

the enemy detachments on the Karun and on the Tigris.

I decided to deal first with the former and placed Major-General Gorringe in command of the operation.

3. Directly the Turks had been defeated at Barjisiyah the concentration of the 12th Division up the Karun was commenced. The Turkish force near Ahwaz retreated across the Kharkeh River on hearing of the defeat of their army at Barjisiyah.

General Gorringe followed in pursuit. By the 7th May the 12th Division and the Cavalry Brigade had reached Illah on the Kharkeh. This river was 250 yards wide with a rapid and deep stream, which presented a formidable obstacle to the passage of troops.

4. General Gorringe overcame the difficulties of passage and skilfully crossed his troops and guns to the other bank. The Turks continued their retreat towards Amarah on discovering that our column had crossed the river.

General Gorringe now found himself under the necessity of dealing with a recalcitrant and pugnacious branch of the Beni Taruf Arabs, who had identified themselves very strongly with the Turkish cause.

He advanced down the Kharkeh River operating on both banks.

Major-General Melliss commanded the column on the right bank and Brigadier-General Lean that on the left bank.

The occasion of the successful attack on the Arab stronghold, Kharajiyah, in extremely hot weather, when the temperature in tents was 120 degrees, was a display of dogged gallantry and devotion on the part of the troops engaged.

Among other interpid deeds was the exploit of Subadar Major Ajab Khan and 20 men of the 76th Punjabis, who swam the river under heavy fire, and brought back a boat in which troops were ferried across until sufficient were collected to assault a stout mud fort which was strongly held.

5. After the defeat and dispersion of the hostile tribesmen who had molested his advance, General Gorringe, in accordance with my instructions, made a series of demonstrations with a portion of his force from Bisaitin against the Turkish force which lay between him and Amarah. This action was in co-operation with the impending advance of our detachment from Qurnah (commanded by Major-General Townshend) on Amarah. It had the desired result of preventing reinforcements from joining the Turkish forces on the Tigris in time to oppose General Townshend's advance. It was largely due to these demonstrations that the enemy's retreat up the Tigris, after their defeat on 31st May, was so precipitate, and that General Townshend was enabled to enter Amarah practically unopposed. The Turkish force opposing General Gorringe was so delayed in its march to Amarah that when it eventually reached there it was surprised by General Townshend, who was already in occupation of the town. A part of the advance guard was captured and the remainder had to seek safety in dispersion with the loss of two guns.

6. General Gorringe's operations extended over a period of seven weeks. As a result, Persian Arabistan had been cleared of the enemy, and the Arab tribes forced to submit, thus enabling the pipe line to be repaired and normal conditions to be resumed at the Oil Fields, and most effective assistance had been

given to General Townshend's advance from Qurnah.

7. I consider that General Gorringe showed marked ability and determination in conducting these operations. The successful result is due to his able leadership and to the zeal and energy displayed by all ranks under his command.

The troops were compelled to undergo severe exertions, and overcame many obstacles during very hot and trying weather with undiminished resolution and zeal that was admirable.

8. While the 12th Division was advancing by the Karun and Kharkeh Rivers, preparations were in progress for an advance up the Tigris by the 6th Division under command of Major-General Townshend. Owing to the limited amount of river transport available at that time the movement and collection of troops was a slow and difficult process, and the flooded country around Qurnah presented many problems which required careful attention before operations could be commenced.

9. "Bellums"—long, narrow boats of the country—were collected and armoured with iron plates, to be used for carrying infantry to the assault of the enemy's positions; troops were trained in punting and boat work; various types of guns mounted on rafts, barges, tugs and paddlers; floating hospitals had to be improvised, and many other details of construction and equipment had to be thought out and provided for.

By the end of May preparations for the advance were complete.

10. The Turkish force was entrenched north of Qurnah on islands formed where high ground stood out from the inundation which covered all lower lying country.

These fortified localities were in two groups, the most southerly group forming an advanced position some two miles from the British lines; the main position being some three miles further to the north.

The flooded state of the country rendered it a position of some strength, necessitating a carefully organised attack in successive phases by combined naval and military operations.

General Townshend's plan was to capture the advanced position by a frontal attack combined with a turning attack against the enemy's left flank, supported by the naval flotilla and the artillery afloat, and that on land within the Qurnah entrenchments.

11. In the early morning of 31st May, after a heavy preparatory bombardment, the infantry advanced to the attack in the flotilla of improvised war "bellums," supported by admirably directed gunfire.

The 17th Infantry Brigade, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Climo, 24th Punjabis, made the frontal attack. The 22nd Punjabis and the Sirmur Sappers and Miners, under Lieutenant-Colonel Blois Johnson, 22nd Punjabis, captured One Tree Hill, on the enemy's left flank, and enfiladed Norfolk Hill, the first objective of the 17th Infantry Brigade, which was carried at the point of the bayonet by the 1st Battalion, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, after poling their boats for over a mile through thick reeds and landing waist deep in water.

12. The bold action of the mine-sweepers, which preceded the naval sloops and armed tugs, enabled the latter to keep pace with the troops, and their fire, combined with that of the Royal Artillery ashore and afloat, ensured