

Commander-in-Chief, on the operations of the Mohmand Field Force, and also of the columns which proceeded up the Khyber to disperse the Sufi Sahib's lashkar.

1. It is unnecessary to go into details regarding the formation of the Field Force, as His Excellency was himself present at Peshawar in April, when arrangements were first being made to strengthen the Abazai-Shabkadr-Michni line of outposts, in order to check the incessant raids of the Mohmands across our border, and their wilful attacks on villages within the British Administrative boundary.

During the early part of April all our posts on the Mohmand border were considerably increased in strength, and on 17th April I despatched 2 field guns and 700 infantry to Shabkadr to reinforce Lieutenant-Colonel Fane, 21st Cavalry, who was in command. New posts had been established at Mutta (to which place I myself proceeded) and Garhi Sadar. On 19th April parties of Mohmands crossed our border, fired after dark into several of the camps and attacked a party of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, causing us some casualties. As it was now evident they meant at all costs to bring on a fight I ordered Brigadier-General Anderson from Peshawar to Shabkadr with a squadron of cavalry, 2 field guns and 1,000 infantry. Strong reinforcements were also ordered from Nowshera to Peshawar and 2 squadrons from Nowshera Cavalry Cantonment to Shabkadr.

2. On 21st April several of our posts were fired into and our telegraph and telephone lines cut in all directions. The same occurred on 22nd April, by which date our camps had been rearranged, and surrounded by strong barbed wire entanglements. During the night the enemy kept up a sharp fire into our bivouacs and camps and again destroyed our telegraphic wires.

3. By 23rd April over 2,000 troops were located on the Mohmand border and I decided to attack the enemy, who had been erecting sangars and entrenchments within sight of our camps. By this time their lashkars had increased to several thousand men and their standards were defiantly planted on the low hills west of Mutta and at the mouth of the Gundab Valley opposite Shabkadr. The Mahomedan Friday gave them extra encouragement whilst we on our part made no movement out of our camps, so as to draw them on as near to our troops as possible. During the night they had their last opportunity of firing into our posts and made most determined attacks on Garhi Sadar and Mutta, and also attempted to destroy one of our boat bridges, on which alone we could rely for maintaining communication with Peshawar. All these attacks were repulsed but caused us several casualties.

4. In accordance with orders which I had issued late the previous evening, two columns composed of all the troops at Mutta and Shabkadr, after leaving guards over the camps, marched out at daybreak on 24th April, and after a gallant fight before Mutta and an advance up the Gundab Valley opposite Shabkadr, totally defeated the enemy and drove them headlong over the border and back into the hills from which they never again emerged.

5. The left column consisting of one squadron, 8 guns and 650 infantry under command of Colonel Unwin, 21st Cavalry, cleared the enemy from their sangars and followed them up to the vicinity of the village of Hafiz Kor. As the tribesmen, who were in considerable numbers, kept retreating up the broad Gundab Valley with

the object of drawing the column into the hills, Colonel Unwin in accordance with his orders, having ascertained the dispositions of the lashkars, retired slowly to Shabkadr. The Seaforth Highlanders, with 250 men of the Warwicks and 28th Punjabis warded off all attacks during this retirement. This movement effectually prevented the enemy from reinforcing the lashkars facing Brigadier-General Anderson, who at the same time was attacking their extreme left.

The 18th Field Battery used the new quick-firing guns on this occasion, I believe for the first time in action, and their fire had a great effect in holding off the enemy. Our casualties were only one British officer and two men wounded.

6. Brigadier-General Anderson's column consisted of 2 squadrons, four guns and 1,150 infantry made up from 6 different corps. The enemy, who numbered some 4,000 men, occupied strong sangars on the hills west of Mutta and defended them with courage and determination, refusing in some instances to yield until charged with the bayonet.

By 9 a.m. 2 companies of the Royal Warwicks had carried a commanding hill on the enemy's right centre. This attack was made with great *élan* and resulted in the enemy losing heavily as they attempted to escape up a narrow gorge. The companies of the Northumberland Fusiliers, the 57th Wilde's Rifles and 59th Scinde Rifles with equal gallantry drove the enemy from their sangars on our right front, the two latter regiments frequently using the bayonet. These combined attacks supported by the 53rd Sikhs and well covered by the guns of the 80th Field Battery, which had by this time approached to short range, altogether disconcerted the tribesmen, who fled towards the Borjina Pass, being severely punished by the combined fire of all the troops. Brigadier-General Anderson's orders were to drive the enemy from his positions, but not to get entangled in the hills and nullahs beyond, as he had no means of following them up. The losses inflicted on the Mohmands and their allies were very heavy; and Anderson's attack was carried out with the spirit and dash which are so characteristic of this fine soldier and have earned for him the respect of all who had the honour of serving with him in the field.

Our casualties at Mutta amounted to 6 killed and 50 wounded (including 3 British officers\*), but these losses were not heavy considering the numbers and position of the enemy, and the results achieved, for from this date no more attempts were made at raiding, night firing, or crossing our border; and in fact a combined reconnaissance from Mutta and Shabkadr next day found that the enemy had disappeared beyond reach. Their losses it is now known amounted to some hundreds killed and wounded.

7. On 27th April I received orders appointing me to command the Mohmand Field Force. I at once despatched messengers to call in the Jirgahs to Shabkadr; but this method of settling matters did not meet with success, nearly all the sections sending evasive or defiant replies.

8. On 1st May I learnt at Shabkadr that large numbers of Afghans and others under the leadership of Sufi Sahib had crossed the British border and were threatening Lundi Kotal; also that Afghan emissaries were endeavouring to bring about a general rising in Tirah. I sent immediate orders to hold the 3rd Brigade in

\* Two of whom died of their wounds.