



## SIXTH SUPPLEMENT

TO

# The London Gazette

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THURSDAY, 29 AUGUST, 1918.

War Office,  
29th August, 1918.

The Secretary of State for War has received the following Despatch, addressed to the Chief of the General Staff, India, by Lieutenant-General W. R. Marshall, K.C.B., K.C.S.I., Commanding-in-Chief Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force:—

General Headquarters,  
Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force,  
15th April, 1918.

SIR,—

I assumed the command of this force on the 18th November last on the death of the late lamented Lieut.-Gen. Sir Stanley Maude, and now have the honour to submit a report on the operations in Mesopotamia from October 1st, 1917, till 31st March of this year.

2. The last despatch of General Maude covered the period April 1st to September 30th, 1917, and concluded with the operations which resulted in the capture and occupation

of Ramadi on the Euphrates. At the commencement of the period covered by the present despatch this force was opposed on the north-east by Turks, who were holding the hills known as Jebel Hamrin, while up the Tigris they were entrenched in front of Daur, and the left wing was secure at Ramadi.

3. At the beginning of October it was decided to clear the Turks from the left bank of the Diala, and occupy the Jebel Hamrin, astride of that river, in order that the control of the canals might be in our hands. This operation was entrusted to the corps then under my command. I decided, as a preliminary operation, to drive the Turks out of their forward positions on the right bank of the Diala, where they were holding a line near Deli Abbas, and after that to hold them in front whilst my main attack developed from the south-east against their left flank. These measures had the desired effect of dislodging the enemy from a very strong position with extraordinarily few casualties in my force, but, owing to the Diala being at that time of year fordable in innumerable places, the bulk

of the Turks evaded capture, destroyed their bridge at Kizil Robot, and retreated to the right bank of the river. All our objectives were gained, and a position astride the Diala gorge, protecting the headworks of the canals, was seized and consolidated.

To ensure a perfect system of communication in the new forward area considerable work was necessitated. The main canals, *i.e.*, Khalis, Mansuriya, Khorassan, Mahrut, Haruniya, and Ruz, as well as their numerous distributaries, were rapidly bridged—often at more than one place—and this mobile bridging equipment was subsequently replaced by more permanent structures capable of carrying heavy loads. Seventy-five bridges of various sizes were built in this area alone, and the Jebel Hamrin, which prior to our occupation was a roadless tangle of hills, was gradually pierced by a very complete and convenient number of roads suitable for wheeled traffic. These roads have involved heavy work, not only in digging but in rock cutting through the hills and in metalling over the sandy flats.

4. Whilst the operations referred to in para. 3 were in progress, the 18th Turkish Army Corps on the Tigris undertook a counter demonstration against our troops on that line, and in the middle of October advanced as far as El Huweslat, 8 miles north of Samarra, where they proceeded to entrench themselves. General Maude decided to attack before they had time to consolidate their position to any great extent, and on the 24th October, after a night march, our leading division on the Tigris front captured El Huweslat, which the Turks had evacuated in haste, and then pushed north to Daur, supported by our cavalry. This position was captured on 2nd November by the 28th Infantry Brigade, who by pressing on with vigour caused the Turks to evacuate also their second line of trenches. The cavalry endeavoured to press round the western flank, but were met with heavy artillery fire, under cover of which the Turks withdrew to Tekrit. Although by this time our infantry had already marched 30 miles in twenty-four hours, it was decided to push on to Tekrit, and on 5th November the 8th Infantry Brigade assaulted the hostile position at that place, capturing the whole of their objectives and repelling two counter-attacks in force. The enemy suffered heavily, and many prisoners were taken. Meantime the cavalry, supported by the 19th Infantry Brigade, had pushed round the flank, and in the afternoon a spirited attack by the infantry, coupled with a charge by the Cavalry Brigade on the flank, threw back the Turks in disorder, who fled panic-stricken under cover of strong rearguard positions, which had previously been prepared for some miles in rear, and which held up our pursuit. During the following night the enemy withdrew the whole of their forces to Shoreimiya, and burnt large quantities of ammunition and stores. Their losses were estimated at 2,000, including 300 killed, and considerable booty fell into our hands.

