



THIRD SUPPLEMENT

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WEDNESDAY, 22 JANUARY, 1919

War Office,
22nd January, 1919.

The Secretary of State for War has received the following Despatch from General Sir George F. Milne, K.C.B., D.S.O., Commanding-in-Chief, British Salonika Force:—

General Headquarters,
British Salonika Force.
1st December, 1918.

My Lord,—

I have the honour to submit the following report on the operations of the British Army in Macedonia from 1st October, 1917, to the present date.

During the greater part of this period I continued to be responsible for the eastern sector of the Balkan front. This part of the Allied line ran north-westward from the mouth of the Struma River, past Lake Tahinos and its marshes, up the broad valley to the junction of the Butkova and Struma Rivers. Here it turned westward, along the slopes of the Krusha Balkans, to Lake Doiran, and then near Doiran town swept south-east to the Vardar Valley. The whole sector was some 100 miles long and distant between fifty and sixty

miles from the town of Salonika. On the north-east it barred the way against an advance from Serres and the Rupel Pass; on the north-west it both guarded and threatened the Vardar Valley, the enemy's main line of communication and his shortest and easiest road to Salonika.

In view of the diminution in the strength of the Army caused by the transfer of two divisions and two cavalry brigades to another theatre, the question of the construction of communications, in order that troops might be moved rapidly from one point to another, and of the preparation of retired positions, became of primary importance. This work was methodically carried out. At the beginning of 1916 the rough and broken Serres Road had been, apart from the railway which fed the Doiran front, the only line of communication. Now good metalled roads run to Serres, to Doiran and to Karasuli on the Vardar River. Neohori, on the mouth of the Struma River, and Snevce and Rajanova at the foot of the Krusha Balkans can be reached by road and light railway; circular routes by road and rail give lateral communications behind both the first and second zones of defence. In the beginning of September, 1917, an entrenched

position was commenced running from Berovo on the east via Lahana, the high-ground to the east of Kurkut and the hills round Janes to the Vardar River at Vardino. This position, which was practically finished in September, 1918, formed a strong and shorter line of defence, at a distance varying from five to fifteen miles behind the front line, and covering all lines of advance from the north-east and north.

On the approach of autumn I decided that the troops which had been withdrawn from the valleys of the Rivers Struma and Butkova at the commencement of the summer should again be moved forward to the lower ground. During the month of October this movement, combined with minor operations against the villages in the valley, was successfully carried out by the troops of the 16th Corps. As a result, over 250 prisoners and several machine guns were captured and severe casualties inflicted on the enemy.

Meanwhile, among the broken hills of the 12th Corps front, between Doiran Lake and the Vardar, our raiding parties incessantly harassed the enemy and returned with prisoners. The most conspicuous of these raids, all of which were carried out with determination and skill, was against Boyau Hill, near Macukovo. Here the 12th Battalion, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, broke through the strong hostile outpost position, 500 yards in front of their main objective, entered the enemy trenches, and, having destroyed three machine guns and inflicted heavy casualties, returned bringing all their wounded with them.

In the middle of October the Allied Commander-in-Chief decided to extend the French front to the left bank of the Vardar, thus permitting me to withdraw another infantry brigade into reserve—a matter of no small value to troops who had been for over one year continuously in the front line.

The winter season had now fully set in, and the heavy rains, followed by snow and frost, considerably hampered operations on all fronts. Local raids continued to be of almost daily occurrence, resulting in a steady loss to the enemy both in killed and prisoners, and at the same time maintaining the offensive spirit of the troops and training both infantry and artillery for the operations which they were called upon to carry out at a later date.

Towards the end of December General Sarrail was succeeded in the command of the Allied Armies by General Guillaumat, on whose initiative considerable attention was paid during the winter and spring to the amplification and improvement of the existing defences of the town and district of Salonika, which were constituted into a third line of defence.

In the beginning of March, 1918, the 1st Hellenic (Larissa) Division was placed under my command and was attached to the 16th Army Corps on the Struma River front, where it took over a sector of the line to the north of Lake Tahinos. With the unhealthy season approaching, this was a welcome reinforcement to my effectives. But almost immediately the gain in numbers was counter-balanced by an extension of front. The Russian troops under General Guillaumat's command had failed him, and he found it necessary to ask me again to take over the line as far as the River Vardar in order to relieve French troops for employment elsewhere.

