

defence of the reach of the Nile between Assouan and Wadi Halfa. Captain F. H. Mitchell, R.N., D.S.O., was sent for this purpose to make all arrangements for an armed naval patrol of this reach.

On 18th March, Captain H. R. H. the Prince of Wales took up his duties as Staff Captain on my Staff, remaining till his departure from Egypt on 1st May.

6. As soon as the conduct of operations on the Western Frontier devolved upon me, I took steps, in consultation with the various officers who were then best acquainted with the situation, to estimate the size of the hostile forces with which I should have to deal, and to determine the policy along this front of over 800 miles by which the Nile Valley could best be protected. It appeared from the information placed at my disposal that the Senoussi forces, spread over the whole Western desert, did not exceed 3,000, and it was certain that the enemy's moral had been severely shaken by Sir John Maxwell's recent successful operations. The chief dangers, therefore, against which I had to guard were enemy raids upon the Nile Valley, the stirring up of native tribes that were inclined to be well-disposed towards the Senoussi, and the creation of unrest in the Nile Valley and Delta among disaffected or nervous elements of the population. The chief end to be held in view was to prevent any local success on the part of the Senoussi.

On 15th April the Kharga Oasis, which had previously been reported by aerial reconnaissance and resident agents to be clear of the enemy, was occupied without incident. The movement of troops was effected by the existing light railway, and by the 18th April a force numbering 1,660 of all ranks was concentrated in the Oasis.

On the 27th April the small oasis of Moghara was occupied. A strongly entrenched post has been constructed. The occupation of this post has materially assisted in preventing the passage of foodstuffs from the Nile Valley to the west, and denies the water to any enemy force attempting to move in the contrary direction.

During April frequent raids and reconnaissances, chiefly with a view to capturing concealed depôts of ammunition, were undertaken on the Western Front; in these enterprises our armoured and light motor cars have been of inestimable value. On 7th April a detachment of four armoured cars, accompanied by the machine-gun section of the 2/7th Middlesex Regiment, conducted a raid from Sollum upon an ammunition depôt at Moraisa, eighteen miles north-west of Sollum. After a very slight resistance from the guard of thirty Muhafzia, twenty-one boxes of 8.9 centimetre Mantelli gun ammunition and 120,000 rounds of small arms ammunition were taken and destroyed. On 11th April a motor car reconnaissance found and removed eleven rifles and 7,000 rounds of small arms ammunition some twenty miles west of Sollum. On 23rd April an armoured car reconnaissance from Sollum discovered and brought in 140,000 rounds of small arms ammunition from a concealed depôt. On the 30th April a further 20,000 rounds were discovered and brought in to Sollum. During this month, also, four prisoners, including a Turkish officer, were captured sixty miles west of Minia, and two small camel convoys were captured near El

Alamein. The light car patrols were responsible for all these captures.

7. During the month of April reconnaissance was active all along the Eastern Front, with the result that by the middle of the month all water supplies of any importance within thirty miles of the Canal were patrolled by our troops, and mobile columns were ready to go out and deal with enemy parties approaching them, or, in the event of serious threat, to demolish the rock cisterns. In No. 1 Section, on 20th April, a patrol from Bir Mabeiuk came in contact with an enemy patrol, fifty strong, on the sand hills near the mouth of the Wadi Hamatha, some eighteen miles W.S.W. of Suez. A squadron and fifty rifles endeavoured to cut the enemy off, but he at once retired and scattered among the hills. Our casualties were two men killed. On 23rd April and the following days four columns, each composed of mounted troops and infantry, carried out reconnaissances of the approaches from the west to Ain Sudr and Sudr El Heitan. The columns returned to their respective posts on 26th April.

In No. 2 Section, on 27th March, the 2nd Australian and New Zealand Army Corps came into existence on the departure of the 1st Australian and New Zealand Army Corps to France. The Corps was commanded by Lieutenant-General Sir Alexander Godley, K.C.M.G., C.B., and consisted of the 4th Australian Division, commanded by Major-General Sir H. V. Cox, K.C.M.G., C.B., C.S.I., the 5th Australian Division, commanded by Major-General Hon. J. MacCay, V.D., and the Anzac Mounted Division, commanded by Major-General H. G. Chauvel, C.B., C.M.G. (attached). In this section, the wells at Moiya Harab and Wadi Um Muksheib having been brought into the regular patrolling area, a very successful reconnaissance to Jifjaffa was carried out between 11th and 15th April. The troops for this enterprise were a squadron of the 9th Australian Light Horse Regiment, accompanied by a detachment of Bikanir Camel Corps, and commanded by Major Scott, D.S.O., 9th Australian Light Horse. The objective was fifty-two miles from the starting point, and a jumping-off place for the attack, eight miles south-west of the objective, was reached at 2.30 a.m. on 13th April. From here an attack was launched by three troops upon the enemy's position at 9 a.m. The enemy, cut off in their attempted retreat by the right flanking party of the attack, stood at bay on one of the hills above the village, and lost six men killed and five wounded before surrendering. One Austrian lieutenant of engineers and thirty-three other prisoners were captured, our own casualties being one man and one horse killed. The destruction of the enemy's camp was thoroughly carried out, a quantity of correspondence was taken, and the elaborate well-boring plant, which had been at work for five months, was completely demolished. The manner in which this operation was carried out was most creditable, both to the commander of the column and to all ranks composing it.

In conjunction with this reconnaissance, a mounted column was sent out in No. 1 Section to reconnoitre Bir el Giddi and the roads leading east from it. This force satisfactorily accomplished its mission, and, after an encounter with a hostile patrol, captured unwounded three armed Arabs.

In the Qatia District, where alone there is