, taken to guard against surprise attack. Defenses were skeleton manned by day and fully by night; a reserve company was always standing by at short notice, provided with the necessary motor transport [M.T] under control of Officer Commanding [O.C] Land Defenses O.C. Levies.

In the last week of April the Kings Own Regiment, under the command of Major (later Lt.Col.) Everett, arrived by air from Basrah. A strong liaison was established between the Kings, I A.C.C [Armored Car Comp.] and the Levies; the whole Force being commanded by O.C. Land Defenses, who was responsible for the defense of the Cantonment. This arrangement worked particularly well and was of great value when the Inf. Bns. (Kings Own and Assyrian Levies) were in action at Sinn El Dibann - afterwards named Sidi Barrani - and Fallujah.



The Levy Hospital proved invaluable in meeting the emergency, caring not only for our own casualties, which were amazingly few, but also for Civilian Volunteers, Arab Legionaries and prisoners of war. That they were efficient is evident from the story of an Iraqi prisoner who had an arm amputated one evening, and the next day was clearing the word of flies with his good arm. The Civilian Assyrian Volunteer Force was formed in Oct. 1940 under the command of Major H.P.F Young O.B.E. About 112 men joined up and attended parades for 7 months.

On the outbreak of hostilities 85 volunteers reported for duty and were employed on local defense. Another 32 Assyrian ex-levy soldiers who had been living in Humphriya village and had been obliged to take refuge in the camp owing to the shelling were enlisted by RAB 100 Suski Paulos. They remained on duty until the 13th of June when they were released for normal duties. They received free rations and uniform and double pay was issued for the first fortnight while employed volunteers received 100 fils per day for the period they were on local defense duties. A well-merited letter of congratulation was received from the Air Officer Commanding. One volunteer was killed in action and a few suffered minor injuries.

Assyrian Guides and interpreters from Levies were, when ever possible gratuitously provided for all units and detachments new to the command, They were of great value, being sometimes away for long periods during operations. They cheerfully carried out their duties with British, Indian and Transjordan troops alike.

During the whole period of hostilities the only A.A [Anti Aircraft] defense in the camp was provided by single Lewis Guns on A.A Mounting and protected by sandbagged emplacements. These were dotted about the camp at strategic points. It is probable that they brought down one Messerschmitt 110, and on the debit side they accidentally holed the petrol tank of one of the first batch of long nose Blenheims to arrive here. Owing to their presence all bombing attacks were made at heights of 8,000 ft and above. Bomb and shell damage was slight in the Levy Lines. A shell landing within 3 feet of the edge of a crowded A.R.P. [Air Raid Precaution] trench failed to injure the occupants. A few roofs of barracks, Major Young's quarters and the RAB 200's house were holed. The C.O's car was put out of action and slight damage was done to the Assyrian Church and the Officers Mess. All three British Churches were hit. Air Headquarters was also hit.

BN. HQ. Ground-Air Discipline showed a great improvement after the first few days. In the beginning the enemy positions completely overlooked BN. HQ. Cars, M/Cs, bicycles and orderlies continued to concentrate on the front doorstep until a little bombing and shelling suddenly made all arrangement quite perfect. The weather was hot and dry and above the average for May, reaching a maximum of 110 degrees F in the middle of the month.

#### HABBANIYA 30.4.41

Early in the morning reliable information reaches us that large bodies of Iraqi troops were approaching the Cantonment, and on instructions from O.C. Land defenses (O.C. Levies) the General Alarm was sounded at 04.20 hours. This was done in order to get the R.A.F reserves out into the sectors, as the perimeter was already fully manned by the Levies. On this day the Kings Own (1st), consisting of operational control of O.C. Land Defenses (O.C Iraq Levies) as did also the 1st Armored car company[ACC] consisting of Headquarters, and three sections each of 6 Armored Cars and two Wireless Tenders.



The large and very unstable population of the Civil Cantonment was quietly informed of the situation and there were remarkably few signs of panic. All the women and children had been practicing weeks beforehand in getting into A.R.P trenches and a proper organization of A.R.P Wardens was in being. It was definitely a Safe Area and a notable feature of the camp, also in the later days of the war, when German Aircraft singled out the Depot for their attentions, was the streams of coolies hurrying back along every road to the arms of their families.