In the early days of this month there came a blizzard of extraordinary severity and deep snow which hampered all movements both by land and in the air. But towards the end of the month fairer weather resulted in a marked increase in aerial activity. Almost every day the Royal Air Force raided the enemy's country, bombed his camps, dumps and railway stations, and attacked his troops with machine-gun fire from low altitudes. In the fighting that these raids entailed our airmen more than held their own.

During April it became necessary, owing to the likelihood of an offensive on the part of the enemy, to do everything possible to disturb his plans and obtain reliable information as to his intentions. Accordingly, on both the Struma and Doiran fronts local operations on our side were intensified.

On the night of the 14th-15th April strong detachments from the 1st Hellenic Division and the 27th and 28th Divisions, supported by artillery, were pushed forward to occupy the villages of Beglik-Mahale, Kakaraska, Salma-hale, Kiskepi, Homondos, Kalendra, Prosenik and Kjupri in the Struma Valley. On the following day violent counter-attacks developed against our advanced troops holding the villages of Prosenik and Kumli. Severe fighting took place at close quarters, during which heavy casualties were inflicted on the enemy. In the course of the next few days these advanced detachments gradually withdrew to their former positions, having obtained sufficient information to verify the position of all the enemy's units opposed to them.

On the Doiran front, where the enemy held strongly entrenched and continuous positions in mountainous and rocky country, operations were necessarily restricted to small raids and artillery bombardment. In all these, casualties were inflicted on the enemy at slight loss to ourselves. One raid, novel in its plan and bold in its execution, is worthy of special notice. Shortly after midnight on the 15th-16th April, in bright moonlight, a mixed naval and military party left the shore of the lake by Doiran Station in four boats, silently driven by electric motors, which had been brought up from Salonika and assembled under the eyes of the enemy. From Doiran Station to Doiran Town by water is two miles, but the party landed well within the enemy lines unchallenged. Sentries were left to guard the boats, the town was searched and the lakeside road patrolled. Not a Bulgar was seen, and so, as the main purpose of the raid, the capture of prisoners, could not be achieved, the party embarked, re-crossed the lake in safety and apparently unobserved, and landed again on our shore at four o'clock. This daring operation stands out as a striking testimony to the enterprise of the troops, and its skilful execution was undoubtedly due to the energy and care displayed by Captain R. S. Olivier, R.N., Senior Naval Officer at Salonika, and the officers and men of H.M.S. "St. George," who not only trained the detachment on this occasion, but have at all times cordially assisted the Army.

During May and June the two remaining divisions of the 1st Hellenic Corps were placed under my orders, and General Paraskevopoulos took over the command in the Struma Valley. With a portion of the British troops thus relieved, I was enabled to extend my front to the right bank of the Vardar River in relief of a French Division.

About this time orders were received for the reduction of the infantry of the divisions from thirteen to ten battalions. As a result, one-quarter of the infantry of the Army was transferred to France.

It was during the month of June that the first indications of a lowering in moral of the Bulgarian Army became noticeable. The number of deserters largely increased, and from their statements it appeared that the Bulgarian Higher Command was meditating an attack on a large scale on the British front from the sea to Lake Doiran. Later information showed that certain enemy units were, however, in a state bordering on mutiny and refused to obey orders.

On June 8th I bade farewell to General Guillaumat, who vacated the post of Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Armies in order to take up an important appointment in France. During his short period of command he had gained, by his tact, courtesy and soldierly qualities, the respect and admiration of all those with whom he came into contact, and I am deeply grateful to him for his cordial and sympathetic assistance. A few days later his distinguished successor, General Franchet d'Esperey, who was so shortly to bring about a sudden change in the whole situation in the Balkans, assumed command of the Allied Forces.

