

were dominated almost throughout by the Turks. The possible Artillery positions were insufficient and defective. The Force, in short, held a line possessing every possible military defect. The position was without depth, the communications were insecure and dependent on the weather. No means existed for the concealment and deployment of fresh troops destined for the offensive—whilst the Turks enjoyed full powers of observation, abundant Artillery positions, and they had been given the time to supplement the natural advantages which the position presented by all the devices at the disposal of the Field Engineer.

Another material factor came prominently before me. The troops on the Peninsula had suffered much from various causes.

(a) It was not in the first place possible to withdraw them from the shell-swept area as is done when necessary in France, for every corner on the Peninsula is exposed to hostile fire.

(b) They were much enervated from the diseases which are endemic in that part of Europe in the summer.

(c) In consequence of the losses which they had suffered in earlier battles, there was a very grave dearth of officers competent to take command of men.

(d) In order to maintain the numbers needed to hold the front, the Territorial Divisions had been augmented by the attachment of Yeomanry and Mounted Brigades. Makeshifts of this nature very obviously did not tend to create efficiency.

Other arguments, irrefutable in their conclusions, convinced me that a complete evacuation was the only wise course to pursue.

(a) It was obvious that the Turks could hold us in front with a small force and prosecute their designs on Baghdad or Egypt, or both.

(b) An advance from the positions we held could not be regarded as a reasonable military operation to expect.

(c) Even had we been able to make an advance in the Peninsula, our position would not have been ameliorated to any marked degree, and an advance on Constantinople was quite out of the question.

(d) Since we could not hope to achieve any purpose by remaining on the Peninsula, the appalling cost to the nation involved in consequence of embarking on an Overseas Expedition with no base available for the rapid transit of stores, supplies and personnel, made it urgent that we should divert the troops locked up on the Peninsula to a more useful theatre.

Since therefore I could see no military advantage in our continued occupation of positions on the Peninsula, I telegraphed to your Lordship that in my opinion the evacuation of the Peninsula should be taken in hand.

Subsequently I proceeded to Egypt to confer with Colonel Sir H. McMahon, the High Commissioner, and Lieut.-General Sir J. Maxwell, Commanding the Forces in Egypt, over the situation which might be created in Egypt and the Arab world by the evacuation of the Peninsula.

Whilst in Egypt I was ordered by a telegram from the War Office to take command of the

troops at Salonika. The purport of this telegram was subsequently cancelled by your Lordship on your arrival at Mudros, and I was then ordered to assume Command of the Forces in the Mediterranean, east of Malta, and exclusive of Egypt.

Consequent on these instructions, I received approval that the two Forces in the Mediterranean should be designated as follows:—

(a) The original Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, which comprised the Forces operating on the Gallipoli Peninsula and those employed at Mudros and Imbros as the "Dardanelles Army," under Lieut.-General Sir W. Birdwood, K.C.B., etc., with headquarters at Imbros.

(b) The troops destined for Salonika as the "Salonika Army," under Lieut.-General Sir B. Mahon, K.C.B., with headquarters at Salonika.

The Staff of the original M.E.F. was left in part to form the Dardanelles Army, and the remainder were taken to make a General Headquarters Staff for the increased responsibilities now assumed. Other officers doing duty in this theatre with the necessary qualifications were selected, and, with no difficulty or demands on home resources, a thoroughly efficient and adequate Staff was created.

Mudros was selected as being the most suitable site for the establishment of headquarters, as affording an opportunity, in addition to other advantages, of daily consultation with the Inspector General, Line of Communications. The working of the services of the Line of Communications presented difficulties of an unique character, mainly owing to

(a) the absence of pier and wharfage accommodation at Mudros and the necessity of transferring all Ordnance and Engineer Stores from one ship to another;

(b) the submarine danger;

(c) the delay caused by rough weather.

Close association with General Altham was therefore most imperative, and by this means many important changes were made which conduced to greater efficiency and more prompt response to the demands of fighting units.

A narrative of the events which occurred in each of the two Armies is now recorded separately for facility of perusal and reference.

SALONIKA ARMY.

Early in October the 10th Division, under Lieut.-General Sir B. Mahon, K.C.B., was transferred from Suvla to Salonika, and fully concentrated there. The dislocation of units caused by the landing on the Peninsula and the subsequent heavy fighting which occurred prevented this Division being despatched intact. The organisation of the Infantry and the Royal Engineers was not disturbed, but the other services had to be improvised from other Divisions as found most accessible.

The arrival of the 10th Division had been preceded by two French Divisions under General Sarrail, whose Force was subsequently augmented by another Division. These three Divisions were then moved into Serbia under the understanding arranged between the Allies Governments, which was to the effect that the