

avoiding the blow, retired down the Luwegu River, destroying and abandoning both his guns. The pursuit was pressed steadily, the enemy retiring from point to point as our troops closed in. By the end of the month he had reached a point on the river south of Liganduka's.

24. The Belgian advance on Mahenge continued steadily over very difficult country, which rendered progress slow; but this was, in any case, unavoidable at the moment, as the long lines of communication made the supply of their forces very difficult. We had hoped that the resources of the country would assist us, but the enemy had practically cleared everything from the line of advance.

On the 4th the Belgian forces were in active contact with eight or nine companies extending from Schauri to just north of Mahenge, and by the 9th had occupied Mahenge, capturing some twenty whites in the last position held, and also ninety-two whites and 242 askaris left sick in hospital. Thus the first and main objective of the Belgians had been most successfully and skilfully attained.

On the 22nd September the Belgian left fought a most successful action against an enemy detachment in position at Mtrika on the Mkaha River, killing or capturing three whites and forty-three askaris, and taking two machine guns.

The Belgian advance continued, and by 18th October their right was in touch with Fair, near Mubike. Saidi was occupied on the 21st, and Ligombazi on the 25th.

Time was, however, getting short in the Mahenge area, where heavy rain might be expected any time after the middle of November. There had been no opportunity to build up a food reserve, and the nature of the road was such that heavy rain might entirely stop the running of mechanical transport.

On the 27th I had a meeting with Colonel Huyghe, and asked him to leave only two battalions in the Mahenge area to co-operate with General Northey's troops, sending the rest back to Kilossa, and to transfer two battalions from his Reserve to the Kilwa line, to operate north and north-west from Liwale. The Kilwa-Liwale line was expected to remain open two months longer than the Kilossa-Mahenge line.

The combined British and Belgian pressure was being severely felt by the enemy, and by the 28th the German Commander in the Mahenge area (Tafel) was reported to be withdrawing all his troops towards Kahambu.

Deserters were numerous, and had begun to surrender to the Belgians in large parties. It was evident that the whole enemy front in the west was giving way, but the great difficulty of supplying our forces at the end of their long lines of communications prevented our taking full immediate advantage of the situation. Both Allies continued, however, to push forward with what troops they could feed.

25. On the night 1st/2nd November Colonel Hawthorn attacked and took the enemy's position south-east of Liganduka's, capturing twenty-four prisoners and a machine gun.

The enemy on the Luwegu retired eastwards, Hawthorn following towards Kabati Mzee, and Fair towards Kabati Mtoto. By the evening of the 5th Hawthorn had driven enemy rearguards down both banks of the Luwegu River, and had got to within a mile

of Kabati Mzee; and on the 6th Fair reached Kabati Mtoto, where 142 German whites and 140 askaris surrendered, and three machine guns and some hundreds of rifles, mostly damaged, were found abandoned.

On the 6th eighty-two more askaris surrendered to the Belgian Columns; and, during the next day or two, other surrenders of sick were made at Kahambu and Mlembwe.

It was now clear that the enemy forces were withdrawing to the south through Dapate, and Hawthorn accordingly turned south-eastwards, while Colonel Murray, with 250 rifles, pressed east along the Songea-Liwale road.

The Belgian forces to the north now found that the enemy was beyond their reach, but that, on the other hand, he was coming within the radius of action of the Belgian column of Liwale.

This column, under Major Herion, consisting of the Belgian 9th Battalion and Cyclists, had taken over Liwale from General Northey's detachment (under Major Hawkins) on the 2nd, and was awaiting the arrival of the 4th Battalion, which landed at Kilwa on the 6th. Major Hawkins had withdrawn to Abdallah-Kwa-Nanga, where he awaited the arrival of Lieutenant-Colonel Shorthose with the headquarters and one company of the 1/4th K.A.R. from Tunduru. One company of the battalion was left as garrison at the latter place.

By the 11th it had become practically certain that Tafel's intention was to break south to join Von Lettow Vorbeck, and the final confirmation was received by the locating of his advanced patrols at Mandebe on the 13th. Major Herion despatched 200 rifles south-westwards from Liwale on the 14th, and Colonel Murray with 400 rifles also pushed south-east towards Abdallah-Kwa-Nanga. These reinforcements could not, however, arrive in time to assist Shorthose and Hawkins in stemming the enemy movement to the south, which they most gallantly attempted to do on the 16th when still separated from each other by some hours' march. Each of their small forces put up a determined fight, and inflicted considerable loss on the enemy before being compelled to withdraw towards Tunduru in face of great odds. The Belgian Column succeeded in overtaking the enemy's rearguard company and captured a maxim and some prisoners, including the company commander. Captured documents showed that the enemy's force numbered between 1,700 and 1,800, and was moving southward to the Rovuma in three parallel columns.

This ended all fighting in the Mahenge Liwale area, and in view of the imminent approach of the rainy season in that part of the country it was decided to withdraw all Belgian forces supplied from Dodoma and Kilossa without delay. General Northey took over Mahenge, strengthened Tunduru, and withdrew the bulk of Hawthorn's column to rest and refit.

26. At the beginning of November the enemy's force in the eastern area under direct command of Von Lettow Vorbeck was located as follows:—

- Mahiwa front, 7 companies.
- Mnacho, 1—2 companies.
- Nangoo-Lukuledi, 12—13 companies.
- Newala, 2 companies.