Towards the end of July I received instructions from the Allied Commander-in-Chief to prepare for my share in a general offensive of the Allied Armies, which was timed to take place during the first fortnight of September. In this the British troops—provided the Allies on the front held by the Royal Serbian Army succeeded in piercing the enemy's centre—were to attack and take the heights to the west and north-east of Lake Doiran. To reinforce my three divisions in this sector General Franchet d'Esperey placed at my disposal two divisions of the Corps of National Defence of the Hellenic Army, a regiment of Hellenic cavalry, and a group of Hellenic heavy artillery. The infantry intended for the attack were gradually withdrawn from the line, and during the latter part of August they were carefully trained for the rôle they were to fill. Meanwhile an offensive spirit was maintained and the enemy harassed by constant raids, in which prisoners were secured for purposes of identification. In the air our machines were more active day by day, and our artillery fire steadily increased, especially on the right bank of the Vardar, cutting wire and drawing the enemy's batteries.

By now it was clear that the enemy suspected an impending attack, but did not know where the blow was to fall. His reserves were reported to be in the Vardar Valley. To prevent their withdrawal, and to deceive him as to the sector chosen for the main allied attack, operations were begun on the afternoon of the 1st September, after heavy artillery preparation, against the rocky and strongly fortified salient north of Alcak Mahale, on the right bank of the Vardar. The troops engaged were the 2nd Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment and the 10th Battalion Hampshire Regiment of the 27th Division. The undertaking proved an entire success. Not only were determined counter-attacks launched fruitlessly against our new trenches, but on the right the Division was able to occupy the enemy's outpost line, thus gaining suitable positions for a further advance. With this operation and with the

unhindered advance of the posts of the 1st Hellenic Corps in the Struma Valley about a week later, the preliminaries on the right section of the general offensive were completed.

On the morning of the 14th September the general attack began. All along the eighty-mile front from Lake Doiran to Monastir the artillery bombardment of the hostile positions became intense. Twenty-four hours later the Franco-Serbian troops, under the command of Voivode Mischitch, stormed the Bulgar trenches on the mountain heights from Sokol to Vetrenik. Before noon the enemy's first and second line were in the possession of Allied troops. This initial victory forced a withdrawal on the flanks. The gap of 12 kilometres was enlarged to one of 25 kilometres. The way was opened for advance to the heights of Kozyak.

The success on which an assault on the Doiran sector was conditional had been attained. Early on the 15th September I received orders from General Franchet d'Esperey that the troops under my command were to attack on the morning of the 18th.

In the general instructions which I had previously received it was indicated that the main operations should be directed against the "P" Ridge and the neighbouring heights west of Lake Doiran, the scene of the battles in the spring of 1917. I had decided to reinforce the British troops here by one of the Hellenic Divisions of the Corps of National Defence, which, as I have previously stated, had been placed at my disposal, and had selected the Serres Division for this purpose. In addition, between Doiran Lake and the Vardar were the 22nd and 26th British Divisions under Major-General J. Duncan, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., and Major-General A. W. Gay, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., respectively, and on the west of the Vardar the 27th Division under Major-General G. T. Forestier-Walker, C.B. This force was supported by the whole of the available heavy artillery, which included a brigade of Hellenic heavy guns.

The effective strength of the British troops at this most trying period of the year in Macedonia had, owing to climatic disease and a sudden and severe epidemic of influenza, fallen below one-half of the normal establishment. The Allied Commander-in-Chief therefore further reinforced my command by a regiment of French infantry. The whole of this composite force of British, Hellenic and French troops I entrusted to the command of Lieutenant-General Sir H. F. M. Wilson, K.C.B., K.C.M.G.

Simultaneously with the main attack, a secondary and surprise attack was to be made round the east and northern sides of the Lake against the Bulgar trenches on the slopes of the Beles range. If successful, the action would turn the Doiran-Vardar front on its left, and in any case would prevent reinforcements moving to the west. The operation was a difficult one, involving a large concentration by night and an advance without artillery preparation across the plain between the Krusha Balkans and the Beles. I therefore decided to support with troops of the 28th Division, commanded by Major-General H. L. Croker, C.B., C.M.G., the Cretan Division of the Corps of National Defence, to whom this movement had been assigned, and placed this sector under the

orders of Lieutenant-General C. J. Briggs, K.C.B., K.C.M.G.

