



THIRD SUPPLEMENT

TO

The London Gazette

Of TUESDAY, the 1st of AUGUST 1916.

Published by Authority.

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THURSDAY, 3 AUGUST, 1916.

War Office,
3rd August, 1916.

The Colonial Office has forwarded for publication the following Despatch on military operations in the Nyasaland Protectorate:—

From the Governor of Nyasaland
To the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Government House,
Zomba,
Nyasaland,
1st November, 1915.

Sir,—With the advent of reinforcements from the Union of South Africa the military operations in Nyasaland enter upon a new phase, and the moment appears to be opportune for a brief review of the work of the local forces since the outbreak of war and for bringing to your notice the names of many officers whose services deserve recognition. With this object in view the accompanying report has been prepared by the Officer Commanding the Forces in Nyasaland.

All Lieutenant-Colonel Hawthorn's recommendations have my hearty support. With

the work of many of the junior officers I have not been in direct contact, but I have closely watched the operations throughout, and a recent visit to Karonga has enabled me to judge better all that has been done to maintain successfully for fourteen months the defence of the Protectorate as well as the cheerful and willing spirit which pervades all ranks.

Lieutenant-Colonel Hawthorn refers to the good services of Captains Barton and Stevens in the command of the troops. He is debarred from mentioning himself, but I desire to bring to notice the excellent work he has done since he assumed command in December last, and to recommend that this be marked by a Companionship in the Distinguished Service Order.

I have been much in contact with the work of Captain Thorburn. In addition to his duties connected with the Base and Lines of Communication, he has rendered important services as Commanding Officer of the Nyasaland Volunteer Reserve, and I was able to mention him specially in connection with the native rising in January, 1915. I feel that I cannot speak too highly of the valuable assist-

ance he has rendered in many directions, and of his cheerfulness and indefatigability at all times.

With regard to the Marine section, the report refers to the work of Captain Rhoades in surprising and disabling the German gun-boat "Hermann von Wissmann" in August, 1914, which gave Nyasaland the command of the Lake. Captain Rhoades and Lieutenant Tate (until their departure on leave in October and December respectively on grounds of ill-health), as well as the remainder of the staff of the Marine Transport Department, rendered efficient service in the movement of troops and stores and in attacking positions of the enemy on the Lake. With the arrival of Lieutenant-Commander Dennistoun and the Naval contingent this Section has been placed on a more satisfactory basis for naval operations, and excellent work was done at Sphinxhaven at the end of May, of which you and the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty have already expressed your appreciation.

Associated with the Government Naval section must be noticed the services of the staff of the "Chauncey Maples," the steam vessel of the Universities Mission, which was commanded by Government on the outbreak of hostilities, and of the African Lakes Corporation's ss. "Queen Victoria," which has been requisitioned on frequent occasions.

I desire to take this opportunity of expressing again my appreciation of the readiness with which the Nyasaland Volunteer Reserve—and they represent practically the whole of the British male population of military age—have come forward, and the services they have rendered in various capacities in connection with the military operations and the native rising of January last. Several are specially mentioned by Lieutenant-Colonel Hawthorn.

For the rank and file of the 1st Battalion, King's African Rifles, there are recommendations with which I cordially associate myself. This splendid corps has won fame for itself on active service in Africa on many previous occasions. In this war, both here and in British East Africa, it has fully maintained its reputation.

It remains to me to add a few words on the services rendered by the civil officers of the Government. Many who had had previous military training joined the Forces at once, others were detailed for special work, but in all branches the state of hostilities has imposed much extra work which has been ungrudgingly and most cheerfully undertaken.

I have, etc.,

G. SMITH, Governor.

ENCLOSURE.

DESPATCH RELATING TO FIELD OPERATIONS.
From Lieut.-Colonel G. M. P. Hawthorn, 1st
K.A.R., Commanding Troops, Nyasaland.
To His Excellency the Governor and Com-
mander-in-Chief, Nyasaland Protectorate.

Zomba,

11th October, 1915.

Your Excellency,

In view of the impending arrival of the Central African Imperial Service Contingent in this Protectorate, and the consequent re-organisation of the forces in the field, I have the honour to submit for your Excellency's approval and favour of transmission to His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies a report on the operations carried out by the

Nyasaland Field Force as hitherto constituted.