Iraqi troops had already occupied Falluja and sent A.F.V [armored fighting vehicle] patrols as far as the Canal Turn, and occasional vehicles over the plateau and on to Ramadi. Officers and mail cars, attempting to reach Baghdad, had been turned back at Falluja; and of course no fresh supplies were allowed to come in. Wireless sets belonging to A.L.Os in various parts of the country were confiscated - in general the Iraqi was making himself objectionable. The morale of the troops was excellent; we were besieged no doubt, but prepared for anything.

The strength of Levies at Habbaniya on this date was British Officers 17, British Warrant Officers and N.C Os 5, Sub Assistant Surgeons 3, Assyrian Officers 40, Native Other ranks 1134, Total 1199





#### HABBANIYA 1.5.41

The Iraqi forces in the vicinity of Habbaniya has been roughly estimated as follows:-  
One Infantry Brigade, One Mechanized Artillery Brigade, 12 Armored Cars, One Mechanized M.G Company, Tanks. All these were on the high ground to the South and South East of the Camp. In Addition there was one company of Infantry at Falluja; two 3.7 Howitzers and several M.Gs on the far side of the river North of the Camp, and one Field Brigade (Horsed) on the Baghdad-Falluja Road. Directly it was light

troops could be seen on the Plateau carelessly walking about. Here and there were small parties of men who had dug themselves in - a few lorries moves about carrying men and materials - they might have been on maneuvers. That afternoon in reply to our demand the Iraqi Commander sent an envoy stating that he could not withdraw his troops without orders from Baghdad.

The Sectors were fully manned at night and everyone waited expectantly. At a conference held after midday on 1.5.41 it was decided to warn the enemy to move off the Plateau by dropping a message. If they failed to comply with this request an Air Attack was to commence at 05.00 hours on 2nd May.

#### HABBANIYA 2.5.41

The day dawned bright and clear at five o'clock our aircraft started bombing the Iraqi troops surrounding the camp, shortly to be answered by heavy fire from their artillery. The planes seemed to skim over the Plateau - tracer bullets and shells reached out but never quite touched them, while clouds of black dust and smoke rolled up from the bombed enemy positions.

Some enemy guns had been shooting into the Cantonment from across the river, and O.C C sector (Capt. Cottingham) located them by a bend in the Burma Bund. O.C Land Defenses (O.C. Iraqi Levies) obtained permission from Col. Roberts (AHQ) from No.8 (Kurdish) Coy was ordered to cross. Capt. Armstrong, who is a gunner and could therefore deal effectively with the guns when found, commanded it. They were under shell fire on the jetty but all got across in an old motor boat. The country was very open and flooded near the bunds, without any cover what so ever. Eventually they came under fire from several M.Gs and when their ammunition was nearly exhausted they had to withdraw. Invaluable covering fire was given by No.10 B.H Manned by Assyrians, who reported 30-40 enemy casualties.



At first three men were reported missing, but they turned up again later. Having been pinned down by enemy fire, they made a successful getaway when one of our planes went over and bombed the enemy guns. A Coy of the enemy approached 10 B.H at this time but remained out of M.G. range, and later retired. At about 11 o'clock Col. Brawn, O.C Land Defenses, and the RAB 200[Assyrian Levies] were in their car on the North Bund talking to Capt. Armstrong, who had re-crossed the Euphrates with his PL., when they were machine-gunned by an Iraqi plane that made a direct diving attack. Fortunately there were no casualties.



Earlier in the day 8 enemy armored cars and three tanks approached the camp from the South and were engaged by blockhouses. One S/T [Anti Tank] rifle of 4 Coy[Assyrian], and two of the Kings Own were mounted in armored cars and went out to deal with this situation. But the enemy scuttled away and thereafter kept out of active action altogether until captured some days later.

One enemy armored car was disabled. The village of Sinn El Dibban was occupied by the enemy and some well-concealed guns were shelling the camp. There was also a large concentration of the enemy in trenches near the New Lake Road. It was at one time decided to attack the latter with the Kings Own and the 4th Assyrian, but the idea was given up.



