



SECOND SUPPLEMENT

TO

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WEDNESDAY, 6 NOVEMBER, 1918.

War Office,
6th November, 1918.

The Secretary of State for War has received the following Despatch from General Sir Edmund Allenby, G.C.M.G., K.C.B., Commanding-in-Chief, Egyptian Expeditionary Force:—

General Headquarters,
Egyptian Expeditionary Force,
18th September, 1918.

MY LORD,

I have the honour to submit a report on the operations undertaken since the 11th December, 1917, by the Force serving in Egypt and Palestine.

1. The operations described in my Despatch of the 16th December, 1917, had resulted in the enemy's army being broken into two separate parts. One part had retired northwards, and had come to a halt on the hills overlooking the plain which lies to the north of Jaffa and Ramleh. This Force consisted of five divisions, four of which had been badly shaken in the recent retreat. Opposite it the XXIst Corps held a line, which, starting at

the mouth of the Nahr El Auja, three miles north of Jaffa, crossed the Turkish railway from Ludd to Jiljulieh at a point five miles north of Ludd, and thence ran in a south-easterly direction to Midieh.

The other part of the enemy's army had retired in an easterly direction towards Jerusalem. Here the remains of six divisions had been concentrated. The XXth Corps, after it had compelled the enemy to evacuate Jerusalem, held a line across the roads leading from Jerusalem to Jericho and Nablus, four miles east and north of the city, and thence westwards through the hills past Beit Ur El Foka to Suffa.

The two wings of the Turkish Army were separated by a roadless tract of country, the chief features of which consist of a series of spurs running west. The spurs are bare and rocky, the valleys between them are deep. No operations on a large scale are possible in this country until the tracks have been improved sufficiently to admit of the passage of guns and of wheeled transport. The only lateral communication possible to the Turks lay some 30 miles to the north of the line Tul Keram-Nablus.

2. In order to provide more effectively for the security of Jerusalem and Jaffa, it was essential that the line should be advanced. I therefore ordered the XXth Corps to advance to the line Beitin-Nalin. This involved an advance on a 12-mile front to a depth of 6 miles immediately north of Jerusalem. The XXIst Corps on the left I ordered to advance to the line Kibbieh-Rantieh-Mulebbis-Sheikh El Balutah-El Jelil. When this advance had been carried out the distance between the enemy and Jaffa would be increased to 8 miles.

3. Before either of these advances could take place a considerable amount of labour was necessary on the construction of roads and the improvement of communications. Supplies and ammunition had to be brought up, a task which was rendered more difficult by the weather. Heavy rains interfered with the progress of railway construction, and in some places washed away the existing line, while the roads became deep in mud, rendering the use of mechanical transport and camels impossible, and that of horse transport slow and difficult.

4. The operation on the left was the first to be carried out. The chief obstacle lay in the crossing of the Nahr El Auja. This river is only fordable in places, and all approaches to it are overlooked from Sheikh Muannis and Khurbet Hadrah. At these places two spurs running from north to south terminate abruptly in steep slopes some 500 yards from the river.

Before the XXIst Corps could reach its final objectives, it was necessary that the guns should move forward with the infantry. Consequently Sheikh Muannis, Khurbet Hadrah and the high ground overlooking the river had to be captured as a preliminary to the general advance in order that bridges might be built.

The chief difficulty lay in concealing the collection and preparation of rafts and bridging material. All preparations were completed, however, without attracting the enemy's attention, and on the night of December 20th-21st the 52nd Division crossed the river in three columns. The enemy was taken completely by surprise. The left column, fording the river near its mouth, at this point 4 feet deep, captured Tell Er Rekkeit, 4,000 yards north of the river's mouth; the centre and right columns, crossing on rafts, rushed Sheikh Muannis and Khurbet Hadrah at the point of the bayonet. By dawn a line from Khurbet Hadrah to Tell Er Rekkeit had been consolidated, and the enemy deprived of all observation from the north over the valley of the Nahr El Auja.

The successful crossing of the Nahr El Auja reflects great credit on the 52nd (Lowland) Division. It involved considerable preparation, the details of which were thought out with care and precision. The sodden state of the ground, and, on the night of the crossing, the swollen state of the river, added to the difficulties, yet by dawn the whole of the infantry had crossed. The fact that the enemy were taken by surprise, and that all resistance was overcome with the bayonet without a shot being fired, bears testimony to the discipline of this division. Eleven officers, including two battalion commanders, and 305 other ranks, and ten machine guns were captured in this operation.

December 21st was spent in building bridges. Considerable hostile shell fire was experienced during the day, chiefly from the right flank.

From Mulebbis the enemy could observe the valley of the Auja. Despite this the bridges were completed, and by dusk the whole of the Divisional Artillery of the 52nd Division had crossed to the right bank, ready to support the advance to the final objectives.

On the morning of December 22nd, the 54th Division on the right drove the enemy from the orchards which surround Mulebbis, and captured the villages of Rantieh and Fejja. On the left the 52nd Division reached all their objectives and consolidated the line Tel el Mukhmar-Arsuf, the latter place, although two miles beyond the allotted objective, being occupied to deny direct observation on Jaffa Harbour to the enemy.

During the day the Royal Flying Corps attacked the enemy with bombs and machine-gun fire as he withdrew, inflicting numerous casualties.

Throughout these operations the XXIst Corps received most effective support from the Royal Navy.

This operation, by increasing the distance between the enemy and Jaffa from three to eight miles, rendered Jaffa and its harbour secure, and gained elbow room for the troops covering Ludd and Ramleh and the main Jaffa-Jerusalem road.

5. In the meantime, on XXth Corps front, only minor operations had taken place, resulting in the capture of various points of local tactical importance.

The preparations for the advance to the Beitin-Nalin line were hindered by the weather, heavy rain falling during the week before Christmas. As they were nearing completion, various movements and concentrations of troops on the part of the enemy indicated that he intended to attack, with the object of recovering Jerusalem.

This proved to be the case. On the night of December 26/27th, the enemy attacked with great determination astride the Jerusalem-Nablus road. A counter-attack against the right of his attack was carried out immediately by two divisions. As the result of three days' fighting, not only did the enemy's attempt to recapture Jerusalem fail, but by the end of the third day he found himself seven miles further from Jerusalem than when his attack started.

The enemy's attack was launched at 11.30 p.m. on December 26th, the advanced posts of the 60th Division, east of the Jerusalem road, being driven in. By 1.30 a.m. on December 27th the 60th Division was engaged along its whole front.

Between 1.30 a.m. and 8 a.m. the outposts of the 60th Division on the ridge north of Beit Hanninah repelled four determined attacks, but the heaviest fighting took place to the east of the Jerusalem-Nablus road. Repeated attacks were made against Tel el Ful; a conspicuous hill from which Jerusalem and the intervening ground can be overlooked. The attacks were made by picked bodies of troops, and were pressed with great determination. At only one point did the enemy succeed in reaching the main line of defence. He was driven out at once by the local reserves. In all these attacks he lost heavily.