At the outset of the war, on receipt of a telegram from His Majesty's Secretary of State with orders that precautionary measures should be adopted, all troops were immediately mobilised, men on leave recalled, and the K.A.R. Reserve called up, a staff was formed of officers and civil officials, and retired officers were posted to K.A.R. Reserve. The force was organised in double companies of African troops, the whole under the command of Captain C. W. Barton, D.S.O., Northamptonshire Regiment.

Immediately after receipt of a telegram to the effect that war was declared between England and Germany the troops marched from Zomba, arriving at Fort Johnston on the 9th and 10th August.

On August 8th the Government armed steamer "Guendolen," commanded by Commander E. L. Rhoades, was ordered to proceed north to reconnoitre Sphinxhaven, where it was reported that the German Government steamer "Wissmann" was undergoing repairs.

Commander Rhoades surprised the "Wissman" on the stocks at dawn, August 13th. He found that it was impossible to refloat her, so, after removing the armament and important parts of the engines, he returned to Fort Johnston on August 15th with the captured crew.

The Field Force embarked in the s.s. "Guendolen," "Chauncey Maples," "Queen Victoria," "Pioneer" and "Adventure" on August 16th and 17th, and disembarked at Vua on August 19th and 20th. By August 22nd it had concentrated at Karonga.

On August 20th an enemy patrol crossed the Songwe River, which forms the Anglo-German boundary, and fired on a police patrol of ours.

Between August 20th and September 8th various reconnaissances were made towards the border, the enemy holding an advanced position at Kapora, about 5 miles south of the Songwe.

At this time the enemy was reported to have about 700 rifles with 8 maxims and 1 field gun in the New Langenburg and Songwe district, but this was probably an over-estimate.

In the beginning of September a reinforcement of 2 officers and 54 British Volunteers of the Nyasaland Volunteer Reserve arrived at Karonga.

On September 8th the force marched north-west from Karonga towards the Lufira River, leaving a garrison at Karonga under command of Lieutenant P. D. Bishop, K.A.R. Reserve. It was the intention of the Officer Commanding to attack and capture the enemy advanced post at Kapora. The main body of the enemy, however, advanced simultaneously close to the lake shore to attack Karonga, strength, as subsequently ascertained, about 400 with 2 light field guns and 3 maxims. At about 7 a.m. September 9th a double company K.A.R. was ordered to attack a company of the enemy reported on the north bank of the Lufira. The enemy company retired, and at about 8 a.m. gun firing was heard from the direction of Karonga, and it was also reported by scouts that the main enemy force had passed east of our position during the night, marching south. A double company with 1 maxim under Captain A. H. Griffiths, 1st K.A.R., was ordered to march with the utmost speed to relieve Karonga. The remainder of the force with the transport, as soon as the double company from

the north bank of the Lufira had rejoined, followed towards Karonga.

The enemy had attacked Karonga at about 7 a.m., and a continuous fire was kept up from 400 yards range against the post by about 350 rifles and three maxims; a few shells were also fired by two field guns (1'4").

Captain Griffiths arrived on the scene at about 11 a.m., completely surprising the enemy, whom he put to flight, capturing two maxim guns.

In the meantime our main body, hampered by transport, was slowly returning towards Karonga; at about 11 a.m. it met half a company of the enemy, which was quickly routed. At about 1 p.m., when crossing the Kasoa stream, the force came into contact with the enemy, who had reformed during the retirement from Karonga. After a sharp action of two hours' duration the enemy was completely defeated and retired in disorder towards the German border, losing two field guns, a quantity of small arms, ammunition and stores. The enemy having been completely scattered, our force was again concentrated at Karonga.

Our total casualties on this day were:—

Killed.—3 officers, 2 British Volunteers, N.V.R., 8 K.A.R. rank and file.

Wounded.—3 officers, 4 British Volunteers, N.V.R., 42 K.A.R. rank and file.

The enemy left on the field:—

Killed.—7 Europeans, 51 native rank and file.

Wounded and prisoners.—2 officers.

Unwounded prisoner.—1 officer.

Wounded and unwounded prisoners.—69 natives.

Reliable reports confirm that at least two other Europeans were severely wounded, and 30 or 40 natives.

In addition two field guns and two machine guns, 72 small arms, about 10,000 rounds of ammunition, and a complete maxim tripod and spare parts, with a quantity of stores and explosives, were captured.

Captain Barton was himself wounded, and Captain H. W. Stevens assumed command of the Field Force.

