

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nine Yeomanry Regiments, five and a half siege batteries, ten British battalions, and five machine gun companies were withdrawn from the line, preparatory to embarkation for France.

By the end of April the Yeomanry Regiments had been replaced by Indian Cavalry Regiments, which had arrived from France, and the British battalions by Indian battalions despatched from India.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In May a further 14 battalions of British infantry were withdrawn and despatched to France.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