A series of panoramas, some time previously drawn up by Capt Armstrong on orders from O.C Land Defenses, were of great assistance in explaining various points in the vicinity of the Camp to newly arrived Officers, also in the making of plans, and the reporting of enemy movements from our B.H. O.P's. During the whole of this period No.10 B.H was constantly used as an advanced Sector H.Q by C sector, Capt Cottingham. It formed an excellent view point and signal situation and although the most conspicuous of all the B. Houses suffered the least from enemy attentions. On the other hand No.8 B.H was under frequent M.G [machinegun] fire, while No.9 had the front knocked out by a shell - though it was never once out of action. At least two alternative positions had been made by each B.H and communication trenches were also constructed. Early in the afternoon two Iraqi aircraft came over and delivered the first air bombing of the camp.







C Sector reported 300 enemy 1.5 miles due North of 10 B.H moving westwards and closely followed by 300 more. At a quarter past three major McWhinnie in No. 8 B.H shot up an Iraqi Staff car on the Falluja-Ramadi road. Four officers were believed to be wounded and an accompanying dispatch rider [D.R.] was shot off his motor cycle and killed. C Sector reported Sinn El Dhibban occupied by about 200 enemies. Later a platoon was sent from reserve to 10 B.H areas.

The blockhouses were constantly firing at enemy targets all day and estimated they had caused 50 casualties to the enemy. The Levies suffered only 11 N.O.R's [native other ranks] wounded and one British Warrant Officer slightly wounded. That night an enemy plane flew over the Camp and later bombs were heard to fall on Ramadi- which says allot for the blackout and not much for the Iraqi's power of navigating by night.

Patrols were sent out but the enemy kept their distance and made no attempt to raid our posts or gain information. Sometimes they vacated forward positions by night. The moral of all ranks was exceedingly good, and "No Man's Land" all round the Camp was ours entirely from the word "go", by day and night.

#### HABBANIYA 3.5.41

At half past four at first light, the enemy guns opened up, soon Sector Commanders were able to inform A.H.Q of some of their positions: our aircraft then dealt with them. The Howitzers on the Burma Bund and the surrounding trenches had been pretty severely dealt with, some 250 lb. bombs had fallen close, and No.8 B.H disabled a lorry bringing ammunition to isolated posts and estimated that five Iraqi's were killed by M.G fire. As on the preceding day all N.H's were engaging the enemy targets, with reported enemy casualties of 35. On our side one civilian volunteer was killed, and one wounded and one soldier wounded. Ineffective sniping went on at night with intermitted shelling. Patrolling was carried out in all sectors and one patrol of 4 Assyrian company co-operated with 1st Kings Own to the East of the Camp.

#### HABBANIYA 4.5.41

Heavy shelling commenced at dawn which abated somewhat when our bombers took off. Throughout the day M.G's in B.H's co-operated with our aircraft in their dive bombing attacks - enemy casualties in the morning estimated at 15-20. In the afternoon Sinn El Dibban was given special attention and enemy casualties placed at 15. Five Iraqi police were fired on in Aba Flus village.

There was a great activity by Assyrian Levy Patrols by night, co-operating with 1st Kings Own. Our casualties were Nil.



#### HABBANIYA 5.5.41

A few shots were exchanged by our night patrols and the enemy in the vicinity of the rifle ranges without result. Intermittent shelling started at daylight. The crew of No.4 B.H foolishly left their door open and suffered two minor casualties from shell splinters. No.10 B.H caught an enemy patrol in the open and inflicted 20 casualties. In the evening aircraft dispersed on the aerodrome were machine gunned; the position of the enemy guns being reported by our B.H's., our patrols were out all night.

