

System ID	11719
Object Type	Sound Recording
Name/Title	U Series - Long Range Desert Group [Parts 1-8]
Brief Description	<p>Broadcaster Doug Laurenson introduces a series of talks by the members of the Long Range Desert Group (LRDG), or alternatively, the Long Range Patrol (LRP) which is comprised mostly of New Zealanders under the command of British Officers who have, for the past ten years, spent their leave exploring the Libyan Desert for fun. (Recorded by the Mobile Broadcasting Unit in North Africa.)</p> <p>He goes on to describe the difference between the country fringing the coast of the Mediterranean, and inland where the desert sweeps back to the equator and is lifeless as the moon. In this area, the LRDG crossed the tracks of motor vehicles made by the Duke of Westminster's motorised column during the Great War a quarter of a century prior.</p> <p>Tony Brown of Wellington, a member of the LRDG, talks to other members of the group about their work.</p> <p>He talks to Tommy McNeill of Hawkes Bay and Cyril Eyre from Te Awamutu, who describe the differences between driving on the road and driving on desert hard and soft sand. Sand so loose that a truck dug in to its tailboard on one occasion. Perception of the vehicles speed is very difficult because of glare from the sand.</p> <p>Roy Kitney of the LRDG describes the rations available to members of the group and the methods used for cooking during patrols into the desert. Water was a problem because the tins had a tendency to spring leaks and was rationed 4 pints per man per day. The patrol on average consisted of 40 men and it took half an hour to prepare a meal for them. Eric Smith of Hamilton describes a period when the LRDG were with the French and this involved a complete change of diet. Coffee making was a major problem also during this same time.</p> <p>2nd Lieutenant Dick Croucher describes how the LRDG find their way across the desert using compasses, theodolites, and sun compasses and how maps of the Libyan Desert were made. Ian McGuinness from Whangarei tells about the experiences of a patrol that left Cairo on Boxing Day and six days later the group was in enemy territory. The patrol cruised around the Libyan desert for another nine days without being seen. The group had an encounter with the enemy when the LRDG attacked and destroyed an enemy fort. On this occasion the patrol was in the desert for seven weeks and had three washes in the period.</p> <p>Len Hawkins, a fitter and gunner in the British Army's Long Range Desert Group, describes some of his experiences whilst out in the desert. Hawkins used to make stamping machines in Christchurch before the war, now he maintains the Long Range Desert Group vehicles in the field. When a thousand miles out in the desert, most work has to be done on the spot. One incident involved a broken axle, and another an engine with severely worn bearings which had to be dismantled and patched up. After travelling 600 miles, this same vehicle was bombed and destroyed by an Italian aircraft, without the loss of the trucks crew.</p> <p>Peter Garland from Auckland talks about the high temperatures in the desert and describes an attack on an Italian fort in the desert. The group inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy. On his first trip into the desert it was so hot that all the men could do was to lie, in the only shade, under the trucks from 4.00am through to 4.00pm. Each man had a shift of one hour as look-out and some of the men became delirious from the heat. Birds endeavouring to cross the desert felt the heat as much as the people. Some of the birds died and others revived in the shade of the trucks.</p> <p>Sandy Sanders of Christchurch, a man of many parts, gives an outline of his work as one of the three man crew of the "big" gun mounted on a LRDG vehicle. In the crew of three on the truck two are gunmen and one a driver. The primary purpose of the gun crew was to guard against attacks from any armed vehicles. They were also used against forts and gun emplacements.</p> <p>A talk about the group's rations and the cooking of the rations by Frank Jopling who drives the LRDG truck that carries the food on patrols. On the first journey the food had to be picked up from the French in the heart of the Tibesti Mountains and included were 14 goat and 1 bullocks carcasses freshly killed by the local tribesmen.</p> <p>Tony Brown winds up this series of talks by personnel of the Long Range Desert Group by explaining that one or two fellows couldn't tell their stories as they are at present guests of the Italians.</p>
Duration (programme)	00:26:03
1: Creator/Contributor & Role	Laurenson, M. Douglas Host
2: Creator/Contributor & Role	BROWN, Tony Interviewer
3: Creator/Contributor & Role	Eyre, Cyril Walter Speaker/Kaikorero
4: Creator/Contributor & Role	Kitney, Ernest William Roy Speaker/Kaikorero
5: Creator/Contributor & Role	CROUCHER, Dick Speaker/Kaikorero