In the meantime the enemy had delivered attacks against various points held by the 53rd Division east of Jerusalem. On the extreme right at Kh. Deir Ibn Obeid a company of

Middlesex troops was surrounded by 700 Turks, supported by mountain artillery. Although without artillery support, it offered a most gallant resistance, holding out till relief came on the morning of the 28th. None of the other attacks on this division's front were any more successful.

On the 60th Division front north of Jerusalem a lull in the fighting occurred after 8 a.m. This lasted till 12.55 p.m., when the enemy launched an attack of unexpected strength against the whole front. In places this attack reached our main line of defence, but these small successes were short-lived, for in each case local counter-attacks, carried out immediately, were successful in restoring the line. This proved to be the final effort.

At noon the counter-attack by the 74th and 10th Divisions, which had been launched at 6.30 a.m. against the right of the enemy's attack, had made itself felt.

The 74th Division, climbing the western slopes of the Zeitun Ridge, advanced along it in an easterly direction. On their left a brigade of the 10th Division advanced along the neighbouring ridge, the left of the 10th Division advancing in a northerly direction to form a defensive flank.

These divisions met with a determined and stubborn resistance. The ground over which the advance took place was sufficiently rough and broken to render the advance slow and difficult, quite apart from any action of the enemy. In addition, the boulders on the hills rendered it ideal ground in which to fight a delaying action, providing positions for machine guns, which are difficult to locate.

Nevertheless, when night fell the 74th Division had reached the east end of the Zeitun Ridge, opposite Beitunia. On their left the 10th Division overlooked Ain Arik, and further to the left were in possession of Deir Izbzia.

The counter-attack of these two divisions had thus not only resulted in an advance of 4,000 yards on a six-mile front, but, by attracting the enemy's reserves, had prevented the enemy from repeating his attacks on the 60th Division, and, depriving him of the initiative, had forced him to abandon his attempt to capture Jerusalem.

Seeing that the Turkish attack was spent I ordered the XXth Corps to make a general advance northwards on December 28th.

The enemy, after the failure of his attack on December 27th, was still holding his original position in front of the 60th Division. This position was of considerable strength, and included Khurbet Adaseh, a high ridge overlooking the approaches from Beit Hanninah, while further west it included the villages of Bir Nebala and El Jib, the scene of heavy fighting at the end of November.

El Jib and Bir Nebala were captured by 1 p.m. Khurbet Adaseh was then attacked and captured by 5.30 p.m.

At 6.30 p.m. the advance was resumed and by 9.15 p.m. the 60th Division had reached the line Er Ram-Rafat. Considerable resistance was met with at Er Ram. The right of this advance was protected by the 53rd Division, which extended its left northwards, capturing the villages of Anata and Kh. Almit.

On the left the 74th Division, advancing from the east end of the Zeitun Ridge, captured Beitunia, which was defended with ob-

stinacy, and seized the high ridge east and north of it. Further to the left, the right of the 10th Division, descending into the valley of the Ain Arik, climbed the opposite slopes and captured Kefr Shiyan Hill, one mile east of Ain Arik, and the ridge between this hill and Kh. Rubin. Considerable opposition was encountered, and great difficulty was experienced in locating the enemy's machine guns.

The 60th Division continued its advance on December 29th. At the start no opposition was met with, the enemy having withdrawn to Bireh and the Et Tahuneh Ridge just north of the village, leaving a garrison at Shab Salah, a precipitous hill 1,000 yards south of Bireh overlooking the Jerusalem-Nablus road. As soon as the leading troops came within range of Bireh they were met with heavy rifle and machine-gun fire. Some delay was caused owing to the difficulty experienced in bringing the guns forward.

By 4.15 p.m. the left of the attack reached the Bireh-Ram Allah road, and then stormed the Tahuneh ridge, the last position from which the enemy could observe the approaches to Bireh.

Simultaneously with this attack the right of the 60th Division had stormed Shab Saleh in face of heavy machine-gun fire, subsequently capturing the ridge east of Bireh.

At 9 p.m. the advance was continued to the line Beitin—El Balua—Kh. El Burj. Little opposition was encountered. On this day the 53rd Division extended its line northwards to protect the right of the 60th Division, occupying Hizmeb Jeba and the high ground north of it overlooking the Wadi El Medineh, with little opposition.

On the left the 74th Division occupied Ram Allah, and the 10th Division advanced without opposition to the line Khurbet Rubin—Ras Kerker—Deir El Kuddis.

The final line occupied by the XXth Corps thus ran from Deir Ibn Obeid, south-east of Jerusalem, northwards past Hizmeb and Jeba to Beitin, and thence westwards through El Burj, Ras Kerker to Deir El Kuddis.

During these days the Royal Air Force not only gained valuable and timely information, but repeatedly attacked the enemy's troops and transport with bombs and machine-gun fire from low altitudes, inflicting considerable losses.

The Turkish attempt to recapture Jerusalem had thus ended in crushing defeat. He had employed fresh troops who had not participated in the recent retreat of his army from Beersheba and Gaza and had escaped its demoralising effects. The determination and gallantry with which his attack was carried out only served to increase his losses. The attack had commenced on the night December 26/27th. By the evening of December 30th the XXth Corps had advanced on a front of 12 miles to a depth varying from 6 miles on the right to 3 miles on the left. This advance had to overcome not only a determined and obstinate resistance, but great natural difficulties as well, which had to be overcome before guns could be brought up to support the infantry.

750 prisoners, 24 machine guns and 3 automatic rifles were captured during these operations, and over 1,000 Turkish dead were buried by us. Our own casualties were considerably less than this number.

As a result of this advance and of that of the XXIst Corps, my force was in a far better

position to cover Jerusalem and the towns of Ramleh and Jaffa, and the road which, running from Jaffa to Jerusalem, formed the chief artery of lateral communication behind my line.

6. Any further advance northwards on my part was out of the question for the time being. Besides the construction of roads and the improvement of communications in the forward areas, stores of supplies and ammunition had to be accumulated. Until the railway had reached a point considerably nearer my front, this was of necessity a difficult task, and one rendered still more difficult by frequent spells of wet weather. Moreover, before a further advance could be made, it was necessary to drive the enemy across the River Jordan to render my right flank secure. The possession of the crossings over the Jordan offered other advantages. These were:—

(a) The enemy would be prevented from raiding the tract of country to the west of the Dead Sea.

(b) Control of the Dead Sea would be obtained.

(c) A point of departure would be gained for operations eastwards, with a view to interrupting the enemy's line of communication to the Hedjaz, in conjunction with the Arab forces based on Akaba.

7. Before the country around Jericho could be used as a base for operations against Amman, a further advance northwards was necessary to gain sufficient space to the north to render any interruption from that direction impossible.

