

Lower Rufiji area and had been forced out of the Kiturika Hills.

It had been found, however, that the enemy's capacity for resistance had not been in any way weakened by the rainy season, and that the moral and training of his troops remained high. There was thus every reason to expect that there would be serious opposition in the coming stages when the circle round him began to tighten.

I decided to continue operations on the same lines until the arrival of reinforcements and transport should place me in a position to make an uninterrupted advance against the main enemy and deal him a decisive blow. This, I estimated, would be about the middle of September.

15. During August and the early part of September good progress was made in the West. Lieutenant-Colonel Shorthose, after crossing the Rovuma, continued his movement north and occupied Tunduru on 23rd August after slight opposition, thus firmly establishing our hold on this district, which was of considerable supply importance.

The Songea column, under Colonel Hawthorn, remained in the vicinity of Mpondas, engaged in a constant struggle, in the most difficult ravine country, with an enemy of equal strength, who received frequent minor reinforcements. Colonel Hawthorn continued to operate with enterprise and vigour, manœuvring the enemy out of successive positions and inflicting loss on him in many minor engagements.

The Lupembe column, under Lieutenant-Colonel Fair, forced back the enemy in the Mpepo area, and by the 20th August was hemming in the enemy detachment there, which finally gave way and retired towards the east. Our troops followed in close pursuit, and on the 30th inflicted a severe local defeat on the enemy, killing or capturing three white and 92 askaris.

The Iringa column was reinforced on 10th August by the leading troops of the Northern Belgian Column. This latter column had been originally intended to operate in the Malinje-Mpepo area, but on account of the progress of our own troops in that area it had been diverted to the Ruipa front, and I arranged with Colonel Huyghe that it should ultimately replace my Iringa column, and so leave the zone of operations towards Mahenge entirely in Belgian hands.

The combined forces under Colonel Tytler renewed operations against the enemy on the Idete River, and by the 26th had effected a crossing and were pushing patrols towards Ifakaras.

Meanwhile the main Belgian column (Southern) had been concentrating at Kilossa and Uleia, and on the 14th began its move south against Mahenge. The enemy did not offer serious resistance to the earlier stages of this advance, and the column moved rapidly forward, driving in the opposing rear-guards and capturing prisoners. By the 26th the column had reached Kiberege, and by the 28th had joined hands at Ifakaras with the Belgian Northern column, and the Iringa column. The latter column was then withdrawn, the 2/4th K.A.R. being sent to reinforce General Northey, while the remainder returned to the Central Railway in reserve.

The enemy had retired south of the Kilombero River, which was a formidable obstacle,

but the rapidity and skill with which the Belgian columns acted deprived the enemy of any advantage he might have gained from this. By the 6th September the Belgian columns had secured crossings at two places, and by the 8th the whole of the Belgian Southern Brigade was across and moving against Mahenge. The enemy opposition now became greater, and strong resistance was encountered at Kalimote on the 11th, from which date the enemy disputed every foot of the way into Mahenge, through hilly country, densely bushed. Progress was necessarily slow, but remained steady, and by the end of September the Belgians, after numerous successful encounters, had reached a point seven miles north of Mahenge and were encircling it from both east and west.

16. On the Eastern front active patrolling was carried out in the Kilwa area with one or two minor encounters, but the chief effort was devoted to organisation and preparation for the advance in mid-September. The tram line was extended as rapidly as possible towards the south, roads improved, transport collected and supplies accumulated as far forward as possible. By the end of the first week in September the bulk of the Nigerian Brigade and the new Indian reinforcements (55th Rifles, 127th Baluchis, and 25th Cavalry) had been landed and were nearly ready to take the field.

The enemy had reinforced his Kilwa front at the end of July, and as this could only have been done at the expense either of his Lindi front or of his reserves, I decided to push forward in the Lindi area during August and thus improve my position for vigorous action against the enemy should he retreat into the Massassi area.

On the 2nd August the Lindi force began operations by occupying the enemy's forward position on the Mohambika stream, and on the 3rd advanced in three columns against his main positions from Tandamuti Hill to Mandawa. The right column (3/2nd K.A.R.) advancing from Schaedels reached its objective, driving the enemy from his advanced position east of the loop on the trolley line. The objective of the left or main column (25th Royal Fusiliers, 259th Machine Gun Company, 3/4th K.A.R.) was the enemy's right flank on Tandamuti Hill. Here very stubborn resistance was encountered, the centre of which was a concealed redoubt, the existence of which was not previously known. Despite repeated efforts this redoubt could not be taken, and in consequence the main column was brought to a standstill. The centre column (30th Punjabis) became thus unsupported in its advance, and on being heavily counter-attacked by the enemy's reserve was compelled to withdraw with considerable loss after the whole of the British officers had become casualties. The engagement ended by our troops entrenching on the ground gained and organising for a fresh advance.

This began on the 10th by a turning movement south of Tandamuti Hill, which was heavily bombarded by the Navy with the object of deceiving the enemy as to the point of attack. The movement was successful in causing the enemy to abandon his ground and fall back to another strong position at Nurunyu. General O'Grady followed in pursuit, keeping in close contact with the enemy and reconnoitring actively with patrols. Heavy rain hindered operations on the 15th and 16th, but on the 18th the enemy was closely engaged and pressed