



## Egypt and the Suez Crisis

### ADD DETAILS AS THEY CAN BE FOUND

The post war strain on Anglo-Egyptian relations came to a head on 26th July 1956 when President Nassar announced the nationalization of the Anglo-French Suez Canal Co. The last British troops had left the area earlier that month because the Egyptians had made it impossible for the base to function effectively, which caused the British government to withhold new aircraft and equipment for the Egyptian forces. The Egyptians consequently went to the Eastern bloc for their needs which caused the Western powers to withdraw their support from Egypt's Aswan high dam project. This resulted in Egypt taking over the Canal.

Britain and France reacted to this threat, which could cut off their remaining Far East colonies, strongly despite US opposition to an invasion. British civilians were evacuated from Egypt and the reservists were called up. The newly formed Israel joined the Anglo-French alliance. On 31st October, H.M.S. Eagle, Albion and Bulwark left Malta with the Helicopter Carriers H.M.S. Ocean and Theseus.

At 4.44am Transport command dropped six hundred men of 3 Para on Gamil airfield in Egypt. British troops had been committed to the Suez Crisis.



(Image courtesy of the Michael McNeil)

Photographer Mac McNeil, 2<sup>nd</sup> Household Cavalry regiment early 1950's  
A driver of this Dingo F340802 enjoys a moment of relaxation on a patrol in the area of the Pyramids



Trouble in Ismailia

Story courtesy of [www.britains-smallwars.com](http://www.britains-smallwars.com)

An Armoured Car Commanders Experience, By Cpl. James Collender Royal Dragoons

Cpl. James Collender was a Cpl. in the Royal dragoons, and was stationed in the Suez Canal Zone from 1950 -to 1953, he, his Armoured car, the men he commanded from his unit in the Royal Dragoons, were amongst the first on the scene when the police headquarters in Ismailia, was taken over by armed Police Irregulars, sent in from Cairo, and hell-bent in causing trouble in the city of Ismailia. This is the story of Cpl. Collender, and those under his command.

I remember it was the night before the attack on the Police Station I was on Patrol by the Great Bitter Lake. I was in charge of a **Daimler Armoured Car**, and a **Daimler Scout Car**, when I got a Call in the 19 Set to head for the Police Station in Ish and that a couple of Land Rovers being driven by Military Police had been attacked, and the vehicles and men had been taken into the Police Compound.

We arrived at the police Station and I went and saw the Land Rovers and MP bodies in them behind locked gates. I called back to my Regimental Headquarters and explained the situation and was asked if I could get to the vehicles and pull them out. I told them that I could not so was told to station our vehicles across from the gates with our guns trained on the Police Station.

Within about 10 minutes a car with some very senior officers arrived and called for the senior Police Officer through a Loud Hailer, and the Police basically told them to Sod off!

I was told to stay parked opposite the Police Station with all weapons trained on them and await instructions. Within a very short time Tanks from the 4<sup>th</sup> Royal Tank Regiment arrived, with vehicles loaded with Infantry.

More Armoured cars arrived to give support, as the senior officer tried to talk to the Police who were firmly barricaded in the Police Station, into releasing the Land Rovers, and the bodies of the Military Policemen, but failed.

We were then told that if we got nowhere there would be an attack on the Police station at 7 am in the morning, this was put off until 10am. During the attack shells were fired at the Police building and after a while the Infantry went in to secure the building.

I saw an officer shot when he tried to hook up a Land rover in order to tow it out and saw some of the Infantry get shot and I do not know if they were killed or wounded at the scene I was told that 39 police bodies were recovered from that particular building, including one police woman, later I heard it was 169, but I have always wondered because right next to the police station was a prison, and that had been hit.

As far as patrols are concerned we did them night and day and our vehicles were shot at quite a few times, and we managed to capture a few terrorists, and killed some more. We had a hull-down position on the treaty Road to try and stop the Oil Tankers running guns to the terrorists. But we only allowed to put empty barrels across the road, and they used to smash these like toys and we were not allowed to fire shells at them. so it was a complete bloody waste of time.

Cpl. James Collender  
Royal Dragoons



Images courtesy of the British Pathe  
Photographer, Not Known  
Description Scout cars at the Ismailia incident  
1953



Image courtesy of the Time Life  
Photographer Carl Mydans, Life Magazine  
Description Daimler armoured cars and scout cars F47818/002514 on patrol, Suez, Egypt  
September 1953



Images courtesy of the British pathé  
Photographer, Not Known  
Description Scout cars and armoured cars 37ZU55 on inspection prior to deployment to Egypt  
Circa 1950's



Images courtesy of Bovington Tank Museum 6026-C2  
Egypt rail cars



Images courtesy of M Van Alderton  
Description: Specially converted dingo's, used for patrolling rail lines to check for bombs before the operation of trains. Here can be seen car F340902.  
Date: Circa 1950's



Images courtesy of Simon Hamon  
Description: Unidentified DAC.  
Date: Circa 1950's