I had intended to carry out this advance to the north simultaneously with the advance eastwards to the River Jordan. It, however, became apparent that, if this was to be carried into effect the operations against Jericho would have to be postponed for a considerable time to enable preparations for the advance northwards to be completed. I, therefore, decided to carry out the advance to the Jordan as a separate enterprise, the limits of the advance being the Jordan on the east and the Wadi el Auja on the north. This Wadi joins the Jordan eight miles north of the point where the Jordan enters the Dead Sea.

For this operation the Australian and New Zealand Mounted Division, less one Mounted Brigade and the Divisional Artillery, was attached to the XXth Corps.

The 60th Division had taken over the line east of Jerusalem some time previously. Opposed to it were some 5,000 rifles, while to the north another 2,000 rifles were in a position from which to act against the left flank of the 60th Division as it advanced.

The chief obstacle to the advance lay in the difficulties of the ground rather than any opposition the enemy might offer.

The descent from the vicinity of Jerusalem to the valley of the Jordan is very steep. The beds of the main wadis run from west to east. Their banks are often precipitous, rendering any crossing from one bank to the other impossible. Numerous tributaries join the main wadis from all directions, breaking up the ridges into a tumbled mass of hills.

The descent to the Jordan Valley from the line then held by the 60th Division is not, however, continuous. It is interrupted by a

series of ridges which afforded the enemy strong defensive positions.

Opposite the right of the 60th Division's line El Muntar formed a conspicuous landmark overlooking all the country in the vicinity: opposite the centre the high ground about Ras Umm Deisis and Arak Ibrahim afforded the enemy a strong position, while further north, on the left bank of the Wadi es Suweinit, Ras el Tawil formed a dominating feature. After a further fall the ground rose again at Talaat ed Dumm. This rise continued in a south-easterly direction to Jebel Ekteif, thence eastwards to Neby Musa, descending from there to the Jordan Valley, five miles south of Jericho.

To the west of Jericho at Jebel Kuruntul the ground falls sharply in steep cliffs to the Jordan Valley.

The general plan consisted of a direct advance by the 60th Division to the cliffs overlooking Jericho. The Australian and New Zealand Mounted Division was to co-operate on the right flank with a view to entering the Jordan Valley near Neby Musa, thus cutting off the enemy's retreat from Jericho.

The first step of the operation was carried out on Feb. 19th. By 9 a.m. the 60th Division had captured El Muntar, Arak Ibrahim and Ras et Tawil, the 53rd Division extending its right to include Rummon, thence along the right bank of the Wadi el Asa, in touch with the left of the 60th Division. The greatest opposition was encountered on the left at Rummon by the 53rd Division, and in the vicinity of Ras et Tawil by the 60th Division.

The capture of El Muntar enabled the mounted troops to concentrate behind it, preparatory to operating against the enemy's left on the 20th.

On the left the 53rd Division was now in a position to command the Et Taiyibeh—Jericho road, along which any troops intended to act against the left of the 60th Division would move.

During the day further ground was secured by the 60th Division in face of considerable opposition, to cover the deployment for the attack on February 20th.

During the night of February 19th-20th the 60th Division moved into positions of deployment in the Wadi Es Sidr. The covering troops of the centre brigade were attacked during the night, but the enemy was repulsed after a sharp struggle. On the morning of the 20th the centre brigade captured Talat Ed Dumm at 7.15 a.m., the enemy resisting with stubbornness. After a pause to enable guns to be brought forward, a further advance of 2,000 yards was made.

The right brigade, advancing on Jebel Ekteif, met with great opposition. Moreover, the ground over which the attack had to take place proved the most rugged and difficult yet met with in this country. Only one approach existed by which the assaulting waves could climb Jebel Ekteif, but by midday it had been stormed.

The left brigade, on the north of the Wadi Farah, advanced four miles, over difficult country, the enemy fighting a rearguard action from ridge to ridge.

Thus by the evening the 60th Division had reached a line running north from Jebel Ekteif, four miles west of the cliffs overlooking Jericho.

In the meantime the mounted troops on the

right had encountered considerable opposition, and had been much hampered by the difficulties of the ground.

Two miles south of Neby Musa the enemy held the high ground at Jebel el Kalimun and Tubk el Kaneiterah. Compelled to move in single file over tracks which were exposed to machine-gun fire from the enemy's position, and which had been registered accurately by the enemy's guns at Neby Musa, the progress of the mounted troops was necessarily slow. By 2 p.m., however, the enemy was driven from his position at Jebel el Kalimun and Tubk el Kaneiterah. The further advance of the New Zealand Brigade on Neby Musa was hampered by the ground, and was finally checked at the Wadi Mukelik, the only possible crossing over which was subjected to a heavy fire from Neby Musa. On the right of the New Zealanders an Australian mounted brigade discovered a crossing over the Wadi Kumran, and entering the Jordan plain reached the Wadi Jufet Zeben by dusk.

The chief feature of the enemy's resistance was the volume of machine-gun fire.

By 6 a.m. the New Zealanders and a battalion of the 60th Division reached Neby Musa, meeting with no opposition.

The Australian Mounted Brigade, advancing along the plain, entered Jericho at 8.20 a.m., the enemy having withdrawn during the night.

The 60th Division advanced to the line Rujm es Shema-Liyeh-Kh. Kakun-Jebel Karuntul, overlooking Jericho.

Meanwhile, patrols from the Australian Mounted Brigade reconnoitred as far as the Wadi el Aujah to the north and the El Ghoraniyeh Bridge. The enemy was found to be holding the high ground north of the Aujah, and a bridgehead covering the El Ghoraniyeh Bridge with guns on the left bank.

As a direct attack on the bridgehead would have involved heavy losses, without compensating advantages, it was not attempted. On the 22nd the 60th Division withdrew to the line Jebel Ekteif-Talat ed Dumm-Ras et Tawil, leaving outposts on the cliffs overlooking Jericho. The Mounted Division, leaving one regiment to patrol the Jordan Valley, returned to Bethlehem.

During these operations four officers, 140 other ranks, and six machine guns were captured from the enemy.

On no previous occasions had such difficulties of ground been encountered. As an instance of this, a Field Artillery battery took thirty-six hours to reach Neby Musa, the distance covered, as the crow flies, being only eight miles.

The Royal Air Force rendered valuable service, but mist and low-lying clouds interrupted their work to a great extent.

8. This operation, by driving the enemy across the Jordan, had rendered my right flank secure, but the base thus obtained was not sufficiently broad to permit of operations being carried out east of the Jordan against the Hedjaz Railway.

Before any such operation could be undertaken it was essential in the first place to cross the Wadi Aujah and secure the high ground on the north bank covering the approaches to the Jordan Valley by the Beisan-Jericho road, and, secondly, by advancing sufficiently far northwards on either side of the Jerusalem-Nablus road, to deny to the enemy the use of

all tracks and roads leading to the lower Jordan Valley. This accomplished, any troops he might determine to transfer from the west to the east bank of the Jordan would have to make a considerable detour to the north.

