



SUPPLEMENT

TO

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FRIDAY, 6 JULY, 1917.

War Office,

6th July, 1917.

The Secretary of State for War has received the following despatches from General Sir Archibald Murray, G.C.M.G., K.C.B., Commander-in-Chief, Egyptian Expeditionary Force:—

General Headquarters,
Egyptian Expeditionary Force,
1st March 1917.

MY LORD,—

I have the honour to submit a report on the operations of the Force under my command from 1st October, 1916, to 28th February, 1917.

1. During the months of October and November and the first half of December there were no important operations upon my Eastern front, though a successful reconnaissance against the enemy positions at Gebel El Rakwa and Maghara, 65 miles east of Ismailia, was carried out between the 13th and 17th October by a small force of Australian Light Horse, Yeomanry and Camel Corps. This operation not only needed careful preparation, but entailed two night marches over exceedingly difficult sand dune country, the difficulties being increased on the second night by the pre-

sence of a thick fog. On the early morning of the 15th the enemy was located holding a strong position on the high precipitous hills of Maghara. The force, attacking in two columns, dislodged the enemy from his advanced position, capturing a few prisoners. At the same time the enemy's camp was repeatedly bombed by our aeroplanes, which furnished invaluable assistance throughout the operation. After an engagement lasting two hours the force withdrew unmolested, and reached Bayud on the 17th without the loss of a single camel. The operation was well carried out, and valuable information was obtained regarding the enemy's dispositions and the nature of the country.

With this exception all was quiet on the Eastern front. The unexpected evidence of our mobility given to the enemy by the successful reconnaissance against Mazar, which I recorded in my last despatch, and the losses suffered by the Turks during this affair, had given the enemy sufficient uneasiness to induce him to withdraw altogether from Mazar, and towards the end of October his nearest troops were in the neighbourhood of Ujret El Zol and Masaid, about seven and four miles west of El Arish respectively. The enemy also maintained various small posts in the neighbour-