

paign had placed the Force under my command in a state of serious disorganisation. Some units were in Egypt, others on the sea, others in Ægean ports. It was not until the end of February that the last units of the Dardanelles Army reached Egypt. Every day for over six weeks ship loads of troops, guns, animals and transport were arriving at Alexandria and Port Said. The components of this mass had to be disentangled and forwarded to their proper destinations; old units had to be reorganised, new units to be created, brigades, divisions, Army Corps to be re-formed. The British troops from Gallipoli were incomplete in personnel and material. It was urgently necessary to bring them up to strength, re-equip them, and provide them with train and mechanical transport on a modified scale. The Australasian troops also needed re-equipment, and, in their case, there was the additional problem of dealing with a mass of unabsorbed reinforcements. Further training of officers and men was an urgent necessity. Moreover, the embarkation of troops for service elsewhere began in February and continued without intermission till the end of April. To this work must be added not only the maintenance of my Force, both in Egypt and Salonica, with animals, supplies, ordnance stores, works material, and medical and veterinary stores, but also the provision and despatch of ordnance stores, works material, and supplies specially demanded for Basrah and East Africa.

The bulk of the work of disembarkation and embarkation, including the very heavy work of railway transport, fell upon the staffs of my Deputy Quartermaster-General and Inspector General of Communications, to whom great credit is due. This work, together with the task of supplying and maintaining the troops operating on the eastern, and subsequently also on the western, front, was efficiently carried out by the Ordnance, Supply and Transport, Remount, and Works departments.

As regards instruction, a training centre for Australasian reinforcements was started at Tel el Kebir and continued until it was decided that the Australasian training dépôts should be transferred to England. Further, a machine gun school was formed at Ismailia which, after producing excellent results, was merged in the Imperial School of Instruction at Zeitoun. The latter institution, which came under my control after 19th March, has since been increased in size so as to train officers in all branches of warfare. Under its commandant, Lieut.-Colonel the Hon. E. M. Colston, M.V.O., its work has been most valuable. Besides the ordinary courses for officers and non-commissioned officers, it holds machine gun, Lewis gun, signal and telephone, artillery, Stokes gun, and grenadier classes. Between 7th January and 31st May, 1,166 officers and 5,512 other ranks attended and passed in the various classes. A machine gun school was also started at Salonica.

Excellent work has been done by the signal service during this period. In the first place, it has efficiently carried out the work of re-fitting the signal units from the Peninsula, re-organising them to suit the conditions peculiar to Egypt, and training locally officers and men to fill the gaps and meet the increased demand for signallers and telegraphists. Ninety-four officers and 1,305 other ranks have been trained

in these duties at Zeitoun and Alexandria this year. Secondly, it has had to provide inter-communication for troops engaged upon over 1,000 miles of front, which has involved the development of an unusually extensive network of military telegraphs. All the resource and ingenuity of the service has been taxed to cope with the conditions peculiar to this field of operations—abnormal distances, unusual means of transport, desert, sand storms and mirage. Lastly, it has substituted a military telegraph and telephone service for the civil system which, until this year, had been the only available means of communication throughout Egypt and was worked mainly by native personnel.

I would also specially mention the survey work that has been carried out since the arrival of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force in Egypt. In addition to the standardisation, printing and issue of tactical maps of Sinai to the whole of the army on the eastern front, a new survey on a large scale of the Canal zone and certain areas east of our lines and advanced posts has been continuously carried on by the Topographical Section of the Intelligence Branch, working in close co-operation with the Royal Flying Corps. This survey, which has now been in process for nearly six months, is now approaching Qatia. I believe that the map based on this survey is the first map entirely constructed on this principle. The work was initiated by Mr. E. M. Dowson, Director-General, Survey of Egypt, who placed his resources at the disposal of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force. The actual direction of the work has been in the hands of the Intelligence Branch of my General Staff, and is based on experience, gained in Gallipoli, of the production of trench maps from aeroplane photographs, controlled by ordinary field survey methods. Co-operation in this survey has been part of the routine of the Royal Flying Corps.

These labours, most of which demanded the utmost despatch in their completion, were carried out concurrently with the conduct of more strictly military operations, to my report on which I will now proceed.

3. When I arrived in Egypt the intentions of the enemy as regards an attack on the Suez Canal were by no means certain. Though his new means of communication in southern Syria and Sinai, commenced with this end in view, were still in a backward state, he undoubtedly had at his disposal the troops, amounting to 250,000 men or more, necessary for such an attack. The adequate defence of the Canal was, therefore, a matter of serious importance. The outline of a scheme of defence had already been prepared; certain works were being constructed, railways and pipe-lines and roads commenced, and troops were being concentrated in the three sections of the Canal defences, which were based on Suez, Ismailia and Port Said respectively. A satisfactory agreement was arrived at between Sir John Maxwell and myself regarding the delimitations of our respective spheres of command and the troops to be allotted to him. On 22nd January General Headquarters opened at Ismailia.

My chief concern was now the defence of the Canal. The work on the stationary defences was backward. Difficulties of water supply on the east bank were increased by shortage of piping; labour troubles had delayed the progress of roads and railways. Guns had still to be emplaced, and no part of the