

his opinion that he would be able to frustrate any attempt by the enemy to move to the south by any direct route through the Matumbi mountains. At this stage I ordered General Hoskins to hold some battalions ready to move north-west when the execution of my general plan was undertaken, and advised him of my intention to proceed to the Mgeta front on the following day to direct operations.

*Operations in the West.*

(7) November and December were periods of considerable activity in the west, where Generals van Deventer and Northey were operating, though here, as elsewhere, the operations were mainly of a local character.

In order to deal with the enemy force which, under General Wahle, had come towards Mahenge from Tabora and was moving about the Iringa district somewhat aimlessly in various detachments, General van Deventer had pushed forward the 7th South African Infantry and a Cyclist Battalion, the latter under Lieutenant-Colonel J. M. Fairweather, D.S.O., who for the time being assumed command of the two battalions and a portion of General Northey's force under Lieutenant-Colonel T. A. Rodger, D.S.O. The two battalions from the Second Division were very weak, but the transport position had not recovered sufficiently at this time to make it possible to send greater numbers, though here, as elsewhere, the utmost effort was being made to prepare for the general advance.

If we had been able to feed a larger number of troops at this stage, south of the Central Railway, in the western area, there is little doubt that we should have handled the enemy force from Tabora far more severely than we were able to do in our difficult circumstances.

The 7th South African Infantry reached Iringa on the 23rd October, and Lieutenant-Colonel Fairweather, with the Cyclist Battalion, on the following day.

On the 25th October General van Deventer reported that the larger portion of the enemy's Tabora force had broken through southwards between Alt-Iringa and Ngominji on the night of the 22nd/23rd and had cut all communication with General Northey, who for some time remained without any means of issuing orders to his troops at Iringa. In these circumstances I placed General van Deventer in charge of the situation at Iringa, and he temporarily assumed control of Lieutenant-Colonel Rodger's portion of General Northey's force. In addition to the concentrated portion of the enemy forces above referred to, many small parties broke through in the darkness, which of course they were able to do without any fear of detection over a large front.

General Northey's forces on the Ruhudje were at the same time being attacked by superior forces.

The passage of the enemy through our lines occupied some three weeks, and this period was marked by much fighting of detachments and patrols.

The main incidents of these operations were as follows—fuller details in many instances will no doubt be available from the despatches of General Northey in due course:—

On the 23rd October a patrol of Rhodesian askaris, under command of Lieutenant-Colonel Baxendale, was ambushed and lost 33 in killed, wounded and missing, with one machine gun.

It is to be regretted that Lieutenant-Colonel Baxendale was among those who lost their lives.

On the 25th a small detachment of the 4th South African Horse encountered a strong force at Malangamagara wells, 12 miles north of Iringa, and inflicted a heavy defeat on the enemy, of whom many were killed and captured. The enemy abandoned all their sick and wounded after this action, and the Commanding Officer wrote asking for their protection by us.

On the 29th October a small post at Ngominji was compelled to surrender to a very superior strength of the enemy after a resolute and gallant defence. Two naval 12 pounder guns lost here were retaken by us in the course of operations almost immediately afterwards. Captain Clerk, commanding the post, was killed.

A detachment of some 12 Rhodesian askaris at Madibira was also surrounded and captured.

At dawn on the 30th October Lieutenant-Colonel Hawthorn attacked the enemy on the west bank of the Ruhudje and obtained a signal success, capturing 6 Europeans and 75 askaris unwounded, together with a 6 c.m. gun, 3 machine guns, and large quantities of ammunition and telephone and other material. Five European and 37 askari dead of the enemy were buried on the scene of the engagement.

On the 30th and 31st October our positions at Altiringa were attacked, but the attacks failed, and the enemy sustained appreciable casualties.

On the 7th November the enemy was still south of Iringa, but had attempted no offensive since his defeats at the end of October. He had left behind many sick and wounded at different camps and released considerable numbers of our prisoners of war, and the state and morale of his troops were reported as indifferent.

In the meantime arrangements had made some headway, and a column, under Colonel A. J. Taylor, was being concentrated to move at an early date from Dodoma to Iringa, while the mounted brigade of the Second Division—which since its withdrawal from the Uluguru operations in August had been resting, reorganising and refitting at Morogoro—was on its way, reduced to approximately 1,000 rifles, to Iringa.

These movements were preparatory to a concentration of General Northey's forces about Lupembe and southwards, while General van Deventer was to assume command in the neighbourhood of Iringa and link up with General Northey to the south.

On the 8th November General Northey reported an enemy concentration against Malangali, where we had a small detachment, and that he had detached 400 rifles under Lieutenant-Colonel R. E. Murray to assist the post.

The force under Lieutenant-Colonel Hawthorn had been ordered to withdraw to Lupembe.

From the 8th to the 12th the post at Malangali was defended most gallantly against considerable odds. Three assaults were repulsed at close quarters, and heavy loss was sustained by the attacking enemy. On the 12th Lieutenant-Colonel Murray's relieving force arrived and attacked from the south, taking