

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 On the 8th December the troops were withdrawn from the forward areas, but the Sakaltutan and Abu Zenabil passes were held and a bridgehead established at Kizil Robat, with a view to further action in the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