The Bulgarian front between Doiran Lake and the Vardar was one of exceptional strength. To an observer from the centre of the line from which the Allied attack was to take place, the medley of broken hills forming his position baffles detailed description except at great length. There are steep hillsides and rounded hills. There is little soil. The hard rocky ground makes consolidation of a newly won position difficult, and gives overwhelming advantage to the defender, well dug into trenches that have been the careful work of three years. Deep cut ravines divert progress and afford unlimited opportunity for enfilading fire. But in all the complexity of natural features the "P" Ridge and Grand Couronne stand out in conspicuous domination. The former, from a height of over 2,000 feet, slopes southward towards our lines, overlooking our trenches and the whole country south to Salonika. To its right the country dips and rises to a less sharp, but no less intricate maze of hills, that mount, tier upon tier, from Petit Couronne with its steep and rugged sides, above Doiran Lake to Grand Couronne, itself little lower than the summit of the "P" Ridge. The enemy had taken full advantage of his ground. He was strongly entrenched in three successive lines, with communication trenches deeply cut into the rock and roomy well-timbered dug-outs, with concrete machine-gun emplacements, and, on the crest between "P" Ridge and Grand Couronne, with concrete gun-pits. It was the key position of the Vardar-Doiran defences, and he held it with his best troops.

Shortly before dawn on the 18th September the bombardment of the last four days was intensified, and west of the lake the attack was launched. Soon after 6 o'clock the two regiments of the Hellenic Division on the right had stormed the enemy position up to the neighbourhood of Doiran Hill, which rises above the ruins of the town, and had taken a large number of prisoners. On the left the 66th Infantry Brigade which had been detailed to lead the attack on the "P" Ridge advanced with consummate self-sacrifice and gallantry. Here the enemy had established three strong lines of defence, teeming with concrete machine-gun emplacements from which they could sweep and enfilade the whole front. After severe fighting the 12th Battalion, Cheshire Regiment, and the 9th Battalion, South Lancashire Regiment, supported by the 8th Battalion, King's Shropshire Light Infantry, succeeded in reaching the third line of trenches. At this point they came under devastating machine-gun fire and, unable to make further progress, were eventually compelled to fall back to their original position. In their heroic attempt they had lost about 65 per cent. of their strength, including Lieutenant-Colonel Hon. A. R. Clegg Hill, D.S.O., and Lieutenant-Colonel B. F. Bishop, M.C., who fell at the head of their battalions. In the centre, Hellenic and Welsh troops together assaulted the network of hills and trenches between the "P" Ridge and Grand Couronne and penetrated to a depth of about one mile. Severe loss was inflicted on the enemy, who offered a desperate resistance, supported by a heavy machine-gun fire from immensely strong emplacements blasted in the solid rock. In spite of this the lower slopes of Grand Couronne

were reached. But the lack of success on the "P" Ridge made it impossible to retain the ground so hardly won, and the battalions gradually fell back to their former lines, the last to leave being the survivors of the 7th Battalion, South Wales Borderers—19 unwounded men and one wounded officer.

Meanwhile, on the east of the lake the Cretan Division, supported by troops of the 28th Division, had advanced across the gradually narrowing plain to attack the enemy's positions on the Blaga Planina, to the north of the lake. In difficult country they had assembled during the night behind the dismantled railway embankment. At dawn they carried the enemy's outpost line and pressed forward to his main line. This they penetrated in two places on a narrow front, but a permanent hold could not be maintained. Nothing was now to be gained by pressing this attack, and I therefore authorised a return to the line of the railway.

Apart from the prospect of a local advance it was essential to the progress of the Royal Serbian Army that none of the enemy reserves which had been attracted to the Doiran-Vardar front should be diverted elsewhere. I therefore gave orders that all the ground won should be held and that the attack west of the lake should be renewed next morning with all available troops. To afford me a reserve, the Allied Commander-in-Chief placed at my disposal a regiment of the 14th Hellenic Division, then in training at Naresh, some 25 miles in rear.

