

concentrating at Kut-al-Amarah, at the junction of the Shatt-al-Hai with the Tigris, the possession of which strategic centre is necessary for the effective control of the northern part of the Basrah Vilayet. Nur-Ed-Din has attempted to cause a diversion by pushing strong detachments to within thirty miles of Amarah, while my principal attention was concentrated on the Euphrates.

The defeat of Nur-Ed-Din and the occupation of Kut-al-Amarah became my next objective as soon as Nasiriyah was secured, and I commenced the transfer of troops towards Amarah on the following day.

34. After the month of June the Shatt al Hai ceases to be navigable for some six months, and the only line of advance by water on Kut-al-Amarah is by the River Tigris.

On the 1st August a detachment from the 6th Division, accompanied by a naval flotilla, occupied Ali al Gharbi. Covered by this detachment, the concentration of the 6th Division under General Townshend for the advance on Kut-al-Amarah was carried out.

35. The transfer of troops from the Euphrates to the Tigris was a slow process, owing to the difficulties in crossing the shallow Hammar Lake during the low-water season.

By the 12th September the force was concentrated at Ali al Gharbi. Thence the advance was continued by route march along the river bank, accompanied by a naval flotilla and shipping, until Sannaiyat (some eight miles below the enemy's position covering Kut-al-Amarah) was reached on 15th September. Intense heat prevailed during the period of this march, with temperatures ranging from 110 degrees to 116 degrees in the shade. The column remained halted at Sannaiyat until 25th September, receiving reinforcements during this period.

36. A few skirmishes had taken place between our cavalry and that of the enemy, and constant naval and air reconnaissances were made. Accurate information was gained regarding the dispositions of the enemy.

The work performed by the Royal Flying Corps during this period was invaluable.

37. Nur-Ed-Din Bey's Army lay astride the river some seven miles N.E. of Kut and eight miles from General Townshend's Force at Sannaiyat. It occupied a line naturally favourable for defence, which, during three or four months of preparation, had been converted into a formidable position.

On the right bank the defences extended for five miles southwards along some mounds which commanded an extensive field of fire. The river was blocked by a boom composed of barges and wire cables commanded at close range by guns and fire trenches. On the left bank the entrenchments extended for seven miles, linking up the gaps between the river and three marshes which stretched away to the north. The defences were well designed and concealed, commanding flat and open approaches. They were elaborately constructed with a thoroughness that missed no detail. In front of the trenches were barbed wire entanglements, military pits, and land mines. Behind were miles of communication trenches connecting the various works and providing covered outlets to the river, where ramps and landing-stages had been made to facilitate the transfer of troops to or from ships, while pumping engines and water channels carried water from the river to the trenches.

38. Nur-ed-din's Army held this position: one division being on each bank, with some Army troops in reserve on the left bank, near a bridge above the main position. A force of Arab horsemen was posted on the Turkish left flank; most of the Turkish regular cavalry were absent during the battle on a raid against our communications at Shaikh Saad.

39. On the 26th September General Townshend advanced to within 4 miles of the Turkish position. His plan was to make a decisive attack on the left bank by enveloping the Turkish left with his main force, but in order to deceive the enemy as to the direction of the real attack, preliminary dispositions and preparatory attacks were made with the object of inducing the Turks to expect the principal attack on the right bank.

40. On the morning of the 27th our troops advanced by both banks. The principal force, on the right bank, made a feint attack on the trenches south of the river, while the left bank detachment entrenched itself within 3,000 yards of the enemy. Meanwhile a bridge had been constructed, and under cover of night the main force crossed from the right bank and deployed opposite the enemy's left flank.

41. On the morning of the 28th September a general attack was made against the enemy on the left bank. The 18th Infantry Brigade, under Major-General Fry, with its left on the line of the river, made a pinning attack, while Brigadier-General Delamain, commanding the 16th and 17th Infantry Brigades, advanced in two columns against the enemy's left, one column being directed frontally against the flank entrenchments while the other moved wide round the flank and attacked in rear. General Delamain's right flank was protected by the Cavalry Brigade.

42. The first troops to enter the enemy trenches were the 1st Battalion, Dorsetshire Regiment, 117th Mahrattas and 22nd Company Sappers and Miners, who made a brilliant assault, well supported by the Artillery, and soon after 10 a.m. captured a redoubt and trenches on the enemy's extreme left, inflicting heavy losses and taking 135 prisoners.

43. A combined attack by the 16th and 17th Infantry Brigades was then made, and, after hard fighting, during which the enemy made several unsuccessful counter-attacks, the whole of the northern part of the enemy's position was in our hands by 2 p.m.

44. General Delamain reorganised his troops on the captured position and gave them a much-needed rest, as they were exhausted by the great heat, the long march and hard fighting. After a brief rest General Delamain moved his column southwards to assist the 18th Infantry Brigade by attacking the enemy opposed to it in rear. Before this attack could develop strong hostile reserves appeared from the south-west, in the direction of the bridge. General Delamain immediately changed his objective and attacked the new troops, supported by his guns firing at a range of 1,700 yards.

45. The sight of the approaching enemy and the prospect of getting at him in the open with the bayonet put new life into our Infantry, who were suffering from weariness and exhaustion after their long and trying exertions under the tropical sun. For the time thirst and fatigue were forgotten.

The attack was made in a most gallant manner with great dash. The enemy were