The Turkish position was found to consist of an intricate system of trenches, many of which had been well and deeply dug, with numerous machine-gun emplacements, and its capture at a moderate cost redounds to the credit of all ranks.

The main portion of our troops were then ordered back to Samarra.

5. On the 19th November, 1917, the army in Mesopotamia received the news of the death from cholera of our beloved and revered Chief, Lieut.-General Sir Stanley Maude, K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O. Needless to say it was a bitter blow to the whole Force that he of all men should have been singled out by this fell disease, which was not in any way in epidemic form.

General Maude, whose genius had altered the whole face of affairs in Mesopotamia, was an almost irreparable loss; he had taken over an army whose moral had been severely tried by their failure to effect the relief of Kut, whose health had been sapped by a very trying climate, and consequently he had a very difficult task to restore its fighting efficiency, but in a few months by his hard work and great gifts of organisation, clear-sightedness, determination, and above all by his intense sympathy with and love of his soldiers, a very different state of affairs came into being. Strongly backed by the efforts of H.E. The Viceroy and the Government of India and by the War Office he thoroughly reorganised the transport services, and the troops were well fed and made as comfortable as circumstances permitted, though training and discipline were never relaxed. When he considered that all was perfectly ready, and not until then, he moved, and from that time this Force never looked back. When, therefore, I had the honour of being appointed as his successor the moral of the army was magnificent, whilst organisation and training had reached a high level of efficiency. The Turkish Army, on the contrary, was low in moral, and desertions from it were numerous and frequent; on the Tigris and Euphrates they had retreated out of rapid striking distance, and only on our right flank was there a good opportunity of hitting them. Towards the end of November, therefore, I determined to attack that part of the 13th Turkish Army Corps which was holding the Diala river above Mansuriya, the passes over the Jebel Hamrin and Kara Tepe.

The Turkish forces were well placed for defence, and the task set to our troops included the forcing of the passages of the Diala and Nahrin rivers, as well as the Sakaltutan and Abu Zenabil passes through the Jebel Hamrin.

The operations were entrusted to Lieut.-General Sir R. Egerton, K.C.B., K.C.I.E., whilst an independent force of cavalry under Major-General L. C. Jones, C.M.G., M.V.O., was ordered to demonstrate up the Adhaim river and prevent strong reinforcements being brought down against our attacking force from the line Tuz Kermatli-Kirkuk.

The passage of the Diala was successfully forced by night, but it was found that the Turks had flooded the whole of the low-lying ground on the right bank above its confluence with the Nahrin river, and this proved a serious obstacle. In spite, however, of the bad going, the whole of the Turkish position between Mirjana and the Nahrin river was occupied on the 3rd December, the Turks falling back northwards. During the same time an infantry brigade advanced north-west along the Jebel Hamrin and drove the enemy towards the Sakaltutan pass and Nahrin river, while another infantry brigade cleared Kishla Suhaniya, capturing 44 prisoners and two field

guns. During the night the Turks withdrew, and we occupied the Sakaltutan pass, and devoted the following day to a forward concentration of troops and supplies, all of which had been delayed by the unavoidable difficulties of ground and weather.

On the 5th December a combined column pushed forward against Kara Tepe; but progress was slow, and it was not until midday of the 6th that an assault, carried out by one infantry brigade, coupled with a flank attack by another infantry brigade, captured the position. The majority of the Turks fled, and the hilly nature of the ground, coupled with the bad going, saved them from heavy punishment. In their retreat through Kifri they set fire to their dumps of coal and the Kifri coal mine. Two hundred and forty-nine prisoners were taken, and over 100 dead were buried by us. The features of the day's fighting were the determination and dash of the infantry, their close support by the artillery, and the valuable co-operation of the flying corps with both. During these operations our troops received valuable assistance from the Russian detachment under Lieut.-Colonel Bicharakhov. On the 8th December the troops were withdrawn from the forward areas, but the Sakaltutan and Abu Zenabil passes were held and a bridgehead established at Kizil Robat, with a view to further action in the future. Our casualties were very small, in spite of the difficulties of terrain, and the operation reflected great credit on the commanders and staffs concerned, as well as on the regimental officers and men.

On the 9th December Khanakin was occupied and the communications in that area improved.