6: Creator/Contributor & Role	MCGUINNESS, Ian Speaker/Kaikorero
7: Creator/Contributor & Role	Hawkins, Len Speaker/Kaikorero
8: Creator/Contributor & Role	GARLAND, Peter Speaker/Kaikorero
9: Creator/Contributor & Role	SANDERS, Sandy Speaker/Kaikorero
10: Creator/Contributor & Role	Jopling, Frank, 1913-1987 Speaker/Kaikorero
11: Creator/Contributor & Role	New Zealand. Army. 2nd NZEF. Public Relations Service. Broadcasting Unit Broadcaster
Creation/Recording Date	17 Feb 1941

System ID	11734
Object Type	Sound Recording
Name/Title	U series - Further talks on the Long Range Desert Group [Parts 1-6]
Brief Description	<p>Mobile Broadcasting Unit commentator Doug Laurenson describes the formation of LRDG, which is under the command of three British Officers who in the days of peace prospected all over the Sahara and Libyan deserts in preparation for the war that may come along.</p> <p>Laurenson then introduces Captain L. B. Ballantyne who, before the war, was a sheep farmer at Pongaroa Hawkes Bay and has travelled with his men on long expeditions.</p> <p>Captain Ballantyne of Hawkes Bay talks about the selection of the men for the Long Range Desert Group from the Divisional Cavalry and Machine Gunners.</p> <p>The first patrol was made in the hot season when the temperatures seldom dropped below 105 degrees and on several occasions topped 120 deg. Water was limited to one gallon a day for all purposes. Captain Ballantyne has seen the selected soldiers in action and no officer could wish for steadier troops.</p> <p>The greatest test the force had been subjected to date was a ground attack a month previous.</p> <p>Ballantyne makes special mention of Corporal Rex Beech, who was killed at his post and saved many lives, Sergeant Cyril Hughson who led his troops into action and decorations awarded to Lieut. Sutherland and Trooper Wilcox for gallantry.</p> <p>Laurenson then introduces the Long Range Desert Group's Medical Officer Captain F.B.Edmundson of Napier. He advises on the good health of the men in the Long Range Desert Group and attributes this to the fact that the men are away from the populated areas and the desert is absolutely sterile. Even the Egyptian flies leave the trucks after the first few days into the desert.</p> <p>Doug Laurenson interviews Sergeant J. R. Shepherd, an expert on communications for the Long Range Desert Group.</p> <p>Sergeant Shepperd explains the systems and methods used to communicate between patrols. Some experimentation with aeriels and choice of frequencies was required. All messages had to be sent accurately as they were in code and could not be checked immediately at the receiving station. Using the standard army radio sets, which were expected to cover 250 miles, he was able to communicate over 450 tp 500 miles distance.</p> <p>A standard Philips broadcast receiver was carried and used to receive time signals and listen to the news while behind enemy lines. The patrol would get in behind the Italian front and listen in to the Italians communications.</p> <p>Sergeant Shepherd describes the types of aeriels used and explains the schedule for sending the coded messages between patrols.</p> <p>Patrols would normally travel from 7.00am to 6.00pm and then communications would start anytime between 6.00 and 10pm and continue through to 1.00 or 2.00 in the morning.</p>
Duration (programme)	00:00:57
1: Creator/Contributor & Role	Ballantyne, L. B. Speaker/Kaikorero
2: Creator/Contributor & Role	Laurenson, M. Douglas Commentator
3: Creator/Contributor & Role	HUGHSON, Cyril Speaker/Kaikorero
4: Creator/Contributor & Role	Edmundson, F. B. Speaker/Kaikorero
5: Creator/Contributor & Role	SHEPHERD, J. R. Speaker/Kaikorero
6: Creator/Contributor & Role	New Zealand. National Broadcasting Service (estab. 1936, closed 1946) Broadcaster
Creation/Recording Date	17 Feb 1941

