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TUESDAY, 20 NOVEMBER, 1917.

*War Office,
20th November, 1917.*

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

*General Headquarters,
Egyptian Expeditionary Force,
28th June, 1917.*

My Lord,

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

1. At the beginning of March the Eastern Force, under the command of Lieut.-General Sir Charles Dobell, K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., was concentrated in the neighbourhood of El Arish. The headquarters of the Desert Column, under the command of Lieut.-General Sir P. Chetwode, Bt., K.C.M.G., C.B., D.S.O., were at Sheikh Zowaid, in advance of which place the mounted troops of the column were covering the con-

struction of the railway, which was being rapidly extended along the coast towards Rafa. Our mounted patrols, as I reported in my last despatch, had on 28th February entered the village of Khan Yunus, which had been evacuated by the enemy. Every preparation was being made for an attack in force on the strong position at Weli Sheikh Nuran, upon which the Turks had been working incessantly since the beginning of January. On 5th March, however, aeroplane reconnaissance established the fact that the enemy had decided not to face our attack and was evacuating this carefully prepared position. I at once instructed the General Officer Commanding, Eastern Force, to do all that was possible either to prevent this evacuation or to inflict loss on the enemy during its execution, and the Royal Flying Corps were ordered to carry out bomb attacks with the utmost energy against the enemy's communications. Accordingly on 6th March and the following days vigorous attacks were made by our aircraft on the railway at Bir Saba, Tel el Sheria and the junction station on the Jerusalem—Ramleh line; but it was found impossible for our infantry or mounted troops to make any effective move against the