6. On the Euphrates Ramadi had been captured in September, and the months from October to December were occupied by the troops in that area in consolidating their forward positions and in establishing a sense of security amongst the surrounding tribes. Offensive measures were of a minor kind, and consisted of raids against hostile shaikhs, some of whom were smuggling food to the Turks, of air raids, and of reconnaissances along both banks of the river and into the desert on either flank. Several bridges were thrown across the river Euphrates, and the development of the forward area was taken in hand so as to relieve the strain on transport which had to bring supplies by road from Baghdad until the railway was completed on 21st December.

During December and January it was evident that the Turks were being reinforced, the bulk of their troops being near Hit, and as their strength grew their patrols were pushed down stream as far as Uqbah and Nafata. I accordingly issued orders to Major-General Sir H. T. Brooking, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., commanding the troops on the Euphrates front, to capture Hit and its garrison as soon as his arrangements were completed and the state of the ground permitted. My opinion was that there would be no difficulty in capturing the town and driving the Turks out of their positions, but that the capture of the Turkish force would be a matter of extreme difficulty, in consequence of their previous experience at Ramadi.

On 19th February troops were pushed forward to Uqbah, which was found evacuated, and it was ascertained that the Turkish main

position was two miles above Hit, behind a depression known as Broad Wadi, while about two-thirds of his troops were fifteen miles further upstream at Salahiya. I did not wish to commit our troops to serious fighting unless I saw a chance of delivering a severe blow against the enemy, and accordingly touch was ordered to be maintained by constant patrolling and reconnaissances while forward communications were improved and supplies pushed up.

On March 8th it was discovered that the Turks had vacated their Broad Wadi position, and were falling back on Salahiya. The troops were accordingly pushed forward, and the R.F.C., which co-operated by bombing and machine-gun fire, caused many casualties and much confusion amongst the retreating columns of the enemy and their transport. Hit was occupied on the 9th, and Salahiya on the 10th, the Turks retreating to Khan Baghdadi.

I then issued orders to drive the enemy as far as possible from Hit, and to inflict all possible damage on him. To assist in this object additional mobile troops, including a cavalry brigade and light armoured motors, were ordered to Hit, with instructions to move by night and conceal themselves by day, so that the enemy might think that no further advance by my troops was intended; in many other ways efforts, apparently successful, were made to deceive the Turks as to our intentions.

On the 26th the plan of operations was to make an attack in strength against the enemy's left, and to send the cavalry and armoured motor-cars round his right flank. Preparations for this attack were nearing completion when it became evident that the enemy had already commenced to withdraw from their forward positions, but intended to make a stand north-west of Khan Baghdadi. Arrangements for assaulting this position were accordingly made, and under cover of an effective barrage it was carried out at 5.30 p.m., with slight loss.

Meantime the cavalry, after a long and difficult march, gained the Aleppo road where it crosses the Wadi Hauran shortly after 5 p.m., and cut off the enemy's retreat by road and river. About 11.30 p.m. the Turks launched a heavy attack in the hope of breaking through the centre of the cavalry; but were completely repulsed and lost 1,000 prisoners.

By 5.30 a.m. next morning the infantry columns arrived and completed the defeat, capturing a large number of prisoners, supplies and munitions of all kinds. An energetic pursuit by the cavalry and by a mobile column in motor-cars was then carried out. Haditha was captured without serious resistance, the enemy having no time to destroy his ammunition dumps at that place, and in the evening Khan Feheme was reached. On the 28th Ana was captured and another large dump of ammunition was found in it. The pursuit by motor was continued for 73 miles along the Aleppo road, many prisoners were taken, the Turks in most cases surrendering freely, being worn out and demoralised by the rapidity of our pursuit. The total prisoners taken were the commander and staff of the 50th Turkish Division, the commandant of Ana, two regimental commanders, 213 officers, and 5,022 other ranks, inclusive of Germans. Twelve guns, 47 machine guns, and great quantities of rifles, ammunition, and stores were also captured. The amount of ammunition found at Ana

being too large to be brought away, was blown up, and on 30th March the troops were gradually withdrawn down the Euphrates to previously arranged positions.

