

whilst the 90th Punjabis pushed eastwards through Ramadie and secured the Turkish Commander (Ahmed Bey) at his headquarters near the eastern front of the position. Both these units displayed commendable dash and initiative, and by 11 a.m. the whole of the Turkish force had surrendered.

Throughout the operations, which were continuous, the endurance and fine fighting spirit of the troops was conspicuous, whilst the night operations so successfully carried out testified to the excellence of their discipline and training. During the daytime the heat was considerable, and these operations, which were conducted at some distance from the river, were only rendered possible by the excellence of the arrangements for water supply. A salient factor in these successful operations was the part played by the cavalry. First by their rapid movement round the enemy's rear, and subsequently by the tactical disposition of their machine guns they prevented the enemy's columns from breaking out, and so drove them back into the arms of the infantry. Very useful work was also done by the transport, and especially the motor transport, whilst the medical arrangements for the evacuation of the wounded over some bad ground were most satisfactory. Amongst our captures were included 3,454 prisoners, of whom 145 were officers and 192 wounded, 13 guns, 12 machine guns, 2 armed launches, 2 barges, and large quantities of arms, ammunition, equipment, engineering stores, railway material and supplies.

Simultaneously with the above operations on our left flank, our cavalry, operating wide on the right flank of the Army, marched during the night of the 28th/29th and occupied Mendali early on the 29th. The Turkish detachment holding that town fled into the hills, leaving 300 baggage camels in our hands and suffering some casualties from our guns whilst retreating. Mendali had for some time been used by the Turks as a source of supply, and its occupation, whilst supplementing our own needs, denied it for this purpose to the enemy.

12. In my former despatch I had occasion to bring to notice the capable handling of the troops by the higher Commanders, assisted by their staffs, and the gallantry, endurance and devotion to duty displayed by the Regimental Officers, Non-commissioned Officers and men. To this I can only add that the fine record then established has been fully maintained under very trying climatic conditions, and that the fighting spirit, discipline and efficiency of this Army have never stood at a higher level than they do at the present moment. The further training which it has been possible to give the troops will tend to develop still further that close co-operation between all arms which was so noticeable throughout the operations last winter and which is so essential a factor to success in war.

13. Similarly the valuable services rendered to this Army by the Directors and the Administrative Services and Departments were previously dealt with by me in detail. In their case there has been no partial respite from their labours such as has been enjoyed by the fighting troops, for their work at the front, on the Lines of Communication and at the Base has continued at the highest pressure. Re-organisation, development of our resources and preparation for the future have needed careful

thought and unrelaxed efforts on the part of all and the progress made in these directions has been very gratifying. More than a passing word of recognition is therefore due to these individuals, who, in spite of the intense heat during the summer months, have continued to work so assiduously in the interests of the Army.

14. Our communications by water and by land have been thoroughly overhauled to meet the new situation, additional ships and barges have been placed on the river, and our railway system has been developed as rapidly as existing conditions have permitted. The ever-increasing needs of this Army have rendered expansion as regards port facilities at Basrah necessary, and this has been successfully met by the opening of a subsidiary port in its vicinity, which is being still further developed as the result of the recommendations of a Committee assembled to report upon the matter.

An abnormally low river during the flood season gave rise to some anxiety that this might be followed by a correspondingly low river during the summer months, and, though the river did not fall below its lowest record, it reached as low a gauge as it has touched within reasonable recollection. The work of the Inland Water Transport was therefore from June onwards one of considerable difficulty, and it was due to the skill and energy of the personnel of the I.W.T., and to the admirable buoying of the channels, that the number of serious groundings was almost negligible, and that the service of maintenance in front of the Base was carried on unimpaired.

The work of transportation by the I.W.T. was ably seconded by the development of our railways, and the way in which, in spite of a limited personnel, construction progressed and the railways were worked at constant high pressure is deserving of high commendation.

The health of the troops during the summer months has been uniformly satisfactory, and many of the diseases from which we suffered in previous years—such as cholera, enteric fever and scurvy—were either non-existent or negligible in their extent. This successful result was partly attributable to the untiring work of the officers employed in the bacteriological laboratories, without whose valuable assistance the difficulty of dealing with the epidemic diseases would have been considerably increased. But, although better conditions as regards accommodation and increased facilities for combating the heat resulted generally in a far lower sick rate, an abnormal heat wave which swept over the area in July was responsible for a heavy casualty list. During this time the personnel of the Medical Services were severely taxed, but they resolutely and successfully responded to the calls made upon them. All ranks redoubled their exertions as the situation became more difficult, and the unremitting labours of the Nursing Sisters, many of whom suffered in health themselves, were worthy of the high record for devotion to duty which the Nursing Service has always maintained. The very practical assistance rendered by the British Red Cross Society and Order of St. John during this trying period was typical of the valuable services so consistently rendered by that organisation.

The growing needs of this Army and the