I therefore ordered the XXth Corps to secure Kh. el Beiyudat and Abu Tellul, in the Jordan Valley, north of the Wadi el Aujah, and further to the west the line Kefr Malik-Kh. Abu Felah, the high ground south of Sinjil, and the ridge north of the Wadi el Jib running through Kh. Aliuta-Jiljilia-Abwein-Arura, thence to Deir es Sudan and Nebi Saleh.

The watershed from which the wadis run, in the one direction to the River Jordan, in the other through the hills to the plain north of Ludd and thence to the sea, runs parallel to and some two miles east of the Jerusalem-Nablus road. The fall to the Jordan Valley is short and sharp, with the result that the beds of the wadis are deep and their sides almost precipitous. The country is so intricate that it cannot be crossed by large bodies of troops. Consequently, there was no danger in leaving a gap between the right of the XXth Corps at Kefr Malik and the detachment in the Jordan Valley at Abu Tellul.

To conform to the advance of the XXth Corps, I ordered the XXIst Corps to advance its right to include the ridge north of the Wadi Ballut, the village of Mejdal Yaba, a conspicuous landmark on a foothill overlooking the plain north of Ludd, Ras el Ain, an old Crusader stronghold on the railway from Ludd to Tul Keram, and El Mirr.

As a result of this advance the XXIst Corps would be placed in a better position for a further advance, should it be decided to attack the defensive system constructed by the enemy from Jiljulieh westwards through Tabsor to the sea.

The two Corps were thus advancing on a front, from Kefr Malik to El Mirr, of 26 miles—to a maximum depth of seven miles.

The ground over which the advance was to take place is rugged and difficult. A succession of high and rocky ridges, separated by deep valleys, afforded the enemy a series of positions of great natural strength. The slopes of the ridges are in many places precipitous. Ledges of rock confine the descent to definite places, on which the enemy could concentrate his fire. In places the slopes are terraced, and men had to pull or hoist each other up.

It was necessary to reconnoitre each successive position held by the enemy, and the subsequent movement of troops into positions of assembly was of necessity a slow process.

Under these conditions no rapid advance could be looked for.

As soon as supplies and ammunition had been collected and preparations were complete, both Corps made a preliminary advance to enable a closer reconnaissance of the enemy's main positions to be made, and to allow of the construction of roads for the movement of guns and supplies.

By March 8th the XXth Corps had reached the line En Nejmeh-Et Taiyibeh-Ain Sinia, on the Jerusalem-Nablus road, Hill 2665 overlooking Bir ez Zeit-Beit Ello, the 53rd Division being on the right, the 74th Division in the centre astride the Jerusalem-Nablus road, and the 10th Division on the left.

On the right of the XXIst Corps the 75th

Division had captured Abud and the ridge between the Wadis Barbara and Abud.

In neither case was any serious opposition encountered.

When the subsequent advance began the opposition stiffened considerably on the front of both Corps.

On March 9th and 10th the XXth Corps had to drive the enemy from ridge after ridge before the final objectives were reached.

During the night of March 8/9th the brigades of the XXth Corps moved forward to their positions of assembly. On the extreme right, in the Jordan Valley, the brigade of the 60th Division entrusted with the task of capturing Kh. el Beiyudat and Abu Tellul experienced some difficulty in crossing the Wadi el Auja in the dark, and subsequently met with determined resistance. By 3 p.m., however, Kh. el Beiyudat and Abu Tellul had been captured. The occupation of a position astride the Beisan-Jericho road completed this operation. Further west the 53rd, 74th and 10th Divisions had advanced by the evening to a depth varying between 3,000 and 7,000 yards, and had reached a line running east and west through Tell Asur, thence along the ridges overlooking the wadis En Nimr and El Jib. The 53rd Division on the right had met with considerable opposition and great natural difficulties, especially on the extreme right and at Tell Asur, a conspicuous landmark among a mass of high hills. The importance attached to Tell Asur by the enemy was shown by the number of determined efforts he made to recapture it, all of which were repulsed.

On March 10th both the enemy's resistance and the difficulties of the ground increased, but during the day and the early hours of the night of March 10/11th, an advance of 3,000 yards was made on a front of 12 miles. The line reached ran from Keir Malik, along the ridge overlooking the Wadi el Kola and the Burj el Lisaneh ridge, past Kh. el Sahlat, Kh. Aliuta, Jiljilia, Abwein, and Arura to its former position at Deir es Sudan and Neby Saleh.

The enemy contested the ridges north of the Wadis en Nimr and El Jib with great obstinacy, while on the extreme left near Neby Saleh he counter-attacked the left of the 10th Division on several occasions. The descent of the slopes leading down to the Wadis el Nimr and El Jib and the ascent on the far side presented great difficulties. The downward slopes were exceptionally steep, almost precipitous in places. It was impossible for companies and platoons to move on a wide front. The slopes were swept by machine-gun and rifle fire, and the bottom of the wadis by enfilade fire. The ascent on the far side was steeply terraced. Men had alternatively to hoist and pull each other up, under fire, and finally to expel the enemy from the summits in hand-to-hand fighting.

On March 11th the operation of the XXth Corps was completed by the occupation of Kh. Abu Felah and the heights overlooking Sinjil and the comparatively low-lying country to the north-east. The result of this operation was the capture of a line with great natural facilities for defence, and of eleven officers, 160 other ranks, eleven machine guns and considerable amounts of ammunition and other booty.

The second phase of the operation by the

XXIst Corps, the preliminary phase having taken place on March 7th, was carried out on March 12th.

At first the opposition encountered was not serious, but from the time the 75th Division reached the ridge overlooking the Wadi Ballut it stiffened, the enemy contesting the ridge on the far side of the Wadi stubbornly, and when driven off making several counter-attacks to regain it. At Benat Burry, a razor-edged ridge north of Kh. Balatah, the top of the ridge is honeycombed with caves with entrances on both sides. Considerable difficulty was experienced in overcoming the enemy's resistance here. Eventually, however, a platoon of Gurkhas worked round to the rear of the ridge. A Lewis gun was brought to bear on the exits. The garrison of the caves, numbering five officers and 50 other ranks, then surrendered.

On the left of the 75th Division the 54th Division captured the villages of El Mezeirreh, Kh. Dikerin and Mejdal Yaba in the foothills, and Ras El Ain and El Mirr in the plain. Seven officers, 105 other ranks and two machine guns were taken by these two divisions.

9. The Jordan Valley had now been sufficiently cleared of the enemy to enable operations to be carried out against the Turkish line of communication to the Hedjaz, in conjunction with the Arab forces under Sherif Feisal, which were operating in the country to the south-east of the Dead Sea and were under my control.