After this success it would have been quite possible to take up a position beyond the border, but as the enemy could have reinforced from other parts of their colony in a short time it was decided to put Karonga into a state of defence and establish the force permanently there. From this date until the commencement of the rains in December various minor encounters and patrol actions took place, with no serious loss to either side, but resulting advantageously to us. After the commencement of the rains the country became impracticable for operations, and the greater part of the British Volunteers were allowed to return to their ordinary duties.

I arrived in Nyasaland in December 1914, and assumed command of the Field Force on December 29th.

On January 25th 1915 I received a telegram from Your Excellency asking for troops to assist in quelling a native rising in the Chiradzulu district. I ordered Captain H. G. Collins, 1st K.A.R., to proceed with the utmost speed to Zomba, with one double company 1st K.A.R., one machine gun, and one field gun. The Government steamer "Guendolen" landed this force at Fort Johnston on January 27th.

Captain Collins detached half a company under Captain J. L. Portal, 1st K.A.R., to proceed to Ncheu, where there had also been a disturbance. Captain Collins' force reached Zomba on January 29th, having marched 86 miles from Fort Johnston in 47 hours. The rebel force had meanwhile been defeated and scattered by a force of 40 British Volunteers and 100 K.A.R. Recruits under the command of Captain L. E. L. Triscott, K.A.R. Reserve. Captain Collins, on arrival, assumed command of the operations, and instituted a vigorous pursuit of the rebels by small patrols, by which considerable numbers of the fugitives were captured. The rising at Ncheu collapsed before Captain Portal arrived there. Your Excellency has already been furnished with detailed reports by the officers who took part in the suppression of the rising.

During March a naval detachment under the command of Lieutenant-Commander G. H. Dennistoun, R.N., with naval guns, arrived in the Protectorate.

Reports having been received that the enemy were repairing the ss. "Wissmann," it was decided to send a combined naval and military expedition to Sphinxhaven, to refloat the steamer if possible, otherwise to complete her destruction. The detachment under Captain Collins was detailed for this duty. The expedition embarked in ss. "Guendolen" and "Chauncey Maples" at Fort Johnston on May 26th. A landing was effected three miles south of Sphinxhaven at about 3 a.m. on May 30th, and the enemy's position was assaulted and captured by 11 a.m. after a bombardment by the "Guendolen's" guns. The "Wissmann" was completely disabled by dynamite charges, and the force re-embarked about 2.30 p.m. The enemy returned before the last section was withdrawn, and opened fire with a maxim and about 40 rifles. The section was re-embarked under cover of gun, rifle and maxim fire from the ships. Our only casualty was Volunteer Sutherland wounded. About 7,000 rounds of ammunition, one maxim carriage and spare parts, some rifles and stores, a green flag with crescent and star, and a German flag were captured.

Captain Collins' force rejoined at Karonga on June 1st.

Early in June reports of a considerable increase in the enemy forces in the New Langenburg district were confirmed from several sources, the reinforcements being estimated at 200 Europeans and 400 native troops.

Enemy patrols became more active, but owing no doubt to the extremely thick nature of the country, the grass being still green and varying from six to ten feet in height, no serious movements were attempted, though the hostile garrison at Ipiana, about three miles north of the Songwe and five miles from the lake shore, was considerably strengthened, and new posts were established at points along the Songwe.

During July patrol activity increased, and one or two affairs of scouts took place. At the end of July it was reported that a considerable portion of the troops from New Langenburg had moved north, presumably to take part in an attack on the post of Saisi, about 25 miles south of Abercorn, which was held by Rhodesian and Belgian troops.

On August 12th news was received that Saisi had been invested by the enemy. Though it

was unlikely that at a distance of 180 miles it would affect the situation at Saisi, I decided to make a demonstration against the enemy's position on the Songwe on the 13th, while the "Guendolen" under Lieutenant-Commander Dennistoun made a simultaneous demonstration at the north end of the lake. A letter, however, was received on the night of the 12th which informed me that the enemy had retired from Saisi, and I returned to Karonga on the evening of the 13th.

The Nyasaland Imperial Service Contingent from the Union of South Africa arrived in the Protectorate early in September and was conveyed in two detachments to Karonga. The first detachment arrived at Karonga on the 15th September, and the second detachment on the 23rd.

During September and October there were numerous encounters between patrols in the vicinity of the Lufira River, Captains Galbraith and Griffiths, of the 1st K.A.R., being prominent in the conduct of these enterprises.