System ID	11742
Object Type	Sound Recording
Name/Title	U series - A talk by the LRDG Commander [Parts 1-6]
Brief Description	<p>Broadcaster Doug Laursen introduces a talk by a British Officer of high rank, who commanded the Long Range Desert Patrol Group. Wartime censorship regulations did not permit the announcement of the officer's name or rank at the time of recording or first broadcast, but it is Major Ralph Bagnold. (Recorded in North Africa by the Mobile Broadcasting Unit.)</p> <p>The LRDG operated for many months through thousands of square miles behind Italian out-posts. Individual troops of our motorised columns harassed, attacked and invaded enemy positions until the enemy transport system was disorganised and the outposts demoralised.</p> <p>As Officer Commanding the LRDG, he has worked, surveyed, explored, invaded and fought in the company of a selected band of New Zealanders. To describe the activities of the group he presents a report, written by himself, on the group from inception to today. Communiqués have to date been confined to operations along the Mediterranean coast. Secrecy has prevented light being thrown on the activities of the LRDG who kept the Italians in the Middle East on their toes. Phantom motor patrols like a "Will o' the Wisp" pirated Italian transport on the roads, attacked isolated forts, blowing up dumps and burning aircraft on the ground.</p> <p>He then goes on to describe the desert country in which the LRDG has had to operate in.</p> <p>The terrain of the country combined with 200 miles of barbed wire and fortifications, the Italians had stretched from the sea southward along the border with Egypt, cut off the the interior of Libya.</p> <p>The presence at Kufra of enemy troops and aircraft was disturbing to the Allies. There existed a distinct threat by land & air to upper Egypt and the Nile communications with Sudan. It was imperative to find out what was going on behind the barriers.</p> <p>General Wavell called together three men who knew the desert country and within six weeks the LRDG was in being. Patrols of picked men from New Zealand and the Royal Armoured Corps were equipped, trained and able to serve in the middle of the desert, out of the reach of help.</p> <p>While this was happening in 1940 one of the three men who had headed the setting up of the LRDG with 5 New Zealanders, breached the Italian shore at the "Great Sea of Sand" by a route only known to himself. The persistence of the tell tale tracks of vehicles in the sand of the desert was one of the chief difficulties which LRDG patrols had to face. The tracks from a motor column can be followed from the air and the column can be traced and bombed.</p> <p>Shortly after the initial crossing of the Great Sand Sea barrier it was again crossed, for the first time by a military patrol. After the patrol passed through the "sea" a hot wind began to blow over the dunes which muffled the force in a blanket of sand. For three days the heat of the wind made more than one man delirious.</p> <p>After the wind had abated the patrol separated, each going on a trip of its own into enemy territory, and were given up for lost. After 3 months a bearded and un-washed group with a batch of Italian prisoners turned up in Cairo.</p> <p>Other expeditions followed through the Autumn of 1940. On one occasion a patrol ended up at the gates of an Italian fort, their sentry thought our men were Italians and was seized by the patrol. Three shells were put through the walls of the fort driving the garrison out enabling the enemy armament to be removed and then the raiders disappeared into the desert. The Italians searched for them but they were never found.</p> <p>On the same day 600 miles further south, another group of the LRDG attacked a post with dozens of Italians wounded or killed.</p> <p>After these attacks the Italians stopped all normal traffic along the desert routes. By December the LRDG had distracted the enemy from the decisive battle area in the North. It was decided to raid Italian garrisons at Fezzan far away in east Libya. On Christmas Eve two patrols set out to raid posts 1,200 miles distance. The LRDG patrols met up with a Free French Commander, at the foot of the Tibesti mountains on the boarder of Chad, and together with him and a detachment of Free French troops continued into Fezzan. Marzuq was taken by surprise and the interior of the Italian fort set on fire.</p> <p>The Free French Colonel was killed at Marzuq while attempting to silence a machine gun. The force then moved onto the town of Traghan and another two towns were taken before they turned back for their base in Egypt.</p> <p>The Long Rang Desert Group had, up to the end of this journey, covered 500,000 truck miles without the loss of a single vehicle.</p>

1: Creator/Contributor & Role	Bagnold, Ralph A. (Ralph Alger), 1896- Speaker/Kaikorero
2: Creator/Contributor & Role	Laurenson, M. Douglas Announcer
3: Creator/Contributor & Role	New Zealand. National Broadcasting Service (estab. 1936, closed 1946) Broadcaster
4: Creator/Contributor & Role	New Zealand. Army. 2nd NZEF. Public Relations Service. Broadcasting Unit Broadcaster
Creation/Recording Date	19 Feb 1941
