

vanced much further up the river. The Turks opposed to us were commanded by Khalil Pasha. They were well dug in in strong positions.

Very large improvements have been effected in the Transport department, railways have been constructed, and a large number of river craft arrived.

A number of these, and also barges, were put together at Abadan and Basra, and the facilities for repairs much increased, and wharves constructed.

3. The gunboats at the Tigris front have co-operated with the Army in many intermittent bombardments of the enemy positions, and some very good results have been obtained, besides frequently engaging enemy aircraft.

We have at all times received great help from the Army, the Artillery officers and Staff being indefatigable in rendering the Navy every assistance.

The 14th Kite Balloon Section, R.N.A.S., commanded by Commander Francis R. Wrottesley, R.N., marked for us on many occasions, besides the useful work it has done keeping look-out for the Army.

Aeroplanes have also been frequently put at the disposal of the Royal Navy for spotting.

While keeping some gunboats at the Tigris front, I have also always, at the request of the military authorities, stationed others at various points on the line of communication, and two have been stationed in the Euphrates, in touch with the troops at Nasiriyah.

The following of H.M. Ships have been engaged in the operations at various times:—

H.M.S. "Tarantula," Commander Henry G. Sherbrooke.

H.M.S. "Mantis," Commander Bernard Buxton.

H.M.S. "Moth," Lieutenant-Commander C. H. A. Cartwright.

H.M.S. "Gnat," Lieutenant-Commander E. H. B. L. Scrivener.

H.M.S. "Butterfly," Lieutenant-Commander G. A. Wilson.

H.M.S. "Sawfly," Commander G. F. A. Mulock, D.S.O.

H.M.S. "Snakefly," Lieutenant R. P. D. Webster.

H.M.S. "Greenfly," Lieutenant-Commander A. G. Seymour, D.S.O.

H.M.S. "Gadfly," Commander E. K. Arbuthnot.

H.M.S. "Grayfly," Lieutenant C. H. Heath-Caldwell, D.S.C.

H.M.S. "Stonefly," Lieutenant M. Singleton, D.S.O.

H.M.S. "Mayfly," Lieutenant R. H. Lilley, D.S.C.

H.M.S. "Waterfly," Act. Commander Charles T. Gervers.

H.M.S. "Firefly," Lieutenant-Commander C. J. F. Eddis.

H.M.S. "Flycatcher," Lieutenant Hugh Lincoln, R.N.R.

H.M.S. "Scotstoun," Lieutenant S. E. Nicolle.

4. Operations proceeded in a most satisfactory manner, and early in February our forces were in possession of the right bank as far as to the westward of Kut el Amara, with bridges over the Hai, large numbers of prisoners having been taken, guns captured, and heavy loss inflicted on the enemy.

After intense bombardment, in which the gunboats co-operated, a successful assault of the Sannaiyat position was made on 22nd February, and a footing obtained in the Sannaiyat position. During the night of the 22nd-23rd dummy attempts were made to cross the river in various places above Sannaiyat, and just before daybreak of the 23rd covering parties were rowed across the Tigris near Shumran in pontoons, a surprise landing effected, and a bridge thrown across.

By evening the infantry of one division had crossed, and another followed, the enemy trying ineffectually to stem the British advance on the Shumran peninsula.

Meanwhile our troops were pushing forward boldly through the Sannaiyat position.

The whole Turkish position was manifestly becoming untenable, and they commenced a general retreat, which developed later into a rout.

5. I was present at the operations on board H.M.S. "Tarantula," and later on on board H.M.S. "Mantis," other of H.M. Ships present being "Moth," "Butterfly," "Greenfly," "Gadfly," "Snakefly," "Waterfly," "Flycatcher," and "Scotstoun" were also present at the front from time to time, and H.M.S. "Gnat" rejoined me on 4th March.

6. On the forenoon of 24th February I moved up river with "Tarantula," "Moth," "Mantis," "Butterfly," "Gadfly," and arrived at Kut el Amara at 9.30 p.m., where I landed and hoisted the Union Jack.

The town was deserted and in ruins. Early on the morning of the 25th I moved on up river and communicated with our troops near Shumran.

Floating mines had been seen in the river, but were easily avoided.

7. During the morning I received a message from the Army Commander asking me to co-operate in pursuing the retreating Turkish Army, and I pressed on up river. We were abreast of our leading Infantry at about 9.30 a.m. and in sight of the Turkish rearguard, on which we at once opened with rapid fire, inflicting heavy casualties. This the enemy soon returned, opening an accurate fire on us with field batteries, and several 5.9 howitzers from a prepared position among the sand hills in the neighbourhood of Imam Mahdi. Our troops were advancing, and some of our field artillery considerably relieved the situation by the rapidity with which they came into action.

The battle continued during the day—all ships being hit by splinters of shell, but luckily no serious damage was done.

Lieutenant John H. Murdock, R.N.R., of H.M.S. "Mantis," was somewhat severely wounded in the afternoon.

8. The enemy evacuated their position during the night, and we pushed on with the Army in pursuit on the morning of 26th February.

It soon became evident that the Turkish Army was much demoralised, and I received a message by W/T from General Sir F. S. Maude during the forenoon to push on and inflict as much damage as possible.

We proceeded at full speed in "Tarantula," leading "Mantis" and "Moth," H.M. ships "Gadfly" and "Butterfly" following at their utmost speed.