

and caused their guns to shift their position further east. The enemy gave ground slowly, and, since by 3.30 p.m. it was evident that Qatia had fallen, General Wiggin determined to fall back; he himself retired on Dueidar by way of Hamisah, Colonel Yorke on Romani; neither were followed. Meanwhile, at 5.30 a.m. a Turkish force, 1,000 strong, with one gun, advancing from the south, attacked Dueidar, the most advanced defensible post, which was held by 100 men of the 5th Battalion, Royal Scots Fusiliers, under the command of Captain Roberts, 5th Battalion, Royal Scots Fusiliers. This officer, who throughout showed conspicuous skill and ability, succeeded in repelling two determined attacks on the position at 6.30 a.m. and 8.30 a.m. respectively. Both attempts cost the enemy dear. At 9.30 a.m. reinforcements of two companies 4th Royal Scots Fusiliers, under the command of Major Thompson, 4th Battalion, Royal Scots Fusiliers, who had been despatched from Hill 70, seven miles away, on the first news of the attack, arrived at Dueidar. The various posts were strengthened, and a counter-attack, delivered at 12.30 p.m. with great spirit, forced the enemy to retire, leaving 30 prisoners in our hands and 70 dead. The Turks were pursued in their retreat by the 5th Australian Light Horse, who had only arrived at Qantara at 1 p.m., and by aeroplanes, thereby suffering further loss. Besides the three and a half squadrons of Yeomanry and details lost at Qatia and Oghratina, our casualties on the 23rd were two officers and 18 men killed, four officers and 21 men wounded. Aeroplane reconnaissance on the evening of the 23rd established the fact that the enemy force, which included a large body of picked Turkish regular troops, was already retiring. At dawn on the 24th eight machines of the 5th Wing, Royal Flying Corps, made a bomb and machine gun attack from a low altitude on the enemy troops left in Qatia, causing very heavy casualties and completely destroying the camp. One machine also located and attacked a large body of enemy at Bir el Abd, and located another party retiring on Bir el Bayud. On the morning of the 25th further bomb and machine gun attacks were made by the Royal Flying Corps on enemy forces at Bir el Abd and Bir el Bayud. Both attacks were extremely successful, working great havoc among men and animals. I cannot speak too highly of the admirable work done by the 5th Wing, Royal Flying Corps, during these few days. The strain thrown on pilots and machines was very heavy, and the former displayed the utmost gallantry and resource on all occasions. Chiefly through their efforts the enemy was made to pay a very heavy price for his partially successful raid. The general situation in front of No. 3 Section was not affected by these operations. Our Cavalry continued to patrol the Qatia district, which was now practically clear of the enemy, while our infantry posts at Dueidar and Romani were strengthened, and the railway towards Romani was pushed on with all speed.

9. After 16th January, when General Sarraill assumed supreme control of the operations of the Allied Forces at Salonica, the British Force there commanded by Lieutenant-General Sir B. T. Mahon, K.C.V.O., C.B., D.S.O., only remained under my control for administrative purposes. From the beginning of January to the end of April no active opera-

tions of importance took place. The general line of defences remained practically unaltered. Some 200 miles of deep trenches, including communication trenches, 710 emplacements for guns, 230 reduits or strong posts, 160 miles of obstacles (barbed wire), and 1,300 miles of telegraph cable have been completed; and the defences as a whole are now quite ready for occupation should the situation demand it.

As in Egypt, so in Salonica, the administrative work has been extremely heavy. At the outset the state of the communications was very unsatisfactory. There were only two metalled roads leading to our lines, both in a shocking state of repair; the few existing tracks soon became impassable in wet weather for everything except pack animals. The construction and repair of roads had, therefore, to proceed simultaneously with the preparation of the defences. Roads in the forward area were all begun by the troops themselves, and all ranks worked admirably, the men thoroughly recognising the importance of the matter. Later, it was found possible to organise local civilian labour companies, who have largely been employed to complete and maintain the road work begun by the troops. Altogether about 90 miles of new metalled cart roads have been constructed, and 105 miles of mule tracks, besides some 60 miles of repairs to previously existing roads and tracks. Railway extensions leading to the various depôts on the Monastir road, with the necessary sidings, have been constructed, and Decauville lines laid within the depôts themselves. Preparations have been made for further extensions. Another great difficulty, that of insufficient wharfage accommodation, has been met by the construction of new piers in the bay itself and at Skala Stavros. These have reduced the congestion to an appreciable extent and fully justified the labour and expense involved.

The supply system, though hindered at first by the state of the communications and by the fact that the equipment of the force with a special scale of transport was only in process of gradual completion, has worked with uninterrupted success. The health of the troops has been excellent, all ranks having benefited by hard physical work in good climatic conditions. In view of the approach of summer, when malaria is likely to prevail in certain districts through which our line passes, special precautions have been taken for the protection of the troops and, where possible, alternative positions prepared.

Throughout the period the importance of training the troops has been insisted upon. At first one day weekly was devoted to training, as opposed to road-making or work on the defences. This proportion has gradually risen to four days weekly, excluding one day of rest.

On 9th May, under orders from the War Office, Lieut.-General G. F. Milne, C.B., D.S.O., succeeded Lieut.-General Sir Brvan Mahon, K.C.V.O., C.B., D.S.O., in command of the Salonica Army. General Mahon sailed on the same date to take up command of the Western Frontier Force in Egypt.

10. In Egypt during the month of May there was no major operation to record. Intelligence received early in the month showed that the Turks had materially increased their numbers in Sinai, doubtless with the view of detaining troops in Egypt. The enemy's main concentrations were too far away for me to strike at them, and I was in hopes that he