

reached Kut-Al-Amarah on December 3rd until the date of my departure from Mesopotamia.

29. When General Townshend reached Kut on December 3rd, measures were taken to withstand a siege until the arrival of relief from reinforcements which were coming from overseas.

Defences were improved. Shipping was despatched to Basrah, evacuating the sick and wounded, and also the Turkish prisoners (1,350 were captured at Ctesiphon and all were safely brought away in the retreat).

The armed tug "Sumana" was the only vessel left at Kut.

The Cavalry Brigade and a convoy of transport animals were marched down to Ali Al Gharbi, before the enemy could effect an investment.

The Cavalry left on December 6th. On that day the enemy closed on the northern front, and by December 7th the investment of Kut was complete.

30. The cavalry at Ali Al Gharbi was reinforced with infantry and guns from Basrah. Behind this advanced detachment a force under the command of Major-General F. J. Aylmer, V.C., was collected on the line Amarah-Ali Al Gharbi, for the relief of Kut as soon as its concentration was completed.

31. The entrenched camp at Kut is contained in a "U" shaped loop of the Tigris; the town stands at the most southerly end of the peninsula so formed. The northern defences are some 3,200 yards from the town; the peninsula is about a mile in width.

A detached post was established at a small village on the right bank of the river opposite Kut. East of the town was a bridge of boats, covered by a bridge head detachment on the right bank.

32. On December 8th, the enemy carried out a heavy bombardment from three sides, and Nur-Ed-Din Pasha called upon General Townshend to surrender.

33. On December 9th, our detachment on the right bank, covering the bridge, was forced to retire before a heavy attack. The enemy occupied the right bank at the bridge head.

During the night, December 9th/10th, the bridge was successfully demolished by a party gallantly led by Lieutenant A. B. Matthews, R.E., and Lieutenant R. T. Sweet, 2/7th Gurkha Rifles.

34. During the following days Kut was subjected to a continuous bombardment and several attacks were beaten off. The enemy's losses were heavy, especially in the abortive attacks on December 12th, when, it is estimated, their casualties amounted to 1,000.

35. Operations were then conducted on the lines of regular siege warfare. A redoubt at the north-east corner of the defences became the special objective of Turkish shell fire and sapping operations.

36. On the night of December 14/15th a successful sortie was made against trenches facing the detached post on the right bank, and, on the night, December 17th/18th, two sorties, from the redoubt previously referred to, cleared the enemy's nearest trenches. About thirty Turks were bayoneted and ten were captured.

37. Heavy fire was concentrated on the redoubt during the night December 23rd/24th and throughout the 24th. The parapet was breached and the Turks effected an entrance, but they were driven out by a counter-attack,

leaving 200 dead behind. Attacks were renewed later, and throughout the night of December 24th/25th a fierce struggle took place around the redoubt. The enemy again effected a lodgment, but by morning they had been ejected and the assault was finally defeated.

38. No decisive attacks have been attempted by the Turks since their failure at Christmas, which, it is reported, cost them about 2,000 casualties.

39. On December 28th a movement of troops, which was continued for several days, took place from the Turkish main camp (six miles above Kut) to Shaikh Saad—which had been occupied by enemy mounted troops for some time.

40. On January 4th, General Aylmer's leading troops, under Major-General Younghusband, advanced from Ali Al Gharbi towards Shaikh Saad, moving by both banks.

General Younghusband's column got in touch with the enemy on the morning of January 6th. The Turks were entrenched astride the Tigris, three-and-a-half miles east of Shaikh Saad. An attempt to turn Turkish right flank did not succeed owing to presence of hostile cavalry and Arabs in superior force on this flank.

41. General Aylmer arrived on morning of January 7th with the remainder of his force and ordered a general attack; Major-General Younghusband commanding on the left bank and Major-General Kemball on the right bank.

Very heavy fighting lasted throughout the day. By evening the enemy's trenches on the right bank had been captured and some 600 prisoners and two guns taken.

On the left bank our troops were entrenched opposite the enemy, who still held their positions on that bank. Attempts to turn their left flank had been checked by counter enveloping movements from the north.

42. The troops were very fatigued next day and little progress was made.

On January 9th, the Turks were forced to abandon their remaining positions and retired upstream, followed by General Aylmer's force. But heavy rain now fell, making the alluvial soil of the roads almost impassable, and prevented active operations for the next two days. It is estimated that the enemy's losses during the three days' fighting at Shaikh Saad amounted to 4,500.

43. The enemy fell back about ten miles, to the Wadi—a tributary which joins the Tigris on the left bank. They took up a new position behind the Wadi and on the right bank of the Tigris, opposite the mouth of the Wadi.

44. General Aylmer concentrated his whole force on the left bank and attacked the Wadi position on the 13th. After hard fighting the Turks were driven out on the 14th and retired five miles further west and entrenched across a defile bounded on the north by a marsh and on the south by the Tigris. They were followed to this position by General Aylmer's force.

45. Throughout these operations the weather was very bad. The heavy rain and high wind caused great discomfort to the troops and made movement by land and by river most difficult. Up to January 17th there was no improvement in the weather and active operations were at a standstill.

46. As, owing to ill-health, I am about to relinquish command of Indian Expeditionary Force "D" I desire to place on record my