Sherif Feisal's forces were based on Akaba. In January, 1918, he had captured the high ground about Uheida, within 7 miles of Maan, his main objective. At the same time a force under Sherif Abdul Magin had occupied the whole of the Hish Forest up to and including Shobek, 20 miles north by west of Maan, destroying 35 kilometres of the enemy's light railway which left the main line at Kalaat Aneiza and was used to transport wood as fuel for locomotives. After the capture of Shobek a force under Sherif Nazir raided Jauf Ed Derwish, a station on the main line 30 miles north of Maan. This they held for three days, burning the station buildings and destroying two locomotives and some rolling stock. In this successful raid the Turkish losses amounted to over 100 killed, over 200 prisoners, a mountain gun and two machine guns. Further north a separate force of Arab tribesmen under Sherif Nazir captured Tafle, 15 miles south-east of the south end of the Dead Sea, on January 16th. The garrison, which consisted of 100 Turks and the officials of the place, surrendered after a short resistance. Ten days later a Turkish force, consisting of three battalions, with two mountain guns and 27 machine guns, advanced from Karak to recapture Tafle. An engagement took place on January 26th in which the enemy suffered a crushing defeat. His losses amounted to over 450 killed and 250 prisoners. In addition, the whole of his artillery and machine guns fell into the hands of the Arabs. In March the Turks concentrated a considerable force, including a battalion of German infantry, and, advancing from Katrani and Jauf Ed Derwish, re-occupied Tafle, the Arab tribesmen, in face of superior numbers, withdrawing to positions north of Shobek.

The situation to the east of the Jordan thus presented a favourable opportunity for a raid on the enemy's communications with the Hedjaz.

Its immediate effect would be to compel the enemy to recall the force which had recently occupied Tafle. It might, in addition, compel the enemy to call on the garrison of Maan for support. If this should prove to be the case, Sherif Feisal would be afforded his opportunity to attack Maan with some prospects of success. The extent of this opportunity would depend on the amount of damage done to the Hedjaz Railway. Near Amman, the railway crosses a viaduct and passes through a tunnel. If these could be destroyed it would be some weeks before traffic could be resumed. I determined therefore to carry out a raid on Amman, with the object of destroying the viaduct and tunnel and, if this should be found impossible, to damage the railway as much as possible. Even if traffic was only interrupted for a short time, the mere threat of a repetition of this raid would compel the enemy to maintain a considerable force to cover Amman. The troops available to operate against the Arabs would be reduced, and possibly the enemy might transfer a portion of his reserves from the west to the east of the Jordan, thereby weakening his power to make or meet any attack on the main front.

Amman is 30 miles east by north of Jericho as the crow flies. The nature of the intervening country varies to a marked degree. From the banks of the Jordan to the clay ridges, a mile east of the river, the ground is flat, and after rain becomes marshy. Beyond the ridges the country is covered with scrub and intersected by numerous wadis. For the first 5 miles the total rise is only 500 feet. In the next 12 miles the ground rises some 3,500 feet till the edge of the plateau of Moab is reached. The hills are rugged and steep. The main wadis descend from the plateau to the Jordan in deep valleys. The plateau itself is undulating, the lower portions of it marshy after rain. The hills which rise from it are rocky and covered with scrub. They are isolated features, and only form continuous ridges immediately west of Amman, which lies in a cultivated plain, extending some 2 miles west and 4 miles north-west of the town. This plain, which is the site of many ruins, is intersected by numerous deep wadis difficult to cross—especially the Wadi Amman, which runs from south to north, leaving the town of Amman on its right.

The Turks had constructed a metalled road from Ghoraniyeh bridge to Es Salt and Amman. Following the Wadi Nimrin, it enters the hills at Shunet Nimrin and winds round the slopes of the valley of the Wadi Shaib, supported by embankments, in places 20 feet high. At Es Salt, a town of some 15,000 inhabitants, eighteen miles from Ghoraniyeh by road, it is joined by tracks leading from the fords over the Jordan at Umm es Shert and Jisr ed Damieh and from Jerash to the north. On leaving Es Salt the road runs in a northerly direction for two miles, and then turns east, reaching the edge of the plateau five miles further on. This is the only road, and is in bad repair. Various tracks follow the wadis to the plateau, but are unfit for wheeled transport. One leaves the main road at Shunet Nimrin, and follows the Wadis Jeria and Sir, passing the village of Ain es Sir. Another leads from Ghoraniyeh and Makhadet Hajlah up the Wadi el Kefrein to Naaur, where it joins the main route from Madeba to Amman.

11. The force detailed to carry out the raid consisted of the 60th (London) Division, the Australian and New Zealand Mounted Division, the Imperial Camel Brigade, a Mountain Artillery Brigade, the Light Armoured Car Brigade, and a heavy battery. This force was placed under the command of the General Officer Commanding 60th Division. The 60th Division was to force the crossings over the Jordan and advance astride the metalled road to Es Salt, which it was to hold, its left flank being protected by a mounted brigade. The mounted troops and the Camel Brigade, following the 60th Division across the Jordan, were to move direct on Amman by the tracks passing through Ain es Sir and Naaur. On reaching Amman the railway was to be destroyed and the viaduct and tunnel demolished. This having been accomplished, the mounted troops were to withdraw on the 60th Division, the whole force then withdrawing to bridgeheads at the Jordan.

The operations, which started during the night of March 21st-22nd, were hampered considerably by rain, which fell during the days preceding the raid and on March 27th and the three following days. The Jordan is unfordable at this time of the year. The current is at all times rapid, and is liable to sudden floods which render the banks boggy and difficult of approach for transport. On March 28th it rose 9 feet. The rain which fell during the operations rendered the tracks in the hills slippery and the movement of horses, and especially of camels, slow and difficult. The delay thus caused enabled the enemy to bring up reinforcements. Before Amman could be attacked in strength some 4,000 Turks supported by fifteen guns were in position near Amman, covering the viaduct and tunnel, while another 2,000 were moving on Es Salt from the north. To have driven the enemy from his position, without adequate artillery support, would have entailed very heavy losses. Owing to the marshy nature of the country it was only possible to bring up mountain artillery, and I therefore ordered a withdrawal, which was carried out without serious interruption. Although it had not been possible to effect any permanent demolitions, five miles of railway line, including several large culverts, and the points and crossings at Alanda station, were destroyed to the south of Amman, while to the north of the town a two-arch bridge was blown up.

Considerable losses were inflicted on the enemy, and in addition 53 officers and over 900 other ranks were taken prisoner, including several Germans.

The raid also enabled a considerable number of Armenians to escape and find a refuge west of the Jordan.