The health of the troops since the outbreak of the war has been satisfactory. There has been a considerable amount of malaria and dysentery, but the percentage of sickness has not been so high as the average of previous years at Karonga; this is no doubt due to the large amount of clearing which has been done and to the sanitary measures carried out by the medical staff. There was one case of enteric at the end of 1914; the majority of Europeans have since been inoculated, and there has been no further case.

The Europeans have been fortunately placed in the matter of supplies at Karonga, cattle and fresh milk being obtainable, also vegetables and fresh fish, at most times of the year. Rations for native troops, principally rice, were brought by steamer from lake ports, and a full ration, with additional issues of beans and fresh meat, was maintained.

The rains at the north end of the lake fell between the end of November and the early part of May, and in the Songwe district the rainfall must have reached nearly 150 inches. In Karonga itself the rainfall did not exceed 30 inches, and this difference favoured our forces very greatly as compared with the enemy in the matter of health. This in itself thoroughly justified the selection of Karonga as our defensive position.

It was impossible to maintain our telegraphic communication with Rhodesia owing to the proximity of the line to the border and the positions of the enemy's main posts.

I wish to acknowledge the cordial assistance which has always been rendered by all the civil officials, on whom a great amount of additional work has been thrown, also the ready help which has been given by the Free Church of Scotland Mission and the Universities Mission. The former placed all their buildings at Karonga at the disposal of the Field Force for hospital purposes, and also helped greatly by supplying labour and growing vegetables for the use of the force. The steamer owned by the latter was taken over by Government for transport purposes, and her staff has worked unremittingly during the whole period dealt with.

A considerable number of the Nyasaland Volunteer Reserve has been employed during the whole period with the Field Force in various capacities, and has for the last eight months furnished a machine-gun section with

two guns. About 60 took part in the action at Kasoa on September 9th 1914, where their services were most valuable, two being killed while working maxims.

The men of the 1st K.A.R. and the K.A.R. reservists have given entire satisfaction, and their conduct reflects the greatest credit on the company officers, especially as the men were mostly young soldiers.

I have the honour to bring to Your Excellency's notice the names of the following officers, non-commissioned officers and men:—

Captain C. W. Barton, C.M.G., D.S.O., Northamptonshire Regiment, 1st K.A.R. Commanded the Field Force till September 9th, 1914, when a severe defeat was inflicted on the enemy, on which date he was wounded.

Lieutenant P. D. Bishop, K.A.R. Reserve. Commanded the garrison of Karonga on 9th September, and defended the post for four hours against greatly superior forces. Awarded Military Cross.

Captain H. W. Stevens, Retired Pay, Reserve of Officers. Commanded a double company at the action at Kasoa on September 9th 1914, with coolness and gallantry. Commanded the Field Force from September 9th to December 29th. Previously served as Lieut.-Colonel Commanding 1st K.A.R.

Captain G. L. Baxter, Cameron Highlanders, 1st K.A.R. Has carried out with zeal and ability the duties of Staff Officer to the force since the commencement of the war. Displayed conspicuous coolness at Kasoa on September 9th 1914, inspiring confidence in the troops by his contempt of danger.

Captain H. G. Collins, R.F.A., 1st K.A.R. Led his company with great dash at Kasoa on September 9th 1914. Commanded a most successful landing expedition at Sphinxhaven on May 20th 1915. Conducted energetic pursuit of rebels after the rising in January 1914, after making a two days' forced march of 86 miles.

Captain J. E. E. Galbraith, Royal Fusiliers, 1st K.A.R. Specially mentioned by his Company Commander for his coolness and leading of his men under fire at Kasoa on September 9th 1915, under enemy's Maxim and rifle fire.

Captain A. H. Griffiths, Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, 1st K.A.R. Commanded relieving force at Karonga on September 9th 1914; attacked enemy with great dash, capturing two Maxims and routing enemy about twice the strength of his own force.

Captain T. S. Muirhead, Northamptonshire Regiment, 1st K.A.R. Commanded his company with ability and coolness at Kasoa on September 9th 1914; though wounded in the leg returned and continued in command till again severely wounded when working a Maxim whose team had been killed or wounded.

Captain J. L. Portal, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, 1st K.A.R. At Kasoa, September 9th 1914, by his personal influence and force of character controlled under a heavy fire a company of young recruits in action for the first time.

