

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