



SECOND SUPPLEMENT

TO

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WEDNESDAY, 14 NOVEMBER, 1917.

War Office,
14th November, 1917.

The Secretary of State for War has received the following despatch from Lieutenant-General G. F. Milne, C.B., D.S.O., Commanding-in-Chief, British Salonika Force:—

General Headquarters,
British Salonika Force.
1st October, 1917.

My Lord,

I have the honour to submit the following report on the operations of the British Forces in Macedonia from 9th October, 1916, to the present date.

Since the 29th November, 1916, when, in accordance with General Sarraill's request, I took over the sector then held by the Italian troops, the army under my command has occupied the front covering Salonika from the east and north, and extending from the mouth of the River Struma along the Tahinos-Butkova-Doiran lakes to the River Vardar, a distance of approximately ninety miles. In addition, from the commencement of December until the end of February one infantry brigade was detached to the neighbourhood of Katerini on the western shores of the Gulf of Salonika.

The necessity of holding this long line placed a considerable strain on the endurance of the troops, especially during the winter months, when, owing to the unprecedented rainfall, the mountain roads became almost impassable and rendered the question of supply one of considerable difficulty, a difficulty overcome only by the energy and determination of all concerned. In spite of the fact that the whole of this force has been in the line without relief for over a year, with only occasional limited opportunities for training and without the encouraging effects of offensive action, a very high standard of morale and efficiency has been maintained.

At the commencement of the period under review, the rôle allotted to the British troops had for its object the engaging of the enemy along the front during the operations which culminated in the capture of Monastir on the 19th November. From that date onwards the advent of the winter season, accompanied as it was by heavy falls of snow and rain, made operations, except on a small scale, a matter of considerable difficulty owing to the paucity of metalled roads and the heavy nature of the soil in the valleys.

In the Struma River valley, since the conclusion of the operations reported in my last despatch, the front line had been gradually