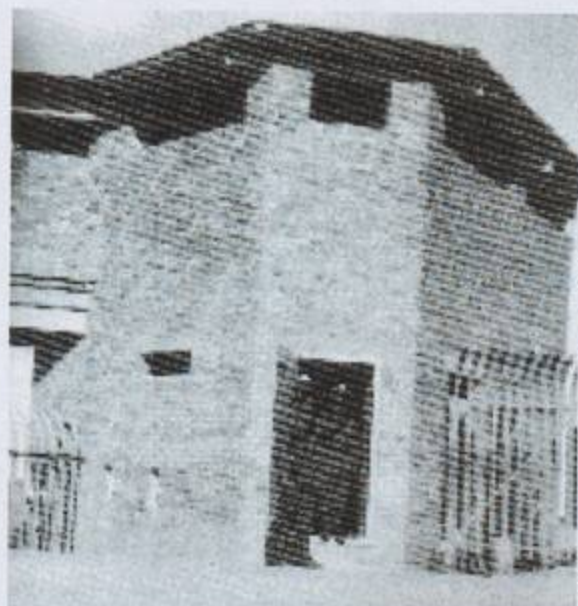
#### HABBANIYA 6.5.41

The enemy had apparently left the immediate vicinity of the camp by dawn. O.C Land Defenses (Col. Brawn) made an early reconnaissance from No.10 B.H and reported to Col. Roberts (AHQ) that there was considerable rearward enemy movement, from the area of the rifle ranges, in Lorries and armored cars in an Easterly direction across the Plateau. Col. Roberts came up to the view point, and it was seen that the enemy were still in position at Sinn El Dibban, and on the high ground behind the village - from the river Euphrates to astride the Habbaniya - Baghdad road. It was decided to attack these positions with 2 Coys. 1st Kings Own - acting on a broad front. When O.C Land Defenses pointed out that the river, hidden by the Bund, came right up to the village, those responsible climbed on to the very top of No.10 B.H and having obtained a proper view adopted a modified plan. O.C Land Defenses explained that there were vehicles ready in the lines to take out one Company to assist in this attack should it be needed. No.4 Assyrian Coy. (Capt. Thomas) was standing by for this and was employed later in the day to good effect, as will be seen from this narrative.

At 7.30 the armored cars left the London Road Gate and started to search the Plateau, and shortly afterwards the attack by the Kings Own commenced. The enemy, who had dug in and camouflaged very well, was stronger than expected. They allowed the leading Coy of the 1st Kings Own to get very close to Sinn El Dhibban, and then poured in a withering fire, with a large number of Bren and Vickers Guns, from the front and left flank. The armored cars meanwhile dealing with the right flank,



operating eastwards along the Plateau. Apart from rounding up many prisoners they got some very good fire effect. The Kings Own at first bravely persisted, but eventually, having suffered a number of Officer and O.R casualties, some of them began to withdraw. To Lt. Col. Everett (Kings Own) and Lt. Col. Brawn (Iraq Levies), together viewing this action from No.10 B.H., the very serious nature of the situation appeared. This was reported by phone to Col. Roberts, A.H.Q., who had ordered the attack, and at the same time O.C Land Defenses got the Kings Own headquarters and informed the Adjutant of the situation, advised him that the sewage farm was a good place to get close contact and carry out any re-organization should it be found necessary. There was a phone there with which he could keep touch with his O.C at No.10 B.H Capt. Boyes was thereafter at the Sewage Farm and in touch with Capt. Cottingham, who was supporting the Kings Own from there.



Block House

Wounded men of the Kings Own were being carried over the Bund near the Sewage Farm, and the dust put up by M.G fire and moving troops was becoming thick. The danger of an immediate enemy attack (counter attack) was apparent and O.C Land Defense (O.C Iraq Levies) asked Lt. Col. Everett if he would like quick assistance in that area. On his agreeing, Capt. Cottingham, his Rab 100 Stephan Nesson and SGT Lazar were at once sent off in the Commer truck with the Vickers Gun and a 3" Mortar and ammo, to get into action as quickly as possible in the sewage area in support of the Kings Own. They were joined shortly afterwards by O.S.M Aston who put in some very good work, killing and capturing allot of the enemy. Later they took a hand in the final assault on Sinn El Dhibbam village and ridge with No.4 Assyrian Company. The O.C Kings Own was kind enough to inform us that this prompt action saved his men a lot of casualties. Immediate Air co-operation was asked for also by O.C Land Defenses after seeing O.C Kings Own, to help the Kings Own and cause diversions. He pointed out the targets to the Pilots, who at his request came up to that vicinity of No.10 B.H

and their subsequent accurate and bold action had very marked and heartening effect. Owing to dust and heat haze and ever changing battle orders, Air and Artillery co-operation had to be very carefully worked out in order to gain the maximum quick effect without causing our side any casualties or alarm.