The complete success of this operation I attribute to the masterly way in which the force was handled by Major-General Sir H. T. Brooking and his very complete preparatory arrangements.

The endurance of the troops, and their determination to get at the enemy was worthy of all praise, whilst the tactical ability of their commanders was of a very high order. The magnificent work done by the cavalry brigade under Brig.-General R. A. Cassels, as well as by the light armoured motor batteries, both in cutting off the enemy's line of retreat, as well as in the pursuit to and beyond Ana, was a notable feat. Best of all, our casualties were very slight.

7. With the advent of the New Year, the weather, which had been unexpectedly good in December, became consistently wet. Continuous operations on any large scale were rendered out of the question, and the greatest strain was thrown on the lines of communication and supply formations.

On the north-east front a small column was sent at the beginning of January as far as Pai Tak, at the foot of the Tak-i-Girra Pass. It met with no opposition, and on its return occupied Kasr-i-Shirin. Towards the end of the month the state of famine to which the Turks had reduced Northern Persia made it incumbent on me to endeavour to open the main trade route via Kirmanshah in order to get supplies to the poor inhabitants of the towns and villages, and to provide them with an outlet for their home manufactures. With this object in view I increased the garrison of Kasr-i-Shirin, and pushed small posts towards Kirmanshah. A large amount of tribal labour was also employed in improving the road, which was in a lamentable state of disrepair. The continuance of wet weather up to the present date, coupled with snow on the high ground east of the Tak-i-Girra pass, has rendered the maintenance of troops along the road a matter of extreme difficulty.

8. In addition to the operations on the DIALA, TIGRIS and EUFRATES, and the activities towards Kirmanshah, to which I have referred, numerous minor operations have been carried out on all fronts. These consisted generally of reconnaissances by cavalry and light armoured motor cars and by bombing raids by the Royal Flying Corps. At the end of March manoeuvres under war conditions were carried out on a large scale near Tekrit, but the Turks in that area withdrew northwards before the arrival of our troops.

9. In the time of my predecessor, the Civil Commissioner, Sir Percy Cox, had strongly urged that the whole of the Euphrates line from Feludja to Nasiriya should be brought under military and civil control, but at that time circumstances did not permit of any extension of our military responsibilities. By the middle of December, 1917, however, the military position had completely changed owing to the magnificent successes gained by General Allenby in Palestine. I therefore considered that the time was ripe to establish a firm control of the line of the Euphrates, and by that means encourage and assist in the development of the rich agricultural lands in that area. To that

end I issued orders for troops to be dispatched from Nasiriya and Baghdad to garrison various villages, thus establishing through communication by river between Basra and Feludja and controlling the development of local resources throughout the lower Euphrates valley. The extension of military control over this area was also desirable in order that the shaikhs of important towns like Kerbela, Nedjef, Hilla and Diwaniya might be brought more closely into the sphere of British influence and that pro-Turk sympathisers might be expelled.

Care was taken not to establish troops in either of the religious cities of Kerbela and Nedjef, and they were quartered at a distance. The inhabitants of Nedjef are, for the most part, well-disposed holy people, but there is in addition a proportion of irreconcilables in the town. On 12th January some of these fired on the troops exercising near the town, causing a few casualties. Not wishing to injure a town which is full of sacred memories for Mahomedans, I decided to punish two of the leading shaikhs who were known to be responsible for the offence, and to levy a heavy fine. The shaikhs, however, fled before they could be arrested, and they became outlaws. The fine was paid. After this incident matters seemed to be going on satisfactorily when, on 21st March, to my great regret, the political officer in Nedjef, Captain W. M. Marshall, was murdered. No reason was given for the act, as the deceased officer was universally liked. I immediately ordered a blockade of the town until all those implicated in the murder were given up, and surrounded it by a cordon of military posts joined by barbed wire. While I am prepared to go to extreme measures if necessary in order to exact reparation for so foul a deed, I feel confident that by blockade methods I shall cause all the delinquents to be surrendered. When these have been removed the further punishment of the town will be a matter for subsequent consideration.

Meantime, the development of the Hilla area has proceeded apace. Many hundred tons of seed grain have been planted, and to assist in bringing the harvest into Baghdad a branch line down to Hilla is being made, which is expected to be open for traffic by the middle of May. I have every confidence that this scheme will prove beneficial and enable this Force to be dependent largely on local produce.

