

cannot sufficiently express my obligation to them.

Also Major Liddell, late Royal Engineers, Director of Telegraphs under the Egyptian Government. This official was largely responsible for the excellent system of inter-communication which prevailed throughout the Canal Defences.

It is needless for me to add that from Admiral Peirse and the ships of His Majesty's Navy, as well as those of France under his command, most important and valuable assistance was received.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

J. G. MAXWELL, Lieut.-General,  
Commanding the Force in Egypt.

*Headquarters, Canal Defences, to the General Staff, Headquarters, Cairo.*

Ismailia,

11th February, 1915.

Sir,—

I have the honour to submit the following report on the recent attack on the Suez Canal. In order to make the narrative complete, I will preface it with a brief account of what has taken place since I took over command of the Canal Defences.

2. I landed at Suez on the 16th November, 1914, and went to Ismailia the same day, having been preceded ten days before by Brigadier-General A. H. Bingley, my Chief Staff Officer, who was sent from India in advance of the troops to make preliminary arrangements for their landing and despatch to destination. I there took over command of the Canal Defences from Colonel W. G. Walker, Commanding 9th Indian Brigade, which had been detached from the 3rd (Lahore) Division for temporary duty in Egypt.

3. In accordance with the instructions received from the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, the Canal Defences were organized in three sections, with headquarters at Suez, Ismailia Ferry, and Kantara, respectively, my own headquarters and the general reserve being placed at Ismailia, with the advanced base at Zagazig and base general hospital at Cairo.

These arrangements were completed by the 5th December, 1914, when the last units of the force arrived from India.

4. Preparations for defence.—The months of November, December and January were devoted to a systematic development of the naturally strong line of defence afforded by the Canal, thus completing the work which had been initiated previous to my arrival. A number of defensive posts were prepared on the east bank, to cover the more important ferries and provide facilities for local counter-attacks. Trenches were dug on the west bank to cover the intervals between posts and frustrate attempts at crossing. Communications were improved by the construction of landing stages and removable pontoon bridges for use at important points. A flotilla of armed launches, manned by the Royal Navy, was organized for canal patrols. A complete system of telegraph, telephone, and wireless

communication was installed, linking up all the posts with headquarters. A system of defence was established for the protection of the railway, the telegraph lines, and the sweet water canal. The detachment of the Royal Flying Corps was organized, staffed with observers, and equipped with accommodation for its planes.

5. The resources of the Suez Canal Company in tugs, launches, lighters, &c., were carefully examined, so as to utilise them for military purposes. Arrangements were made with the Railway Administration for the collecting of rolling stock at convenient places, in order to expedite the dispatch of reinforcements to threatened points. Provision was also made for the organization of the water supply of the troops and the formation of supply depôts, as well as for the rapid collection and evacuation of the sick and wounded. A system of intelligence, censorship and police surveillance was established, and plans were devised, in consultation with the Canal Authorities, for the control of shipping in the event of an attack. Last, but not least, a scheme for making inundations, and so limiting the front over which the enemy could attack, was carried out successfully by the Irrigation Department at Port Said and the engineering staff of the Canal Company at El Cap, Kantara and Ballah.

6. During this period no active operations took place, except a Bedouin raid made by the enemy in the direction of Kantara. A patrol of the Bikanir Camel Corps under Captain A. J. H. Chope, 2nd Gurkha Rifles, consisting of one Indian officer and twenty other ranks, encountered a force of some 200 Bedouins and Turks on the 20th November, 1914, near Bir-el-Nuss, and in spite of the enemy's treacherous attack, due to the abuse of the white flag, extricated itself successfully from a somewhat difficult position. Our patrol, which lost one Indian officer and twelve other ranks killed and three Sepoys wounded, inflicted some sixty casualties on the enemy. For their gallant conduct on this occasion, No. 1534 Sepoy Ali Khan was awarded the Indian Order of Merit, 2nd Class, and No. 115 Sepoy Faiz Ali Khan the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

7. General summary of events.—During the first fortnight in January little direct news of the enemy's advance was forthcoming, though reports of considerable preparations in Syria were constant, and information was received to the effect that advanced posts and depôts had been formed at Khan Yunis, El Arish, El Auja, and Kosseima. The country to the east of the Canal within the radius of our aeroplane reconnaissances remained clear of formed bodies of hostile troops, though frequently visited by Bedouin patrols which, in some cases, were accompanied by German officers in Arab dress. About 15th January, however, it became clear that hostile forces of some strength had entered Sinai, and on the 20th the Canal Defence troops were reinforced from Cairo by the 1st and 3rd Brigades R.F.A., East Lancashire Division, T.F., which proceeded at once to previously prepared positions.

8. On 18th January a hostile force of 8,000—10,000 was located near Bir-es-Saba by a French naval hydro-aeroplane, and on 22nd a Turkish force was reported to be at Moiya, Harab, having arrived there from Gifgaffa. This was confirmed by aerial reconnaissance the