12. The crossing of the Jordan took place during the night of March 21st-22nd.

The crossing was to have been effected by a brigade of the 60th Division at Ghoraniyeh and Makhadet Hajlah. This brigade was then to cover the construction of bridges, the 60th Division crossing at the former, the mounted troops at the latter place. The attempt to cross at Ghoraniyeh failed owing to the strength of the current, which prevented all attempts to cross both by swimming and by means of rafts and pontoons.

At Hajlah, however, the swimmers succeeded in reaching the opposite bank at

1.20 a.m., and by 7.45 a.m. the leading battalion was across. Till dawn this crossing was unperceived by the enemy, but subsequently the troops had to be ferried across, and a bridge constructed, under fire. The bridge was completed by 8.30 a.m. Further troops crossed, but it was found impossible to enlarge the bridgehead till dark, owing to the enemy's fire and the thickness of the scrub.

A further attempt to cross at Ghoraniyeh during the night of the 22nd-23rd was again frustrated by the current and the enemy's fire. Early in the morning, however, a New Zealand regiment crossed at Hajlah, and, galloping northwards, drove back the enemy and formed a bridgehead at Ghoraniyeh. The current having diminished, three bridges were constructed during the day, and by 10 p.m. the whole of the infantry of the 60th Division and the greater part of the mounted troops were east of the Jordan, but owing to the swollen state of the river much valuable time had been lost.

On March 24th the 60th Division attacked the enemy and drove him from his position at El Haud and Shunet Nimrin, covering the entrance to the pass leading to Es Salt. Three guns were captured by a battalion of the London Regiment, the teams being shot down by the fire of the Lewis guns. Following on the heels of the retreating enemy, the 60th Division advanced four miles along the road to Es Salt, which was occupied the following evening without opposition.

In the meantime the mounted troops, followed by the Camel Brigade, made their way along the tracks towards Ain es Sir and Naaur. Early in the day all wheeled transport had to be sent back. Even so, the tracks had been rendered so slippery by rain, which fell continuously on the 25th, that progress was slow. In many places horses had to move in single file, and had to be pulled or pushed up the slippery slopes.

Naaur was reached late in the evening of 25th March.

The rain continued to fall on 26th March. At 5 a.m. the New Zealand and Australian Brigades met at Ain es Sir. The Australians moved on to Suweileh, north of the Es Salt-Amman road, capturing 170 Turks there. Both men and horses were, however, too exhausted by their exertions to admit of more than demolition parties being sent on to the railway.

On 27th March the advance was resumed. The ground favoured the enemy, the rocks and scrub on the hills affording excellent cover to his riflemen. The wadis could only be crossed at a few places, and then only in single file.

By evening the New Zealanders had reached the railway south of Amman, their demolition parties working southwards. In the centre the Camel Brigade advanced direct on Amman, but were checked some 1,500 yards west of Amman village. On the left the Australians were unable to reach the railway north of Amman, being heavily counter-attacked; but during the night a demolition party succeeded in blowing up a small bridge seven miles north of Amman.

On 28th March a brigade of the 60th Division arrived from Es Salt accompanied by mountain artillery. The road was too soft to admit of field guns being brought. In fact, twenty-two Turkish motor lorries and other vehicles found along the road were so embedded in the mud that they had to be de-

stroyed. On its arrival this brigade attacked along the Es Salt-Amman road, the Australians attacking on its left, the Camel Brigade on its right, while the New Zealanders attacked Hill 3039 just south of Amman.

Little progress was made. The enemy made several counter-attacks, especially against the Australians, who were forced back a short distance.

On 29th March Turkish reinforcements arrived, and the counter-attacks were renewed, but without success.

During the afternoon two more battalions of the 60th Division and a battery of Royal Horse Artillery arrived after a long and arduous march.

The attack on Amman was renewed at 2 a.m. on 30th March. The New Zealanders captured a portion of Hill 3039, but were unable to drive the enemy from the northern and eastern ends. Parties of New Zealanders entered the village, but were fired on from the houses. Elsewhere the attack met with only slight success. It was apparent that without greater artillery support further attacks could only succeed at the cost of heavy losses. Moreover, Turkish troops from Jisr ed Damieh and from the north had begun to make their presence felt at Es Salt. Orders were therefore issued for a withdrawal to take place during the night. This was carried out without interruption, after all the wounded had been evacuated.

By the evening of 2nd April the whole force had recrossed the Jordan, with the exception of the troops left to hold the bridgehead on the east bank.

Although no permanent damage had been done to the Hedjaz railway, the raid had succeeded in drawing northwards and retaining not only the Turkish troops which had been operating against the Arabs, but in addition a portion of the garrison of Maan and the stations further south.

Before the raid was carried out the enemy's strength in the Amman-Es Salt-Shunet Nimrin area was approximately 4,000. By the middle of April it had increased to over 8,000.

13. Taking advantage of this opportunity, Sherif Feisal commenced operations against Maan. The railway was first cut both north and south of Maan at Ghadir el Haj and Jerdun. At these places 270 Turks and three machine guns were captured. On 13th April, Senna, a Turkish post 4,000 yards south-west of Maan Station, was captured, and on 17th April the station was entered and 100 prisoners made, but the attack was unable to make any impression on the strong Turkish position 400 yards north of the station. This position was of considerable strength, and was provided with concrete machine gun emplacements. The Arabs then withdrew to a strong position at Senna to await the arrival of further ammunition for their artillery.

In the meantime another column attacked the line between Batn el Ghul and Kalaat et Mudawara, 70 kilometres south of Maan, and destroyed 100 kilometres of line so effectively that at least a month's uninterrupted work will be required to repair it, and then only if large gangs of labourers are available. The damage to the railway north of Maan was not so thorough, but was sufficient to prevent through traffic for several days.

14. After the troops employed in the last raid had been withdrawn to the west bank of

the Jordan, the enemy reoccupied the Shunet Nimrin position, which he held with some 5,000 rifles.

On April 11th he made simultaneous attacks on the Ghoraniyeh bridgehead and on El Musalabeh, which covers the Beisan-Jericho road west of the Jordan. Both attacks were pressed with considerable determination, but brought him no success, and during the night 11/12th April he withdrew to his positions at Shunet Nimrin, which he commenced to strengthen. His losses in these attacks were heavy. He left 3 officers and 113 other ranks in our hands as prisoners, while some 500 dead were buried by us or seen to be buried by the enemy.

I determined to seize the first opportunity to cut off and destroy the enemy's force at Shunet Nimrin, and, if successful, to hold Es Salt till the Arabs could advance and relieve my troops. This would have denied the enemy the use of the harvest. I had intended to carry out this operation about the middle of May, when the reorganisation of the 1st Mounted Division had been completed. In the meantime, however, a deputation from the Beni Sakhr tribe arrived stating that the tribe was concentrated near Madeba, ready to co-operate with any advance I might make, provided it took place before May 4th, after which date their supplies would be finished and the tribe would have to disperse.

The troops available to carry out this raid were the Desert Mounted Corps, less the 1st Mounted Division, the 60th Division less one brigade, and the Imperial Service Cavalry and Infantry Brigades.

