

cavalry; on being driven back they were supported by a considerable force of footmen from the "dem." General Hunter, in face of this enveloping movement, ordered a retirement under cover of artillery and Maxim fire. Our cavalry were now closely engaged on both flanks and rear, when Lieutenant-Colonel Broadwood, with Major Le Gallais' and Captain Perse's squadrons, gallantly charged the Dervish horsemen, getting well home and forcing them to fall back. Captain Perse received a bullet wound in the forearm.

The effect of the Maxim fire was most marked, enabling our retirement to be quietly and steadily carried out without further interference.

I now determined to attack Mahmud's position, and accordingly advanced on the morning of the 6th April to Umdabia, and reconnoitred a further position near Mutrus, which would satisfy the requirements of a resting and watering place during the intended night march on the enemy's camp.

On the following evening (7th April), having left half of the 15th battalion as guard over hospital, stores, and transport, in strong zareba at Umdabia, the brigade (British leading) advanced to Mutrus, where the force watered and rested till 1 A.M., when the march was resumed in bright moonlight, the route followed being clear of all bush, and circling out into the desert in order that the positions previously selected could be occupied by daybreak unseen, if possible, by the enemy.

Captain Fitton, D.A.A.G., directed the line of advance with the greatest accuracy.

When opposite the enemy's position, indicated by their camp fires, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles distant from it, the force halted from 3.45 to 4.30 A.M. The brigades then deployed from square into attack formation—British on the left, Macdonald's in the centre, Maxwell's on the right, and Lewis' brigade, with water and transport, in reserve. In this formation the force advanced to within 600 yards of the Dervish "dem," which comprised a large irregular inclosure, strongly entrenched all round, palisaded in parts, with innumerable cross trenches, casemates, and straw huts, besides ten palisaded gun emplacements, the whole surrounded by a strong zareba. That portion of the camp nearest to the desert was fairly free of bush, but towards the centre it became thicker, and the rear and flanks closest to the river were concealed in a dense jungle of sunt trees, dom palms, and undergrowth.

From the commanding ground we occupied numbers of the enemy were observed moving about in the camp, and dense clouds of dust were seen up-stream.

Two good artillery positions were chosen so as to bring a cross fire on the enemy's entrenchments, and twelve guns came into action at each of those points, assisted by a rocket detachment under Lieutenant Beaty, Royal Navy. At 6.15 A.M. the first gun was fired; all movement in the enemy's camp then ceased, and a body of some 2,000 horsemen were seen advancing towards our cavalry, which occupied a commanding position on the extreme left; they were received by a heavy Maxim fire, which drove them back into the belt of dom palms, where they remained for some time threatening our left flank.

During the artillery bombardment, which lasted an hour and a half, and which was most efficiently carried out, the enemy showed little activity—a few desultory shots only being fired.

At 7.15 A.M. the infantry were ordered to form in column for assault; the British were disposed in three columns, covered by a battalion in line with the Maxims on the left, whilst the Egyptian

force had in each brigade two battalions, covering a central assaulting column in double companies with extreme right flank well protected. One battalion of the reserve brigade formed square in a central position round the transport and water, leaving two battalions in rear of the extreme left flank.

At 7.40 A.M. I sounded the general advance, and as the infantry approached the crest line dominating the trenches the enemy opened fire, gradually increasing in intensity as the crest was reached, and the assaulting columns, now suffering many casualties, steadily and unflinchingly bore down towards the zareba, with pipes and bands playing; advancing by successive rushes, they surmounted this obstacle, carrying most gallantly the first line of trenches and stockades at the point of the bayonet. The guns and Maxims accompanying the infantry swept the trenches and ground in front, with case and Maxim fire.

The advance through the "dem" was steadily continued, trench after trench being cleared, down to the river bank, where the troops arrived at 8.35 A.M. and re-formed. The two battalions of the reserve brigade co-operated in this movement on the extreme left, as well as Captain Payton's squadron, which had been sent down to the river bank on the extreme right previous to the general advance.

The pursuit was taken up by the cavalry, but owing to the thick bush it could not be continued far. The Dervish losses are estimated at over 3,000 killed within and around the zareba. A large number of prisoners, quantities of banners, war drums, rifles, and ten guns were also captured, besides the entire baggage of the Dervish army.

With the exception of Osman Digna and three other Chiefs, all the important Emirs were killed, and Mahmud was taken prisoner by the 10th Battalion under the command of Major Nason.

Nothing could exceed the steadiness and excellent fire discipline of the troops throughout the engagement. An observation was made, with which I fully concur, that had a force at peace manoeuvres attacked over similar obstacles a better line and a steadier advance could not have been maintained.

I deeply regret the loss of Captains Urquhart and Findlay (Cameron Highlanders) and Second Lieutenant Gore (Seaforth Highlanders), who fell gallantly leading their men over the trenches.

Our further losses amount in the British brigade to 22 non-commissioned officers and men killed, and 10 officers and 82 non-commissioned officers and men wounded.

In the Egyptian army 57 non-commissioned officers and men were killed, and 5 British and 16 native officers and 365 non-commissioned officers and men wounded.

A field hospital was established in which all the wounded were dressed, and the troops marched back at 4 P.M. to Umdabia, where all the wounded were brought in.

The action having been decisive, the troops returned by independent brigades and short marches to their quarters on the Nile, the wounded being carried to the hospital at Atbara Fort, where all arrangements for their comfort and subsequent transfer by boat north had been made.

I cannot speak too highly of the behaviour of all ranks during the long and trying day which showed to the greatest advantage the discipline, courage, and endurance of the whole force.

My special thanks are due to Major-General Hunter, who throughout the operations gave additional proof of those valuable and soldierlike