10. The riverain tribes of the Euphrates had long been independent, and though the capture of Feludja and Ramadi had produced a very marked effect upon them, and checked any serious attempt at hostile action, nevertheless certain minor punitive operations had been necessitated. These took the form of despatching small columns of all arms, assisted by river gunboats, by means of which the towers of recalcitrant chiefs were demolished and the tribe in question punished. Five such expeditions were sent out from Nasiriya between November and February, and were uniformly successful. Though of a minor nature, nevertheless they taxed the powers of endurance of the troops employed.

11. A portion of this Force is maintained along the Karun river, primarily to protect the oilfields near Tembi, but also to maintain order in Ahwaz, Shushtar and Dizful. In this work the troops have been markedly successful. A disturbance occurred at Shushtar on November

2nd, during which the British Consulate was threatened, but it was quickly and easily suppressed, thanks to the energetic action of the officers in responsible positions, and by the rapidity with which the troops employed performed a long and difficult march to the scene of action.

12. The maintenance of the line of communication defences along both the Tigris and Euphrates has been carried out with marked efficiency. Though the work has at times been arduous, and often more monotonous than that of troops employed in forward areas, the inability of enemy agents to cause even the slightest damage or delay on the lines of communication redounds to the vigilance and credit of all concerned.

On the Tigris the only trouble caused has been due to losses by theft from trains and boats, especially between Kurna and Amara. This district is inhabited by marsh tribes, who in their native swamps are afforded complete immunity against attack by land, as they retreat rapidly into their boats, leaving nothing of value behind.

The tribes between Basra and Nasiriya have been absolutely quiet, and have made no hostile movement.

I have nothing but praise for the patrols, railway guards and escorts, whose work has brought out qualities of self-reliance and devotion to duty.

The defences at Fao have been consolidated and improved, and the examination service of ships entering the Shatt-el-Arab has been effective. During the six months under review 581 vessels other than British and 8,466 native craft have been examined.

13. I desire to bring to favourable notice the names of my two Corps Commanders, Lieut.-General Sir R. G. Egerton, K.C.B., K.C.I.E., and Major-General (temp. Lieut.-General) Sir A. S. Cobbe, V.C., K.C.B., C.S.I., D.S.O., who have rendered me every assistance and have commanded their respective corps with ability.

My thanks are also due to the commanders of higher formations and staffs for their loyalty and untiring work, and to the gallantry, endurance and devotion to duty displayed by regimental officers, non-commissioned officers and men of all arms throughout the period under review.

Throughout the whole period covered by this Despatch the work of the R.F.C. has been, as usual, perfectly admirable, and enemy machines, which endeavoured at one time to carry out raids on our camps and communications, were either driven off or brought down. Many reprisals were also carried out on the enemy aerodromes and camps, both by day and night. During all operations the R.F.C. have co-operated with other arms, cavalry, artillery and infantry, in the closest and most effectual way, whilst the pursuit of the retreating enemy columns has been harassed by our machines in the boldest manner, both by bombing and machine-gun fire.

14. The extension of the lines of communication to the north-east and north-west, coupled with the opening up of the lower Euphrates, has thrown an ever-increasing responsibility on Major-General Sir George MacMunn, K.C.B., C.S.I., D.S.O., Inspector-General of Communications, and I concur whole-heartedly

in the opinion of his ability which was held by my distinguished predecessor.

One of the principal features of the lines of communication has been the rapid development of the port of Basra by the completion of the dockyard and of the first set of wharves, earlier planned, as well as the continuance of the arrangements for improving the working of ocean shipping. A large island at Magill has been raised by dredging to take ocean ships on one side and to load river steamers on the other. The auxiliary annexe of Nahr Umr has also given very great assistance with little outlay of material. All this work reflects great credit on the construction branch of the Port Administration and Conservancy.

The period covered by this Despatch contains the worst months of low water, when every day was a constant anxiety with regard to river navigation, and the river was kept open only by the most unremitting care of the buoying establishment. The riverborne tonnage has steadily improved, and the organisation of the Inland Water Transport has shown a very high state of efficiency.