The 60th Division was to attack the enemy's position at Shunet Nimrin, whilst the Mounted Troops, moving northwards from Ghoraniyeh, were to turn east along the tracks leading from Umm Es Shert and Jisr Ed Damieh to Es Salt, after leaving a force to watch Jisr Ed Damieh and protect the left flank.

In the former raid the only route found fit for wheeled transport between Amman and Shunet Nimrin had been the metalled road passing through Es Salt. The arrival of the mounted troops at Es Salt would thus sever the main line of communication of the force at Shunet Nimrin, who would be dependent for their supplies on the track further south through Ain Es Sir. This track was exposed to attack by the Beni Sakhr tribe.

There appeared every chance therefore of the Turkish Force at Shunet Nimrin being compelled to retreat under very difficult conditions, and a fair chance of its being captured.

The operations were commenced early on the morning of April 30th, and proceeded according to plan.

The 60th Division captured the advanced works of the Shunet Nimrin position, but were unable to make further progress in face of the stubborn resistance offered by the enemy.

The Mounted Troops, moving northwards, rode round the right of the Shunet Nimrin position, and by 6 p.m. had captured Es Salt, leaving an Australian Brigade to watch the left flank.

This Brigade took up a position facing north-west astride the Jisr Ed Damieh-Es Salt track, with patrols watching the Wadi Ez Zerka, and with a detachment on the high ground on the east bank of the Jordan, 2 miles north of Umm Es Shert.

At 7.30 a.m. on May 1st this Brigade was attacked by the 3rd Turkish Cavalry Division,

and a part of the 24th Division, which had crossed from the west bank of the Jordan during the night at Jisr Ed Damieh. The enemy succeeded in penetrating between the left of the brigade and the detachment on the bank of the Jordan. The brigade was driven back through the foothills to the Wadi El Abyad. During its retirement through the hills 9 guns and part of its transport had to be abandoned, being unable to traverse the intricate ground.

The Umm Es Shert-Es Salt track was thus the only line of supply or retreat left to the mounted troops in Es Salt, till the main road and the Wadi Arseniyet track could be opened by the capture of the Shunet Nimrin position and El Haud.

Arrangements were made for a combined attack to take place on this position on May 2nd. The 60th Division was to attack from the west and the mounted troops at Es Salt from the north-east.

On May 2nd the mounted troops in Es Salt were attacked by two Turkish battalions which had arrived from Amman accompanied by heavy guns, as well as by cavalry from the north, and troops from Jisr Ed Damieh. These attacks were driven off, but the force intended to attack Shunet Nimrin from the north-east had to be weakened and was checked at El Howeij, 5 miles south of Es Salt. The 60th Division was also unable to make any substantial progress, in spite of determined efforts.

As the assistance of the Beni Sakhr tribe had not materialised, the Ain Es Sir track was still open to the garrison of Shunet Nimrin. Further Turkish reinforcements were known to be on their way. It was evident that the Shunet Nimrin position could not be captured without losses, which I was not in a position to afford. In these circumstances I ordered the mounted troops to withdraw from Es Salt. Their retirement was accomplished successfully. The enemy, who followed up closely, was held off without difficulty. By the evening of May 4th all the troops had recrossed the Jordan, bridgeheads being left to cover the bridges at Ghoraniyeh and the crossing at El Auja.

Although the destruction of the Turkish force at Shunet Nimrin had not been effected, the enemy's losses were considerable, the prisoners brought in amounting to 50 officers and 892 other ranks; 29 machine guns and several motor-cars and lorries were destroyed by the mounted troops before they left Es Salt.

The raid has undoubtedly rendered the enemy apprehensive of further operations east of the Jordan, and has compelled him to maintain considerable forces in the Amman-Shunet Nimrin area, reducing the forces available to meet the Arab menace.

15. The despatch of troops to France, and the reorganisation of the force, has prevented further operations, of any size, being undertaken, and has rendered the adoption of a policy of active defence necessary. During the first week in April the 52nd Division embarked for France, its place being taken by the 7th (Meerut) Division, which had arrived from Mesopotamia.

The departure of the 52nd Division was followed by that of the 74th Division, which left Palestine during the second week in April. The 3rd (Lahore) Division was sent from Mesopotamia to replace the 74th Division, but it was not till the middle of June that the last

units disembarked. In addition to the 52nd and 74th Divisions, nine Yeomanry Regiments, five and a half siege batteries, ten British battalions, and five machine gun companies were withdrawn from the line, preparatory to embarkation for France.

By the end of April the Yeomanry Regiments had been replaced by Indian Cavalry Regiments, which had arrived from France, and the British battalions by Indian battalions despatched from India. These Indian battalions had not, however, seen service during the present war; and, naturally, had not the experience of the battalions they replaced.

Thus in April the strength of the force had been reduced by one division, five and a half siege batteries and five machine-gun companies; while one mounted division was in process of being reorganised, and was not available for operations.

In May a further 14 battalions of British infantry were withdrawn and despatched to France. Only two Indian battalions were available to replace them. Thus at the end of May the force had been further reduced by 12 battalions, while the loss of the 74th Division had not yet been fully made good. On the other hand, the reorganisation of the mounted division had been completed.

In June the places of the British battalions which had been despatched to France were filled by Indian battalions. Six of the Indian battalions had, however, been formed by withdrawing a company from 24 of the Indian battalions already in the Force. As few reinforcements were available for the battalions thus depleted, the Force had been completed in name only.

During July and the first week in August a further 10 British battalions were replaced by 10 Indian battalions, the personnel of the British battalions being used as reinforcements.

16. During these months of reorganisation various minor operations and a number of raids have been carried out.

Between the 9th and 11th of April the right of the line held by the XXIst Corps was advanced on a front of 12 miles, to a maximum depth of 3 miles; the villages of Kefr Ain, Berukin, El Kefr and Rafat being captured. Considerable resistance was met with, the Turkish troops being stiffened by a German battalion. The enemy made several attempts to recapture Berukin and Rafat. His counter-attacks were broken up by the infantry, ably supported by the artillery but, in some cases, only after sharp hand-to-hand fighting. The enemy's losses were considerable, over 300 of his dead being counted.

On June 8th an advance was made on the coast, at the extreme left of my line, with the object of depriving the enemy of observation. The enemy's positions were captured by two battalions—the Black Watch and the Guides. Two counter-attacks were made. In the first the enemy succeeded in reoccupying a portion of the position, but he was expelled. The second counter-attack broke down before it reached our new position. The enemy's losses were considerable, and four officers and 101 other ranks were captured. The capture of these positions not only prevented the enemy from overlooking a considerable length of our defences and the ground in rear, but secured observation of the approaches to the enemy's

positions, with the result that his movements, by day, have been considerably restricted.