During the night of the 18th-19th a heavy bombardment was maintained. At 5 a.m. Greek and Scottish troops moved forward against the enemy's positions on the lower slopes of Grand Couronne. Again, in spite of the intense machine-gun fire, they succeeded in reaching their objective at many points. Several of the intermediate works were captured and held against determined counter-attacks. Unfortunately, on the left the Allied troops at their position of assembly had come under heavy barrage, and could make no further progress. In spite of this the 65th Infantry Brigade, which had moved up rapidly during the night from an influenza observation camp, twice gallantly tried alone to capture the "P" Ridge, but were driven back by overwhelming fire from the enemy's machine guns. The effect was that the troops in the centre found their left flank exposed. Their right was also threatened, and they were compelled to fall back, stubbornly fighting the whole way. The 12th Battalion, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, the 8th Battalion, Royal Scots Fusiliers, and the 11th Battalion, Scottish Rifles, covered the retirement in spite of severe casualties, including loss of all their commanding officers, killed or wounded.

Accordingly, at midday on the 19th, I decided to hold and consolidate the ground won. This included Petit Couronne, Teton Hill and Doiran town. "P" Ridge and Grand Couronne had not been taken, but the enemy was severely shaken; he had suffered very heavy casualties, losing over 1,200 in prisoners alone. What was even more important, the whole of his reserves which might have been employed effectively elsewhere had been pinned down to this front, and had suffered so severely that they were now ineffective.

The results of these stubbornly contested operations were to be seen in the course of the next few days.

By the morning of the 21st the Franco-Serbian Army had reached the line Gradista-Bosava-Dragosil and the heights of Porca dominating the Vardar, thus turning the flank of the enemy in my front and cutting his communications down the Vardar Valley. By noon it was plain that a hurried retirement on the Doiran front had begun. The depôts at Hudova, Cestova and other places behind the lines were observed to be in flames, and numerous explosions showed that ammunition depôts were being everywhere blown up. The observers of the Royal Air Force reported that the Kosturino Pass on the Strumica road, the only good line of retreat now open to the enemy, was blocked by masses of men and transport moving northwards. The pilots of the Royal Air Force, flying low, took full advantage of this opportunity. They bombed the Bulgar columns and shot down men and animals with their machine guns, causing heavy casualties and a confusion that bordered on panic.

During the evening patrols reported that the advanced trenches of the enemy were empty. Before dawn on the 22nd the whole of the Army was on the move. By nightfall the foremost troops had reached the line Kara Ogular-Hamzali-Bogdanci. Close touch was kept with the hostile rearguards which, well supplied with mountain and machine guns, did all they could to delay our pursuit. West of the Vardar the 27th Division advanced with the Archipelagic Division of the Franco-Hellenic Corps on their immediate left.

In the next few days the pursuit was pressed by all the Allied Armies from Doiran to Monastir. By the 24th the Serbian infantry, moving forward at an extraordinary speed, had reached the line Hadzi-Seidli-Cesme Dere; their cavalry were approaching Stip.

The first of the Allies to enter Bulgaria was the Derbyshire Yeomanry, early on the morning of the 25th September. These were the leading troops of the 16th Corps under Lieutenant-General C. J. Briggs, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., whom I had brought round from the right to the left of the Army. They were followed shortly after by the 14th Hellenic and 26th Divisions, the former having replaced the Serres Division in the Anglo-Hellenic Army.

Simultaneously the 22nd Division from the west and the Cretan Division from the east of Lake Doiran began to climb the steep slopes of the Belasica Range on the north of the Lake. In the centre the 28th Division, which had made forced marches across from the extreme right reached the heights of Dzuma Obasi. On the 26th September the 16th Corps descended to the Strumica Valley and gained the Strumica-Petric road. During the night French, Hellenic and British troops stormed and captured the towering summits of the Belasica. This range is over 4,000 feet above the Lake; the ascents are severe, there are practically no paths, and communication was necessarily most irregular. In this operation the 8th Battalion, South Wales Borderers, under Lieutenant-Colonel R. C. Dobbs, D.S.O., specially distinguished themselves.

