

full advantage of the surprise which it had been able to effect, and inflicting heavy damage on the enemy, of whom nine Europeans in one company alone were captured. The captures included one machine gun and much ammunition.

Abortive attacks were delivered by the enemy at Ssongea on the night of the 14th/15th, and at Lupembe on the 17th.

These last rebuffs apparently caused the enemy to abandon any idea of further immediate offensive action, and for some little time the operations reverted to a minor degree of importance.

On the 16th November the leading regiment of the Mounted Brigade reached Iringa.

By the 19th all information pointed to the withdrawal of the whole of the enemy forces eastwards to take up a chain of positions covering Mahenge and extending from Kidatu by Lofia, Mfua, Lukegeta, Makua's, Mfirika to north-east of Ssongea.

The presence of an enemy force about Madibira had been for some time persistently reported, and it was known that early in the operations, which resulted in the eastward movement of General Wahle's force, a detachment had either become separated from the main Tabora force or from some cause or other had been delayed.

The retirement of the enemy and the arrival of fresh units of the Second Division at Iringa having made the position secure, the occasion seemed suitable for an attempt to round up the enemy detachment which was assumed to be following the Tabora force. A big gun was reported to be with the detachment.

General Northey accordingly arranged to send a force under Lieutenant-Colonel Murray by motors to attack the enemy detachment from the south, while General van Deventer was instructed to co-operate from Iringa.

On the 21st it was definitely ascertained that the enemy detachment had occupied Ilembule mission (N.W. of Ubena) on the previous day and was moving to the east.

At noon on the following day the enemy was still at Ilembule, half Lieutenant-Colonel Murray's column being near Emmaberg and the remainder at Ubena.

On the 22nd the second half of the South African Infantry Battalion which had been sent to General Northey arrived at Wiedhafen.

At noon on the 24th the enemy at Ilembule had been surrounded by Murray, and on the 26th, after resistance, the entire force was captured by him. The enemy force was commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Huebener, and consisted of 7 officers, 47 other Europeans and 249 askaris, and one howitzer and three machine guns were also taken. This highly creditable enterprise was carried out with trifling casualties to our forces engaged.

The losses incurred by the enemy in the operations round Iringa and Lupembe in dead which we had buried and prisoners we had taken, amounted to 125 Europeans and 619 askaris.

On the 25th November I left Morogoro to visit the western front, and investigated the country to the Ruaha River and beyond, and on the 29th I instructed General van Deventer to retake Muhanga, which the enemy had occupied, and from there to move a strong force to Ifakara and further east to Luwegu,

while General Northey was to deal with the enemy at Mfirika and Ssongea by moving to the Ruhudje River and Mponda respectively.

As a preliminary feature of my general plan I intended the enemy to be driven over the Ruhudje and Ulanga Rivers.

It was plain that the feeding of any considerable force south of the Ruaha River during the wet season was a problem of almost insurmountable difficulty, as it was apparently impossible to avoid vast inundated swampy areas of which the passage appeared impossible. I therefore determined to drive the enemy over the two rivers named above, and by creating a dump of supplies south of the Ruaha, to collect sufficient food to sustain a force which could watch the enemy until the rainy season was over and our advance became once more practicable.

I had investigated the possibility of feeding more troops by way of Lake Nyasa, but was compelled to abandon the idea.

On the 1st December I went to Dar-es-Salam chiefly to make arrangements for the institution of a river transport service in connection with my coming operations on the Rufiji, and returned to Morogoro on the 5th. While at Dar-es-Salam I took the opportunity of visiting the Force at Mssanga.

On the 4th General Northey moved his headquarters from Neu Langenburg to Ubena.

About this time constant patrol skirmishes took place between the enemy about Lukegeta and Mfirika and General van Deventer's troops and those of General Northey respectively.

Continuous heavy rain in the west produced conditions under which every movement became a matter of extraordinary difficulty, and the supply situation was at times seriously insecure; and on the 19th December General van Deventer, whose headquarters were now at Iringa, reported that he had been unable to build up the reserve of supplies which we had hoped we should have been able to collect at Iringa, and that he could not feed his whole division during the forward move which was then imminent. He further advised moving a considerable portion of his command back to the railway, and that a reduced force of three infantry battalions and a squadron of mounted troops should be kept at Iringa for the advance. To this I agreed.

It is of interest, as indicating in some measure the difficulties which are attendant upon military movements on a large scale in tropical Africa, here to observe that of 1,000 mounted men who had marched from Morogoro early in November, rather more than 90 per cent. had lost their horses by death from disease by this date, viz., in six weeks.

The combined forward movements by Generals van Deventer and Northey, in conjunction with the movements of the general advance elsewhere, were arranged to begin on the 24th December.

*Operations in the Area between the Rufiji and Central Railway from Dar-es-Salam to Ruwru.*

(8) Before describing the operations which took place on our resumption of the offensive on all fronts at the end of the year, it is necessary briefly to touch upon the events which occurred during November and December in the Mssanga-Kissangire area.

As already stated, an attempt by a small column on the 9th October to drive away an