

(b) Rendered Nasariyeh safe against a hostile movement from the Tigris down the Hai;

(c) Increased the possibility of obtaining supplies from the prosperous districts on the middle Hai, and rendered it correspondingly difficult for the enemy to supply himself from there;

(d) Interposed between the Turks and their adherents at Shattrah.

THE OPERATIONS IN THE KHADAIRI BEND: JANUARY 5TH TO 19TH.

10. It was evident that the enemy intended to maintain his hold on the right bank of the Tigris, and preparations were accordingly made to reduce these trench systems. His position in the Khadairi Bend was a menace to our communications with the Hai, for in the event of a high flood he could inundate portions of our line by opening the river bunds. It was therefore decided to clear the Khadairi Bend in the first instance, and this operation was assigned to the force under Lieut.-General Cobbe. The enemy held a well-prepared line some 2,600 yards long, facing east. The ground in front was flat and bare, except for a belt of low brushwood along the river bank on the northern flank. At the southern end, 200 yards from the river and parallel to it, was a double row of sandhills, on which the enemy had constructed a strong point with covered-in machine gun emplacements. The front of the position was swept by fire from both flanks from the left bank of the river. There was a second line in the rear, at distances varying from 500 to 1,000 yards from the front line, whilst between the two were trenches and nasals prepared for defence. The southern portion of the second line, and some sandhills 400 yards behind it, formed a last position, and the garrison had communication with the left bank by means of ferries, which, owing to the conformation of the river bend, were protected from direct rifle and machine-gun fire so long as this retired position was held.

Our troops drove in the Turkish advanced posts, but progress was slow, as many of the trenches had to be made by sapping. On the 7th our trenches were within 200 to 350 yards of the enemy, the rain had ceased, and as the ground was beginning to dry, preparations for the assault were made. This preliminary stage had involved digging some 25,000 yards of trench under trying conditions—constant rain and exposure to enfilade, as well as direct fire.

On the 7th and 8th bombardments were carried out. On the 9th a successful assault was delivered with small loss on a front of 600 yards against the southern end of the Turkish line, but a thick mist hindered further artillery support and facilitated counter-attack by the enemy. Severe hand-to-hand fighting ensued, but the Gurkhas and Mahrattas on the left reached the river bend, having inflicted severe casualties on the enemy. On the right our troops continued to gain ground along the trenches and nasals, until a heavy counter-attack, made under cover of the mist, temporarily checked its progress. This counter-attack was defeated with heavy loss by the resolute resistance of the Manchesters, a frontier Rifle Regiment, and a detachment of Sikh Pioneers. The ground gained was consolidated during the night.

Prior to the attack on the 9th, raids had been made into the enemy's front line at Sannaiyat. Simultaneously a diversion was carried out by

Lieut.-General Marshall against the Hai bridge-head, whilst other intended operations west of the Hai by the cavalry and a detachment of Lieut.-General Marshall's force were necessarily abandoned on account of the mist.

12. On the 10th the attack was resumed in foggy weather, and the enemy was pressed back trench by trench till, by nightfall, he had fallen back to his last position.

On the 11th an unsuccessful attack was made on this position. Our troops reached their objective, but were driven back by a strong counter-attack. A further counter-attack, which attempted to recover trenches which we had taken on the previous day, suffered heavily from our artillery and machine guns during its retirement. On this occasion a battalion of Sikhs specially distinguished themselves.

On the same day the cavalry occupied Hai Town and remained there several days. A considerable quantity of arms, ammunition and supplies was captured, and on our withdrawal an attack made on our troops as they retired received well-merited punishment, a Jat Lancer Regiment executing a brilliant charge.

13. Owing to the open nature of the ground now confronting our troops, and in view of the fact that it was commanded at close range from both flanks from across the river, it was decided to construct covered approaches and trenches in which to assemble the troops under cover prior to the assault.

By the 17th the forward trench system was completed, and one by one the enemy's advanced posts had been captured. A strong point, which would enfilade the attack, only remained. On the night of the 17th/18th our troops captured and lost this redoubt twice. They retook it again on the 18th and held it.

The final assault was fixed for the 19th, but during the night of the 18th/19th the enemy, under cover of rifle and machine-gun fire, retired across the river.

During these operations the fighting had been severe, and mainly hand-to-hand, but the enemy, in spite of his tenacity, had more than met his match in the dash and resolution of our troops, and had learnt a lesson which was to become more deeply ingrained on subsequent occasions. The enemy's losses, judging from the number of dead found by us, were very heavy, and we captured many prisoners and a considerable quantity of war stores.

THE OPERATIONS AGAINST THE HAI SALIENT: FROM JANUARY 20TH TO FEBRUARY 5TH.

14. On the 11th, while Lieut.-General Cobbe was still engaged in clearing the Khadairi Bend, Lieut.-General Marshall commenced preparations for the reduction of the Hai salient—the extensive trench system which the Turks held astride the Hai river near its junction with the Tigris, and for a fortnight we gained ground steadily in face of strong opposition, until on the 24th our trenches were within 400 yards of the enemy's front line.

15. On the 25th the enemy's front line astride the Hai was captured on a frontage of about 1,800 yards. On the eastern (or left) bank our troops extended their success to the Turkish second line, and consolidated and held all ground won in spite of counter-attacks during the day and following night. The enemy lost heavily, both from our bombardment and in violent hand-to-hand encounters. On the western (or right) bank, the task was a