Considerable progress has also been shown in the development of the railways in all sections of the lines of communication, and in the improvements of the river ports of the Amara and Kut-el-Amara.

15. The high standard of efficiency displayed by all ranks of the Medical Service has been most gratifying to me, and reflects great credit on Surgeon-General A. P. Blenkinsop, C.B., C.M.G., my Director of Medical Services. The health of the troops has shown marked improvement as compared with the corresponding months of 1916-17. The sanitary organization and administration has steadily progressed, and the standard of comfort and efficiency of the hospitals is most satisfactory.

The Nursing Sisters have, as always, devoted themselves with untiring care and zeal to the welfare of the sick and wounded. Through the generosity and kindness of Her Excellency Lady Willingdon clubs and convalescent homes for these devoted ladies are being established at suitable centres.

I also wish to take this opportunity of recording my gratitude, and that of all ranks under my command, for the valuable help afforded by the Red Cross Society, which has resulted in the increased comfort of the troops.

16. I was lucky to receive a visit early in March from Lieut.-General Sir E. Altham, K.C.B., C.M.G., Quartermaster-General in India, and Sir Thomas Holland, K.C.I.E., head of the Munitions Board, who were thus able to see for themselves the wants of the country and the results of the efforts made by India to supply our needs.

The work thrown on the Administrative Services and Departments, most of which is primarily due to the long line of communications, has been consistently heavy. In spite of distances traversed over a roadless country, and of interruptions by floods, Supplies to the fighting troops have been maintained with the utmost precision. In Transport a salient feature has been the welcome arrival of extra mechanical transport companies, which increased the radius of action of the troops in the large areas over which they had to operate. The maintenance of these companies reflects great credit on the mechanical transport branch of the Army Service Corps.

Similarly, the mule columns and animal drawn transport have shown a high standard of efficiency. In this connection I would specially mention the assistance rendered by the corps raised by Indian Princes, viz., Jaipur, Bharatpur, Gwalior and Mysore Imperial Service transport.

The Ordnance Services have been conducted and developed with energy and efficiency with a view to making the Force as self-supporting as possible and to the consequent saving of sea transport. To this end boot-repairing shops, disinfecting and repair stations, and other workshops have been established or extended.

The duties of the Works Department in providing protection for the communications to Baghdad and Baghdad itself against floods have proved long and arduous, and show good progress. It is not, perhaps, realised that in this undeveloped country the only local products are mud bricks, reeds for making mats, lime and bitumen in small quantities, and gravel in isolated localities. Every other requirement, from a constructional point of view, has to be imported. The supply of good drinking water has been well maintained. Automatic suction chlorination is now in general use, and mechanical filtration plants have been or are being erected at all important posts.

The conduct and administration of the Remount Department is most satisfactory, and I consider that the Remount Depot and attached farm at Baghdad are models of their kind.

Owing to the increased area over which this Force operates, to the amount of animal diseases existing in the territories conquered, and to the consequent danger of the animals of the Force becoming infected, it has been found necessary to increase the Veterinary administrative staff and to form extra veterinary hospitals. The results are most gratifying, and reflect great credit on this Department.

The Irrigation Department, as such, has been recently constituted, though irrigation work was carried out previously, chiefly on the Euphrates. The work done can only be described as extraordinary, and I look forward to a great development in this direction next year. The excellent results already achieved are due to the untiring zeal and energy of all ranks in a country where, until recently, there was no military control.

The period has been one of constant construction work and of steadily increasing demands on the Railway Department. Floods have caused several interruptions, but the service of trains has been maintained with great success in face of difficulties inherent to lines rapidly constructed in a new country, where all material has had to be brought from overseas.

The Department of Local Resources has, in addition to its former duties, taken over the control of grass farms, the feeding of the civil population, and the arrangements for the collection and transportation of the coming harvest. Tanneries, and a poultry farm primarily to supply hospitals, are being formed. The blockade system has been carefully regulated, and ample evidence is available of severe shortage of supplies among the Turkish troops resulting in increased desertions and loss of moral. The Department has been conducted with considerable ability.

