

this force was led considerably out of the direct road.

On the 17th April, 1903, the mounted troops continued their march at 3.30 A.M., and met the Bohotle—Megagjifa—Danop road at 6 A.M., some 14 miles from Megagjifa. At 11.30 A.M., when some ten miles from Danop, the force halted, as the animals were very done up by the heat and want of water. Ten of the best Somali Mounted Infantry ponies were picked out, and a patrol of Somali Mounted Infantry sent on to Danop to reconnoitre and report on the water. At 4 P.M. two of this patrol returned and reported as follows:—

“Went to Danop, and found 15 of the enemy’s horsemen, chased them capturing nine ponies. Water there only sufficient for the whole Flying Column for 3 days.”

On this information orders were sent out by mounted messengers to Major Rowlands to return to Bohotle, as there was not enough water to fill up tins for the return journey.

The mounted troops continued their march to Danop to water up, and to act on any further information that might be obtained.

Arrived Danop, 5.45 P.M., a few shots being fired by the enemy on our left flank. Water was found to be more than expected, although not enough for the whole Flying Column. Orders were, therefore, sent to Major Rowlands, at 6.30 P.M., cancelling previous orders, and ordering up 100 2nd Battalion King’s African Rifles, 50 Sikhs, 2 Maxims, reserve ammunition, 100 water tins, and all available rations, the remainder of the column to return to Bohotle.

A strong zariba was made.

On the 18th April, 1903, patrols of Somali Mounted Infantry were sent out west and south-west at 6 A.M. These returned at noon with 400 loot camels and two prisoners. The latter reported 3 days’ heavy fighting between Galadi and Wardair, and that the Mullah had lost many men. Zariba was strengthened.

At 5.30 P.M. messengers, received from Major Rowlands, dated noon this day, 15 miles east of Megagjifa, saying that up to the time of writing no messengers from Flying Column were received by him, and that he would have to return unless he received orders by early morning of 19th. His men had been placed on a half issue of water to enable Major Rowlands to stay on an extra day.

Messengers were sent back at once, repeating previous orders re coming on to Danop.

An Ibrahim was sent to Walwal to try and get information, and camel meat was issued to all ranks as rations.

On the 19th April, 1903, an Officers’ patrol, under Captain Hughes, consisting of 30 Bikanir Camel Corps and 10 Somali Mounted Infantry, were sent out on Walwal road. This patrol returned at 5 P.M., having gone 15 miles on Walwal road and having seen nothing. At 12.30 P.M. a few of the enemy’s horsemen reported in the bush close to the zariba. Fifteen Somali Mounted Infantry chased them out of it, a few shots being exchanged.

At 1.30 P.M. a letter was received from Major Rowlands, acknowledging receipt of yesterday’s orders, and saying that he was acting on them. Our two previous messengers were afterwards found to have eventually fetched up at Bohotle.

On the 20th April, 1903, Major Rowlands, with 50 Sikhs and 30 2nd Battalion King’s African Rifles, arrived at our zariba at 1.30 A.M., having marched 35 miles, the convoy being zaribaed at dark about 10 miles from Danop.

The Bikanir Camel Corps were sent out at daylight to meet the convoy and escort it into Danop. The convoy arrived all correct at 9 A.M. A false alarm occurred at noon. The zariba was strengthened and bush cleared.

On the 21st April, 1903, a patrol of 25 Somali Mounted Infantry was sent out at 4.30 A.M. towards Wardair, with orders to go on till they met the enemy or otherwise obtained information and to bring back a prisoner, if possible.

Another patrol of Somali Camel Corps was sent to Massara (7½ miles south-west by west) to report on water there. This patrol returned at 8.30 A.M., reporting the water there so filthy that the animals refused to drink it. The Somali Mounted Infantry patrol returned at 1 P.M. with two prisoners, and reported having met 42 of the enemy’s scouts 12 miles from Danop; they killed 18 and brought back two prisoners. The prisoners stated as follows:—

“Sent out from Daratoleh (25 miles S.S.E. from Danop) to watch the English force and report on its strength. Enemy’s force at Daratoleh, 50 mounted rifle-men and 300 spearmen, but that they had received further reinforcements yesterday.” Also stated that there had been heavy fighting at Gumburu, the Mullah losing heavily; also that there was a fresh rain-water bali at Daratoleh.

The Ibrahim, who was sent out on 17th, returned at 2.30 P.M., and corroborated the above story, but said that the enemy had a large force at Daratoleh, and that the English force had halted at Gumburu and was short of water.

A report of the above was sent to the Officer Commanding Lines of Communication, Bohotle, informing him that the mounted troops would go out to Daratoleh to-morrow (morning of 22nd).

On the 22nd April, 1903, as reported in my letter of 21st to Officer Commanding Lines of Communication, Bohotle, I left Danop at 4.30 A.M. with following force:—

45 Bikanir Camel Corps, 2 Officers, with 1 Maxim under Sergeant Gibb; 54 Somali Mounted Infantry (6th Battalion King’s African Rifles), 3 Officers; 50 Somali Camel Corps (6th Battalion King’s African Rifles), 1 Officer; 30 2nd Battalion King’s African Rifles, 2 Officers mounted on Bikanir riding camels (behind the camel sowars); 12 Indian Contingent, British Central Africa, 1 Officer, mounted on ponies; Lieutenant Horton, Indian Medical Service.

At 7.30 A.M. we were fired on by the enemy’s scouts. The Somali Mounted Infantry chased and killed two men, capturing two rifles (Lee-Enfields), and three ponies.

We lost one pony shot. One mounted scout of enemy got away. At 9.15 A.M. we again came in contact with the enemy’s scouts, and, at 10.20 A.M. Captain Howard of the Somali Mounted Infantry reported a large force of enemy advancing to meet us. The force was dismounted at once, animals placed in centre, and the men lining the faces.

At 10.30 A.M. the enemy attacked in front, almost immediately developing the attack on all sides. Owing to thick bush and long grass the firing was at very close range, from 20 to 50 yards being the average range. This heavy attack continued till 2 P.M., our men being most steady and firing well. The Maxim under Sergeant Gibb was moved from place to place as occasion arose, and the enemy always giving way when it opened fire. The enemy attacked in a most determined way, exposing themselves freely. At 2 P.M., our ammunition beginning to run short, and one of the enemy who was captured by the Somali Camel Corps reporting that the Mullah himself