Col. Everett, O.C Kings Own attacking force, at top of 10 B.H remained in observation while Col. Brawn assisted him by observing from below, at the same time getting immediate reports and requests through personally by telephone to all concerned direct.

Col. Roberts and Major Rose G.S.O 11 came and viewed the situation as also did W/O Lane, O.C A/Cars and Major Cooper R.A, O.C Habbaniya Artillery. These Officers were fully informed of action taken for additional Air, Arty, and Levy support by Col. Brawn. Heavy losses were sustained by the enemy and 400-500 prisoners were brought into the camp in the morning.

Subsequently O.C Land Defenses (O.C. Iraq Levies) sought and obtained permission for No.4 Assyrian company's Captain Thomas to go through the Company of the Kings Own, who had knocked out the enemy left flank and taken Sinn El Dhibban village and the ridge behind. After having the situation and intention explained to him from No.10 B.H by O.C Levies, Capt. Thomas embossed his company at 2.30 in the afternoon, and proceeded out of London Road Gate to the rifle ranges. He was covered this far by a rogtl "Coffee pot" and by A/cars on the Plateau. Having well thinned out his troops, to guard against surprise L/A fire, he advanced and made a successful attack on his large quantities of war materials. The enemy were so demoralized and their fire so erratic that even snipers who were killed close up caused No.4 Coy no casualties.

We suffered greatly from lack of artillery in this attack but towards the end two 4.5 Hows were brought into action by Major. Cooper R.A. Ranges had previously been taken and a good target was immediately to hand in the form of large numbers of enemy who were forced to retire across Falluja Road by Kings Own, A/cars and Assyrian Levies. Having allowed these Iraqi infantry to collect in Sinn El Dhibban mud hut village, and the sherifas (huts) beyond, the artillery gave target No.1 a good pasting.

It was later reported on the wireless, presumably for propaganda purposes, that these guns had been flown over to us in special aircraft, by the Royal Air Force. These weapons had been used as ornaments on the lawn outside depot H.Q for a number of years. However they were not in good condition and artificer was flown from Basra who put them right. They were joined later by some captured Iraqi 3.7 Hows and a mixed battery of them was formed under the command of Major Cooper. R.A. Enemy aircraft attacked the camp three times causing some damage to the perimeter fence which was immediately repaired. In the late afternoon a report was received that Iraqi reinforcements consisting of cavalry, a battalion in M.T and A.F.Vs were on this side of Falluja. Our bombers went over and completely broke up this force. They were caught on the open road and many direct hits were scored causing indescribable confusion.

In the attack on Sinn El Dhibban the enemy suffered 1,000 casualties and 25 officers and 408 men were captured. The Kings Own lost 7 killed and 12 wounded. Assyrian Levy casualties were two wounded. The result of the encounter was a great encouragement to all ranks, and very good for morale. The Assyrian Levies had the opportunity of really putting their training into practice, and showed a high standard of marksmanship with all weapons in the field. Time was getting on and though at first it was decided to leave No.4 Coy. Assyrian Levies and one Coy. of Kings Own in position all night they were later withdrawn.



#### HABBANIYA 7.5.41

At daybreak Sinn El Dhibban and the neighboring high ground were re-occupied by a pl of 4 coy. When they were in position a composite pl from the Reserve carried out salvage operations in the area.

An enemy plane was shot down by a Blenheim fighter north of the camp - it started diving to make a getaway, at 5,000 ft but never came out of the dive.

In early afternoon enemy movements were reported east of Sinn El Dhibann and the composite Coy was withdrawn at dusk. A pl from C sector searched Humphria but found nothing of interest. Six 3.7 Hows, 4 A/Cars, a large number of A/T and automatic weapons as well as many vehicles - all in good condition - were salvaged.

#### HABBANIYA 8.5.41

Salvage work was carried out as before - protected by a composite Coy. and A/cars. Assyrian levies provided an escort for the prisoners of war who were well occupied burying their dead. Capt. Armstrong went across the river again to try and locate enemy guns, which were wrongly reported from the air as being still in position on the Burma Bund. A pl. from No.4 Coy moved out to Canal Turn to form a standing patrol at dusk. Capt. Armstrong and patrol from north of the river bringing an enemy car and several rounds of 3.7 How ammunition, and spare parts. The heavily laden car had to be dragged for several miles along the top of the Bund until it could be put on planks laid across small boats which were lashed together and ferried across the river Euphrates, which was at high flood.