The Indian troops have carried out a number of minor raids with success. On July 13th a party of the Guides surprised the enemy in his trenches in the middle of the day, bringing back 15 prisoners and a machine gun. On July 27th a Pathan company of the 53rd Sikhs F.F. inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy, and brought in 33 prisoners and two machine guns.

A raid on a larger scale, carried out on August 12th by the Leinster Regiment, 54th Sikhs and 1st Battalion, 101st Grenadiers, was crowned with complete success. The objective was the enemy's defences on the El Burj—Ghurabeh ridge, north-west of Sinjil. This ridge is some 5,000 yards in length, and lies 2,000 yards in front of our line. It was held by 800 rifles and 36 machine guns. The defences consisted of strongly-built sangars, protected by thick wire entanglements. The approaches to it are rocky and broken, involving a climb of 900 feet. The position was attacked from both flanks. The enemy was surprised. His losses were heavy, and the raiders brought back 239 prisoners, including a battalion commander and 16 officers and 13 machine guns. Great dash was shown by all the troops taking part in it.

In the Jordan Valley the mounted troops have carried out successful raids, and have ambushed a number of hostile patrols. The Indian cavalry have used the lance with good effect on several occasions.

17. This activity on our part has not been imitated by the enemy, except in one instance. Then the brunt of the fighting fell on German troops. Early in July movements of troops, and increased artillery and aeroplane activity, foreshadowed an attack on our defences in the Jordan Valley.

On the right bank of the Jordan our defences form a marked salient. The eastern side of the salient faces the ford at Umm Esh Shert. The apex is at El Musallabeh, while the western face runs across the north-west slopes of Abu Tellul.

Early on the morning of July 14th the enemy was seen to be concentrating in the deep wadis north-west of Abu Tellul. At 3.30 a.m. the attack began. The enemy penetrated between the advanced posts and seized Abu Tellul, thus cutting off the posts further north at El Musallabeh. At 4.30 a.m. the 1st Australian Light Horse Brigade counter-attacked. By 5 a.m. Abu Tellul had been regained. The enemy, driven against our advanced posts, which, with one exception, had held their ground, suffered heavily. Two hundred and seventy-six Germans, including 12 officers, and 62 Turks were captured, in addition to six machine guns and 42 automatic rifles. One hundred wounded and many dead were left on the ground. Great credit is due to the Australians for the quickness of their counter-attack and for the determination displayed by the garrisons of the advanced posts in holding out, although surrounded.

While this fighting was in progress a Turkish force of considerable strength was observed to be concentrating to the east of the Jordan, opposite El Henu Ford, which is midway between the El Ghoraniyeh bridge-head and the Dead Sea. A cavalry brigade

moved out to counter-attack. Taking advantage of the ground, the cavalry arrived within charging distance before they were observed. In the charge that ensued some 90 Turks were speared; and 91, including six officers, in addition to four machine guns, were captured. It was only by reaching ground impassable for cavalry that the remainder of the Turks effected their escape. The Jodhpur Lancers played a distinguished part in this charge.

The enemy's attack on both banks of the Jordan thus failed ignominiously. His losses, especially those of the German troops, were heavy, and it is probable that the German units which took part will need a long rest before being ready for active operations again. Our casualties were comparatively light.

18. Since April no events of any importance have taken place in the Hedjaz. The Turks have been unable to restore through railway communication between Maan and the north. South of Maan a detachment of the Imperial Camel Corps attacked and captured the station at Kalaat El Mudawara, destroying the water tower and pumps. Thirty-five Turks were killed, six officers and 146 other ranks, two guns and three machine guns were captured.

As a result of this operation, no water supply now exists on the railway for a distance of 150 kilometres south of Maan. Medina has thus been definitely cut off from the north.

19. The operations, which took place during the first half of the period covered by this despatch, rendered secure the fruits of the fighting, which, commencing with the capture of Beersheba, culminated in the occupation of Jerusalem.

On December 12th the enemy still remained within 4 miles of Jerusalem. He is now 22 miles from the Holy City. To the east he has been driven across the Jordan, and his communications to the Hedjaz raided. His losses between December 12th, 1917, and May 31st, 1918, were considerable, the number of prisoners amounting to 331 officers and 6,088 other ranks. His one attempt on a large scale to assume the offensive and retake Jerusalem failed, and was turned into a defeat, accompanied by a considerable loss of territory.

In driving back the enemy my troops suffered considerable hardships. The rugged country in which the majority of the fighting took place not only favoured the defence, but demanded great physical exertion on the part of the attackers. In the early months of the year their task was often rendered more difficult by the cold and heavy rains which added greatly to their discomfort. They responded to every call made on them, and proved their superiority over the enemy on every occasion. The second half of the period under review has been spent in reorganisation and in training. Although operations have been limited to

raids, 69 officers and 1,614 other ranks have been taken from the enemy since June 1st.

20. Throughout the whole period, the work of the Royal Air Force has been of great value. Fifty-three hostile aeroplanes have been destroyed, in addition to 23 which have been driven down out of control. The enemy's troops, camps and railways have been bombed with good results, while very important photographic work has been carried out. Co-operation with the other arms has been excellent.

21. During the early months of the year, whilst the rainy season was still in progress, and before railhead had reached the troops, the supply situation presented great difficulties. The wadis came down in spate, overflowing their banks and flooding the surrounding country. Not only was railway construction hindered, but the country became almost impassable for motor, and extremely difficult for horse transport. Nevertheless, all difficulties were overcome.

22. I am indebted to His Excellency General Sir Francis Wingate, G.C.B., G.C.V.O., K.C.M.G., D.S.O., High Commissioner for Egypt, for the cordial assistance he has given me at all times.

Egypt has provided transport personnel, drivers for the Camel Transport Corps, and men for the Egyptian Labour Corps in large numbers, in addition to several units of the Egyptian Army. These have all done work which, though unostentatious, has been of great value. During the operations in the hills of Judæa, and of Moab, the troops often depended for their supplies on the Camel Transport Corps. The drivers displayed steadiness under fire and devotion to duty in the face of cold and rain, which they had never experienced previously. The Egyptian Labour Corps shared these hardships. The construction and maintenance of roads was a task of considerable importance and difficulty during the rainy season, and threw a great strain on the Egyptian Labour Corps. Its successful accomplishment reflects credit on the Corps. The Egyptian authorities have complied at once with all requests that I have made, and my thanks are due to them for their loyal support.

23. The Army Postal Service has carried out its work efficiently. During the early months of the year, when my troops were far in advance of railhead, the delivery and collection of mails was a matter of considerable difficulty, which was invariably overcome.

24. Throughout the period I have received every help from Rear-Admiral T. Jackson, C.B., M.V.O.

I have the honour to be,
Your Lordship's most obedient Servant,

E. H. H. ALLENBY,
General,
Commanding-in-Chief,
Egyptian Expeditionary Force.

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