Agriculture has made great progress, and my especial thanks are due to Mr. C. C. Garbett, I.C.S., first Revenue Officer, for the initiative

displayed and the valuable work done by him in this connection. The latest estimate for the coming harvest is most gratifying. I hope, by the institution of a properly constituted Department of Agriculture and by its co-ordination with the Irrigation Department, that a very large increase will be shown next year in the agricultural development of this country.

The Postal Services have had to compete with the ever-increasing wants of this Force, and the Department has worked satisfactorily.

17. The Chaplains of all denominations have continued to devote themselves to the spiritual welfare of the troops, and have carried out their duties to my entire satisfaction. I am indebted also to the Church Army for the provision of tents for social and religious purposes, which have not only afforded opportunities for recreation to the troops, but have assisted the chaplains in their work.

The activities of the Y.M.C.A. have extended considerably during the last six months. There are now a total of seventy centres, and the system of soldiers' clubs has been initiated throughout the country. I greatly appreciate the excellent work of this society in undertaking the management of these recreational centres, which tend so largely to the well-being of the troops.

Considerable advance has been made in Graves Registration, and the special difficulties inherent to this country have been satisfactorily overcome.

To all those ladies and gentlemen who have so generously worked for, and contributed to, the comfort of the troops by the provision of war gifts, hospital ships and launches, and in numberless other ways, I can only, on behalf of this Force, tender our very grateful thanks and assure them that their kindness will never be forgotten.

18. The Directorate of Signals and Telegraphs has had to deal with ever-increasing communications and to improve those already existing in connection with the extension of the area occupied and of the railway system and with the development of the country. In addition the telephone systems have been enlarged and extended, and the work done by the wireless squadrons has been of a high order. The efficiency of this Directorate has been well maintained.

The work performed by the Surveys has assumed very large proportions, but my demands have always been met in the most satisfactory manner, and the Map Compilation Section has been of the greatest assistance.

19. In the working of the civil and political branch of this Force I have been most ably advised by the Civil Commissioner, Sir Percy Cox, G.C.I.E., K.C.S.I., to whom I am greatly indebted. The military developments on both flanks have involved a corresponding extension of our political responsibilities. The functions of the civil administration consists in the extension of political control, the exercise of influence on agricultural shaihs and tribes, the levy of revenue in kind, and not least the work connected with Central Arabian politics and the local Arab tribes.

The administration of the Basra Vilayet continues to run smoothly on what are practically peace lines, and satisfactory progress is noticeable in all branches.

20. The Royal Navy has ever been anxious to give me every assistance when called upon, and

I am grateful to Rear-Admiral D. St. A. Wake, C.B., C.I.E., and the officers and ratings under his command for their ready co-operation.

21. Lastly I desire to record my most sincere thanks to my Staff and technical advisers who have so ably and loyally carried out my wishes.

Major-General W. Gillman, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., my Chief of the General Staff, has rendered me most loyal and invaluable assistance, whilst during his absence on an important mission his place was ably filled by Brig-General T. Fraser, C.B., C.M.G., to whose capable work I owe much both during that period and on previous occasions.

Major-General the Hon. A. R. M. Stuart-Wortley, C.B., D.S.O., my Deputy Quarter-master-General, has had an ever-increasing load of work and responsibility placed on his shoulders owing to the various new directorates which have come into being within the past six months, but his energy and ability have overcome all initial difficulties.

Major-General F. F. Ready, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., my Deputy Adjutant-General, has been a tower of strength to me, and I owe much to his painstaking work and sound advice.

The entire absence of friction or discord which has characterised the work of all branches of the Staff has been a source of great gratification to me, and, I feel sure, to the entire Force.

22. As a proof of the gallantry and devotion to duty displayed by regimental officers and men during the period covered by this despatch, I have, under the powers delegated to me as Commander-in-chief, made the following immediate awards for service in the field: Distinguished Service Order 15, Military Cross 109, Distinguished Conduct Medal 33, Military Medal 67, Indian Order of Merit 30, Indian Distinguished Conduct Medal 104.

23. I attach, in addition, a list giving the names of those officers, ladies, warrant and non-commissioned officers and men, whose services are deemed to be deserving of reward and special mention.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

W. R. Marshall,

Lieut.-General, Commanding-in-Chief,  
Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force.

LONDON:  
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