#### HABBANIYA 9.5.41

On receipt of the all clear signal from the recce patrol of No; 1 A.C.C., No 4 Assyrian Company, less one platoon, moved to the sinn el dhibban area to take up a defensive position covering salvage operations and the burial of enemy dead. The Ramadi Police post, about 2 miles west of the camp, was occupied by a platoon from A sector. In the evening No; 4 Company [Assyrian] returned to barracks and the platoon at Canal Turn was relieved. The enemy appeared to have left the vicinity of the camp completely.

#### HABBANIYA 10.5.41

A quiet day spent mostly by providing escorts for burial, salvage and proceeded to Canal Turn to try and obtain information from local inhabitants. Authority was obtained for the issue of captured Bren Guns to the unit. Capt. Graham made an aerial recce over Hammonds Bund, and Capt. Armstrong over Saqlawiya, the letters plane developed a small petrol fire which severely burnt the pilot's leg - happily he soon had it under control and a safe landing was made. At night Capt. Graham went by lorry to Hammonds Bund and made a successful recce in the neighborhood of Falluja. The Bund being cut in one place, he waded across up to his neck in water - carrying his Assyrian orderly who was of very small stature, on his shoulders.

Capt. Armstrong crossed the river again at Sinn El Dhibban and reconnoitered a suitable route for troops to Saqlawiya. The usual night patrols went on round the camp in all the hours of darkness.

#### HABBANIYA 11.5.41

Patrols approached within 3 miles of Falluja which, an unconfirmed report stated, was held by one Battalion of Iraqi troops. The levies again provided working parties and escorts. Troops in barracks carried out improvements to A.R.P trenches. Capt. Boas patrolled north of the River to the desert track, at the end of the Burma Bund, along with the Iraqi's were reported to be rushing supplies and re-enforcements to Ramadi.

#### HABBANIYA 12.5.41

Bren Gun Instructors were provided by 1st Kings Own, and squads from each coy practiced with this new weapon. During the day No.'s 1,2 and 4

Assyrian companies were put into reserve in preparation for operations outside the Cantonment, and their places in A and B sectors were taken over by a composite Coy and No.8 Kurdish Coy respectively, No.3 Coy remained in C sector. Two platoons of No.4 Assyrian Coy took up positions south of the main landing ground to protect aircraft there during the night. A patrol from No.8 Kurdish Coy went to Lake Habbaniya to protect the marine craft and to ambush any Dulaimi that appeared - however it was a completely quiet night. The enemy out the river bunds at Ramadi and Falluja: their strength in each village estimated at 1,000.

#### HABBANIYA 13.5.41

The personnel practices in the Bren Gun and fired a short course on the open ranges. One of our pilots on recce over the Rashid aerodrome saw a Messerschmitt 110 below him, the first tangible evidence of Axis support to Rashid Ali's revolt in Iraq. to assist in taking troops across the river for the coming attack on Falluja, a flying ferry was built at Sinn El Dhibban and a pl 2 Coy took up a position to guard the bridge-head on the north bank of the river. At this time out Platoons permanently



outside the Cantonment were all Assyrian and included: A PI (1 Coy) at Rumadi Police Post, A PI (2 Coy) plus 1 section Vickers Guns at Sinn El Dhibann, A PI (2 Coy) on the north bank of the river opposite Sinn El Dhibban, A PI (4 Coy) at Canal Turn.

#### HABBANIYA 14.5.41

A quiet and uneventful day.

#### HABBANIYA 15.5.41

A PI of HQ Wing moved out to defensive positions at Suttaih Bridge. A detachment of the Gurkha Rifles (100 all ranks) was quartered in the Assyrian Levy Lines. Six planes believed to be M.E 109s were observed at Erbil. Our Blenheims went over and damaged 3 or 4 of the enemy machines. No.4 Coy took over No.4 Defense Sector.

#### HABBANIYA 16.5.41

Reports were received that Iraqi Army and Police personnel were wearing plain clothes to enable them to approach the Cantonment and posts in the vicinity. At nine thirty in the morning German Aircraft made their first bombing attack on the camp, one man being slightly injured. They concentrated their attentions on our aircraft without causing much damage.

