

Ruangwa, and, leaving a rearguard in that area, marched south-east with about five companies to reinforce his troops at Nyangao. This movement brought on one of the severest fights of the East African Campaign.

21. The Nigerian Brigade had now joined the Lindi force, and was operating on its right flank. One battalion which had been moved to Lindi by sea after the Naumann operations still remained in force reserve. The objective of the brigade was to cut off the enemy's retreat from Nyangao north-westwards and from Mahiwa westwards, and by the night of the 14th it had reached the sanatorium four miles north of Nyangao. Here one battalion (1st Nigerians) was left, together with the brigade reserves of ammunition and supplies; and on the 15th the remainder of the brigade continued its march west. Opposition increased with the advance, and continued all day on the 16th. The enemy succeeded in preventing the 1st Nigerian Battalion (which was called up in support) from joining the remainder of the Brigade in its forward position on the enemy's northern flank, and compelled it to fall back to the Sanatorium with some loss. This made the situation of the Nigerians somewhat precarious, and in order to relieve it Nos. 3 and 4 Columns operating on and parallel to the main road pressed their advance vigorously. The enemy fell back from Nyangao on the 16th, but took up a position on a ridge about two miles south-west of that place, behind the Nakadi River bed, and offered most determined resistance on the 17th. Nos. 3 and 4 Columns were both heavily engaged all day. No. 4 Column (Colonel Tytler) advanced from Nyangao at daybreak, and at once gained touch with the enemy. The 3/4th K.A.R. attacked, supported by artillery fire, and by one o'clock had taken part of the position. No. 3 Column (General O'Grady) had meanwhile come up on the right of No. 4 Column, the Bharatpur Infantry attacking with 1/2nd K.A.R. in support. Opposition to this attack increased steadily, and both battalions were soon fully engaged. At four o'clock a determined counter-attack was made against both columns, and the whole line was pressed back, but again advanced and regained part of the lost ground. Darkness set in with the engagement still proceeding.

On the morning of the 18th the action was resumed, No. 4 Column pressing the enemy vigorously in order to enable No. 3 Column to effect a junction with the Nigerian Brigade, which it succeeded in doing at 8 o'clock. No. 4 Column's attack was at first successful, the 30th Punjabis driving the enemy from their trenches and occupying them, while part of the 3/4th K.A.R. and of the 259th Machine Gun Company came up on the Punjabis' left to strengthen that flank.

The enemy was, however, in force, and delivered a strong counter-attack on the left, which eventually compelled our line to fall back to the river bed. This position was maintained during the afternoon, several counter-attacks being repulsed.

No. 3 Column meanwhile attacked the enemy's left flank and forced it back for some distance, the 3/2nd K.A.R. leading, while the 25th Fusiliers (from No. 4 Column) filled the gap between the attacking fronts of the two columns. On this flank also the enemy developed a very strong counter-attack, gaining some ground, and it was found necessary to

restore the situation by bringing up the 3rd Nigerians from reserve to the left of No. 3 Column. The enemy pressure continued until dark, but without further result, and on the morning of the 19th he was found to have retired to his original line.

Losses on both sides were heavy in this four days' engagement, in which much of the fighting had been at close quarters. A halt was advisable until reinforcing drafts could be brought up, and action against the enemy was therefore confined during the next fortnight to vigorous patrolling against his front and round his flanks.

22. Meanwhile to the west the Kilwa force successfully raided Lukuledi Mission. Colonel Orr, with No. 1 Column, leaving Ruponda on the 17th, reached Lukuledi next day, and had a sharp fight with two or three enemy companies. Reconnaissances towards Tshikukwe and Massassi were carried out.

On the 21st the column was attacked at Lukuledi by the force which it had previously fought, reinforced by at least three other companies. The enemy was repulsed with loss, two machine-guns and some prisoners being captured by the 1/3rd K.A.R. The column then withdrew, reaching Ruponda on the 24th. Valuable information about the country, roads, water, etc., had been obtained, which proved of great use to us later on.

No. 2 Column in the centre drove the enemy rearguard from Ruangwa on the 16th and 17th. The enemy then withdrew to Mnacho, across a wide waterless strip.

The line from Kilwa had now been stretched so far that maintenance of the forces fed from it was becoming a serious problem, and it had become desirable to call a halt in order to let supplies accumulate forward before making any further advance. I decided accordingly to spend the next fortnight in active patrolling, and in refitting and resting the troops before beginning what promised to be the final phase of operations in German East Africa. Until 6th November no further movement of importance took place on the eastern front.

23. Steady pressure on the western front had been maintained during October. General Northey's battalion at Tunduru sent a strong detachment north-east to the Mochesi River, and in the middle of the month strengthened this to two companies and pushed it forward to Abdallah-Kwa-Nanga, the centre of a fertile district some fifty miles south of Liwale. This detachment in turn pushed forward a raiding party of 250 rifles, which entered Liwale on the 29th, capturing twenty-four whites, including sick.

The Songea Column continued its activity on the Luwegu River, and by the 5th had established itself on the north bank east of the enemy position. The enemy gave way and retired some six miles northwards.

I had previously asked General Northey to dispatch the battalion which had joined him from the Iringa Column (2/4th K.A.R.) towards Abdallah Kwa Nanga, but now decided that the situation pointed to the possibility of the Songea and Lupembe Columns being able, in conjunction with the Belgians, to bring the enemy in this area to decisive action. I accordingly requested General Northey to reinforce his Songea Column with this battalion and all available transport. Thus reinforced, Colonel Hawthorn renewed his attack on the 16th October; but the enemy,