

33. The last six months of the German East Africa campaign had been of a most exacting nature. My predecessors have well described the difficulties of advancing through tropical Africa against an enemy in possession of interior lines who can advance or retire along carefully prepared lines of supply. As the area of operations diminished so the potential advantages of these interior lines increased and the fiercer became the fighting. The moral of the enemy never wavered, and nothing but the determined gallantry and endurance of the troops finally galled him. To the infantry, British, South African, Indian, West and East African, I owe unqualified thanks and praise; and especially to the regimental officers, who set an example which all have followed.

During the six months our casualties in action alone have been close on six thousand, including over one thousand carriers and followers, but against these may be placed the 1,618 German whites and 5,482 German askaris who have been killed or captured in the period. Most of those captured in hospitals were not ill, but were simply tired out by the closeness of our pursuit. Fourteen guns, seventy-seven machine guns and thousands of rifles have also been taken.

Although the nature of the country and of the fighting were such that the infantry had incomparably the hardest task, yet the other fighting arms have done all in their power to lighten it. The artillery and the Stokes Mortar Batteries have afforded steady and close support in action, while the successful raiding of the mounted troops has frequently upset the enemy's plans and movements and so facilitated our advance.

The Royal Flying Corps under Major Wallace, D.S.O., and Royal Naval Air Service, under Commander Bowhill, have been indefatigable in their work of reconnaissance, of such great value in this badly-mapped country, and have never hesitated to take any risks in carrying out this duty. Their well-organised bombing raids have been also most successfully carried out.

The Royal Engineer units, Pioneers, and Road Corps, under the direction of Colonel Rundle, D.S.O., R.E., have done splendid service in keeping pace with the troops, and pushing forward the roads on which the movement of mechanical transport, and consequently of the forces, entirely depend.

The Signal Service has maintained its high reputation in this country and has never failed to cope with any situation which has arisen, often under circumstances of the greatest difficulty. Lieutenant-Colonel Hawtrey, D.S.O., R.E., deserves great credit for the efficient work of this important service.

The good work done by the Intelligence Department, Officers, Scouts, and Agents has very greatly assisted the progress of operations.

Much of this work has necessarily been performed under circumstances of considerable difficulty and danger, but the results have been most valuable, and great credit is due to all ranks.

34. In a campaign of this nature, in which a force comprising a most varied assortment of races and languages has been distributed over many hundreds of miles of wild tropical country where malaria and other serious diseases have been rife, with an entire absence of made roads,

and serving under continuously adverse climatic conditions; the strain thrown upon the lines of communication can only be fully realised by those who have participated in it.

During the greater part of the period five separate lines were in use simultaneously, three from the Central Railway, one from Kilwa and one from Lindi. On each of these most careful organisation of posts, depôts and transport had to be made, and maintained and adjusted from time to time in accordance with the fluctuations of the campaign. Transfer from one line to another was an exceedingly difficult matter, in view of the distances which separated them and the constant necessity to economise shipping, yet changes at short notice were inevitable against an enemy acting on interior lines. Only foresight, energy, and incessant labour on the part of the Inspector-General of Communications and his subordinates could solve such problems, and I record here my appreciation of the great services rendered by Brigadier-General W. F. S. Edwards, C.M.G., D.S.O., and those serving under him.

35. From past experience it was recognised that the success of the operations for the period under review must largely depend upon the degree of preparedness and efficiency of the Administrative Services, and active steps were therefore taken for some months beforehand to increase and organise the supply, transport, and medical resources, while tramway construction was expedited to the utmost. Large numbers of box cars, petrol tractors for tramways, and additional personnel were ordered, while the Ordnance and other services similarly anticipated every requirement of the Force. As a result it was in a position to take the field with the knowledge that it could be adequately supported and maintained at considerable distances from its main bases, and this was fully borne out by subsequent results.

In preparation for the Belgian offensive down the Kilossa line, large stocks of supplies were placed at Iringa, while on the Dodoma line animal transport was exploited to the fullest extent. This line is the only one, of the many opened up during the East African campaign, which has proved to be "fly" free. The use of animal transport on it released cars for use elsewhere, while on the Mikesse-Rufiji line the same object was attained by the employment of large numbers of local porters, this course being possible owing to the very thickly populated nature of this area.

Contemporaneously very large numbers of carriers were being assembled in both British and German East Africa, this in view both of the high wastage to be anticipated and the fact that all probable lines of advance lay through fly belts of unusual virulence.

To supplement carriers, a considerable amount of pack donkey transport was also formed and equipped.

It was deemed advisable to depart from generally accepted principles in the matter of the allocation of transport. Instead of units of mechanical transport being attached to field formations and running back to points at which lines of communication convoys could transfer their loads, as had been the practice in the earlier stages of the campaign, Mechanical Transport units of the lines of communication delivered practically into the bivouacs of the troops. This method, while ensuring more effective control of the Mechanical Transport and economising vehicles, entailed in many