#### HABBANIYA 17.5.41

To aid in the dispersal of our aircraft, 7 Emergency Landing Ground was brought into use - a party of Levies assisted 1st Kings Own in constructing A.A. L.G posts for its protection. A number of Levy families, numbering 54 in all were evacuated by air to Palestine. Early in the morning a recce party under O.C Iraq Levies proceeded to Suttaith Bridge, later followed by a column consisting of 1 A.C.C Guide, 1 Coy plus 1PI and 1 troop Habbaniya Artillery, taking the desert route south of the road to Falluja - Ramadi.

The operation commenced at 1620 hours from Suttaih Bridge. No.1 Coy Commander (Capt. Graham) ordered two platoons to proceed north towards the river and west through Palm Grove with the intention of capturing enemy disguised as civilians, who were reported to be in the area. The Habbaniya Artillery opened fire on an enemy M.G post reported to be to the west of Suttaih Bridge. One of the enemies was seen to dive over the bund in a hurry. Our forces continued to move westward without encountering any opposition. Large enemy concentrations, including guns, were reliably reported from Ramadi and Falluja but the bloody nose they received at Sinn El Dhibban has prevented any investment of the immediate neighborhood. Our force was eventually withdrawn after dark bringing back 16 suspect natives.

#### HABBANIYA 18.5.41

A total of 131 members of Assyrian Levy families were evacuated by air. Large number of Levies re-enforcements arrived at Habbaniya from Palestine. Nos. 1 and 2 Assyrian Coy prepared for operations at Falluja. (No.2 Coy under Capt. Anderson known as A Col and No.2 Coy under Capt. Graham as G Col.) At 5 o'clock in the afternoon A Col mule transport started crossing Sinn El Dhibban Ferry - completed the movement 2 1/2 hours later. Just before 7 o'clock G Col left Habbaniya. Advanced Bde and Bn Headquarters were in separate positions in the Bluff at Canal Turn. These HQ's,



in well camouflaged positions, were in communication with all the Levies attacking Falluja, and also with Habbaniya.

#### HABBANIYA 19.5.41

The method of the attack on Falluja was described on the B.B.C News as unique. Roughly it was this. A Col was to the north of the town, G Col to the south west and V Col was landed by troop carrying aircraft 2 miles north east. Our aircraft first bombed the town, and then dropped leaflets demanding its surrender, and as this was not immediately forthcoming G Col investing the town. A Col had been delayed by the flooding and it was not until after 5 p.m. that G Col reported that they were holding the bridge-head. O.C Levies and RAB 200 Assyrian Levies went forward to make arrangements for holding the town during the night. The main streets were already barricaded and No.1 Coy in position near the bridgehead. There was no counter attack by the enemy this night, the heavy bombing having destroyed their morale temporarily.

Lt. Col Everett (O.C 1st Kings Own) took over command of Falluja, and personnel of the 1st Kings Own moved into the town. In the middle of the morning A and G Cols arrived. 200 prisoners taken at Falluja were set to work repairing Hammonds



Bund under a small Assyrian Levy escort. Five attacks were made on the camp, Saqlawiya and Falluja by German aircraft during the day. One of our Gladiators disabled a Heinkel 111, before being destroyed itself, that the enemy plane had to make a forced landing near Haditha and was burnt out.

O.C Levies, the RAB 200 and Major Rose had a narrow escape when the car in which they were traveling on the road to and near by Hammonds Bund was machine gunned by a Messerschmitt 110, the R.I.A.S.C driver being wounded in the head and the car well riddled. The Messerschmitt coming over in the morning attacked an ambulance on the Plateau - in the evening they took great pains to shoot up the British General Hospital.

#### HABBANIYA 21.5.41

The advanced Bn HQ was withdrawn to Habbaniya. Work went on consolidating the defense of Falluja and the repairing of Hammonds Bund.

#### HABBANIYA 22.5.41

The Iraqi counter attacked Falluja early in the morning with Infantry and Light Tanks. Our British outposts were driven back and the enemy penetrated the town. After heavy bombing and spirited counter attacks by the Assyrians the enemy were driven out and our original positions were occupied without serious loss. A detachment from 3 Coy under Lt Lloyd moved off to Mujarah- south of Lake Habbaniya. The A.A defenses on the camp were re-organized.