Lieutenant (temporary Captain) C. Thornburn, Reserve of Officers. Has commanded the Base and Lines of Communications from the commencement of the war. Has performed his duties very industriously, and

arranged most satisfactorily for transport of troops and supplies from the sea coast to the lake.

Dr. (now temporary Major) H. S. Stannus. Has been responsible for all medical organization. To his ability and industry has been due the health of the force and the rapid and satisfactory recovery of the wounded.

Volunteer J. A. Griffiths, Nyasaland Volunteer Reserve. Acted as a scout on the enemy's border for about one month at the beginning of the war, during which time he obtained very valuable information at great personal risk. He was most untiring in his duties and only by great skill escaped capture.

No. 6 Corporal Makwari, 1st K.A.R. After being wounded at Kasca, September 9th 1914, escaped from hospital and brought up several stragglers into the firing line, when he was again wounded, his clothing being shot to pieces.

No. 18 Lance-Corporal Stima, 1st K.A.R. Showed conspicuous gallantry and tenacity in handling a Maxim after the British Volunteer in charge had been mortally wounded. The latter specially requested that this act of gallantry should be rewarded.

No. 481 Serjeant Matafari, 1st K.A.R. When in command of the last section to re-embark at Sphinxhaven, May 30th 1915, handled his section with skill under fire of superior numbers, making good his retirement without loss.

Lieutenant J. L. Caldecott, R.G.A., killed in action.

Lieutenant P. N. Garnett, Royal Berkshire Regiment, 1st K.A.R., killed in action.

Displayed coolness and gallant leading in action at Kasao on September 9th 1914.

Mr. G. F. Manning, Resident, killed in action. Gallantry in action at Kasoa, September 9th 1914.

Volunteer G. Merriman, N.V.R., killed in action.

Volunteer V. J. D. Ascott, N.V.R., killed in action.

Killed while working maxim guns under heavy fire with coolness and effect.

Volunteer A. Haverfield, N.V.R. Courage and resource in reconnaissance at close quarters, September 19th 1915.

Volunteer J. Sutherland, N.V.R. Successful reconnaissance work and guiding by night at Sphinxhaven on May 30th 1915, when he was wounded.

No. 629 Private Isaac Kutakwananzi, 1st K.A.R.

No. 456 Private John, 1st K.A.R.

Carrying messages at great personal risk through the enemy during action.

No. 112 Private Koffman, 1st K.A.R. Showing an excellent example by his contempt of danger under a heavy fire at close range on two occasions.

I would also request that the good services of the following may be brought to the notice of His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies:—

Dr. (temporary Captain) N. MacL. Leys, who has been in charge of the Karonga Hospital and has spared no pains in his attention to duty.

Mr. V. J. Keyte, Chief Supply and Transport Officer, who has been responsible for the forwarding of supplies from the sea coast to the lake.

Temporary Lieutenant H. R. Cruise, who organised and managed the transport of the Field Force by land, and whose services proved invaluable.

Temporary Lieutenant J. C. Abraham, who has been in charge of transport and embarkation work at Fort Johnston, which he has carried out with the greatest zeal and thoroughness.

Mr. H. A. Channon, Universities Mission. Although he is properly under the Senior Naval Officer, his assistance to us has been so constant and cheerful, and I feel that I should make special mention of him.

Miss A. Pallot and Miss B. Empson were present at Karonga when the post was attacked on September 9th 1914, and were most assiduous and indefatigable in their care of the wounded in Hospital.

Miss R. Paterson, Matron, was sent to Karonga when more help was required after the action on September 9th 1914, since when she and Miss Pallot have been employed continuously with the Field Force; their services have been invaluable.

The Honourable H. L. Duff, C.M.G., as Your Excellency is aware, was of the greatest assistance at the commencement of the war as Political Officer. He also by his personal influence, exerted under fire, contributed largely to stopping a panic amongst the transport carriers at Kasoa.

I would also request that the services of Lieutenant-Commander G. H. Dennistoun, R.N., may be brought to the notice of the Lords of the Admiralty. In addition to the admirable manner in which he carried out the expedition to Sphinxhaven on May 30th 1915, his cordial co-operation at all times has been invaluable in overcoming difficulties.

I have, etc.,

G. M. P. HAWTHORN, Lieut.-Colonel,
1st K.A.R.,

Officer Commanding the Troops,
Nyasaland.