Falluja Bridge after the battle



#### HABBANIYA 23.5.41

In the early morning No.2 Assyrian Coy (Capt. Anderson) and attached HQ Wing personnel returned from Falluja with 72 prisoners - but without their automatic weapons, these having been borrowed by the Essex Regmt., who had apparently come without any. They were, however, returned later. During the day they took over C sector from 3 Coy who were off to Mujarah. Messerschmitt made two attacks in the morning. The enemy casualties and heavy losses in arms and equipment sustained by them in the Battle of Falluja compared to our own success and small losses did much to keep the Levy morale bouncing up. The G.O.C Habforce saw fit to send a letter of congratulations for Assyrian Levy efforts in this Battle.

#### HABBANIYA 24.5.41

At dawn two Platoons of 3 Coy left for Mujarah by motor transport to replace two platoons of the Kings Own. The detachment there, under Capt Chadwhick, consisted of 1 Sub Asst. Surgeon, 3 Native officers and 100 Native other ranks. 1 N.O and 16 men left for Falluja to replace casualties and Capt. Graham became A.P.M of the town. A signal terminal was installed in No.3 B.H to maintain contact with Det. 1st Bn. Essex Regt. at Ramadi Police Post. In the evening the camp was machine gunned from the air.

#### HABBANIYA 25.5.41

Another party of levy families left by air for area H.4. Our aircraft bombed Ramadi and dropped leaflets. A bombing attack by Heinkels in the morning cut water mains leading to the Levy Lines and Civil Cantonment causing a temporary shortage of water. The Germans used a delay action bomb which penetrated the earth to a depth of 20 to 30 ft. before exploding - which it frequently failed to do. Five of the M.E 110s followed up with a machine gunning attack. One of these was shot down, by a Levy A.A Post, and was later recovered in an excellent condition.

#### HABBANIYA 26.5.41

Capt. Cottingham, Lieut. Trelawny, 10 N. Off. and 20 N.O.Rs left for Nujarah to relieve Capt. Chadwhick and personnel of the other Coys. Who remained there. There were two bombing attacks in the morning. G.O.C Habforce, Major General Clark, inspected A and C sectors. Ferrying across river was carried out at Sinn El Dhibban and Hammonds Bund all night. The 2/4 Gurkha Rifles arrived by air from Basra.

#### HABBANIYA 27.5.41

A very quiet day with no enemy activity - day spent in fatigues.

#### HABBANIYA 28.5.41

Another quiet day for the camp - though No.1 Coy was seeing a certain amount of action on the Abu Charib Canal. Major McWhinni went into Falluja to investigate.

#### HABBANIYA 29.5.41



Working parties and escort duties were carried out during the day. There were no enemy air attacks. The Iraqis were reported to be still in the area south of Falluja.

The Assyrian Levy Band marched through the roads of the camp in the evening - a sign of impending security and a return to more peaceful conditions.

#### HABBANIYA 30.5.41

The formation of No.9 Assyrian Coy commenced. The old strength of 6 N.Os [native officers] and 160 N.O.Rs had been found unwieldy and the Assyrian Companies were reduced to 5 N.Os and 110 N.O.Rs - the balance forming a new company, which came under the command of Capt. Chadwick, and later took over the A.A defenses of the camp. Two Pls of No.4 Coy proceeded to Falluja to replace two Pls of No.1 Coy. The mobile column was now well on its way to Baghdad and the R.A.F carried out frequent raids on Rashid and Washak Camps.

#### HABBANIYA 31.5.41

At 2 o'clock in the morning the following signal was received from Force H.Q :- Rashid Ali and his Govt. have fled the country. Armistice terms are being arranged between Baghdad Committee and Representative OF Regent. Although no offensive action is to be taken against Iraqis utmost vigilance must and will be observed. The strength of the Levies at Habbaniya on this date was:-

British Officers 17, British Warrant and N.C Os 6, Sub Asst. Surgeons 3, Assyrian Officers 40, Native Other Ranks 1126



3 Battalion Band