Up to this date thirty guns, large quantities of ammunition and three hospitals had been captured, while many of our wounded prisoners had been recovered; considerable quantities of

guns, motor cars and stores had been found abandoned all along the line of retreat and in the mountains.

At 8 o'clock on the morning of September 26th a Bulgarian parlementaire, under a white flag, bearing a proposal to conclude an armistice, approached the British lines, and was immediately conducted to my headquarters and thence to the Allied Headquarters at Salonika.

Two days later the Bulgarian plenipotentiaries, Mr. Lyaptcheff, Minister of Finance, General Lukoff, Commander of the 2nd Bulgarian Army, and Mr. Radeff with their staff, passed through *en route* for Salonika.

In the meanwhile the advance continued. The Strumica Valley runs eastward towards the upper Struma Valley, which it joins near Petric, fifteen miles north of Rupel and Demirhissar. The defile of the Upper Struma through the Kresna and the Rupel Passes, formed the main line of communication for the Bulgar forces on the lower Struma. To strike at this the 16th Corps now swung eastwards, sending a flank guard by way of Berovo to Pechovo on their left, while on the right the Cretan Division, in conjunction with the 228th Infantry Brigade, swept along the crest of the Belasica and down the Butkova Valley against Rupel and Demirhissar.

It was at this time that the Royal Air Force found the Kresna Pass choked by the retreating enemy, whose Struma army was now in danger. Again our pilots, as subsequent reports showed, did enormous execution.

Considerable resistance was encountered to the north-east of Yenikoj, in the Strumica Valley, and on the northern slopes of the Belasica Mountain, where the steep slopes and the absence of water made operations very difficult. The troops of the two Hellenic Divisions, supported by British cavalry and artillery, were slowly but surely fighting their way forward, when at 2 a.m. on the 30th, at the moment when only fifteen miles separated my advanced troops from the Rupel Pass and the lines of communication of the Bulgarian Army in the Struma Valley, I was informed that a military convention had been signed at the Allied Headquarters and that operations would cease at noon.

The orders now received were to the effect that the British Army should move by Petric and Radomir through Bulgaria to the Danube, in the vicinity of Vidin, in order to co-operate with the French and Serbian Armies in their operations against Austro-Hungary. This advance had begun when, on 10th October, I received instructions to assume the command of the Allied troops operating against Turkey in Europe, and to transfer the Army under my command to that theatre of operations.

In spite of the fact that the railway had been totally destroyed between Doiran and Serres, and that practically no roads exist in Eastern Macedonia, on the night of 30th/31st October, when I received the news of the conclusion of an armistice with Turkey, two British divisions and one French division were ready on the River Maritza to seize the northern bridges and to occupy the town of Adrianople, the bridge at Ipsala was in my possession, while in rear the 1st Hellenic Corps was echeloned between Kavala and Drama, ready to take part in the general advance on Constantinople.

This rapid move of about 250 miles, including the re-basing of the troops on the small ports in the Ægean Sea, reflects the greatest credit on the staff and administrative services, but it would have been impossible of achievement without the hearty co-operation of the Royal Navy in clearing the mine-swept areas and ports and in assisting in the transfer of troops and stores. My thanks are specially due to Vice-Admiral Hon. Sir S. A. Gough-Calthorpe, K.C.B., C.V.O., Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean, Read-Admiral M. Culme Seymour, C.B., M.V.O., Commanding the British Ægean Squadron, Captain G. K. Chetwode, R.N., Commanding Destroyer Flotilla, and to Commodore E. Unwin, V.C., C.M.G., the indefatigable Principal Naval Transport Officer in the Eastern Mediterranean, to whose energy was due the possibility of making any use of the open and unsuitable roadstead of Dedeagach as a base of supply.

I cannot speak too highly of the spirit and determination shown by all ranks during this short but arduous campaign. Malaria and influenza had taken a heavy toll, both in strength and in numbers, but rather than miss the opportunity for which they had waited three years, officers and men remained in the ranks till often they dropped from sheer exhaustion. The calls made on the infantry have been specially severe, but whether in the attacks on the almost impregnable positions between Doiran and the Vardar, in the operations in the unhealthy Struma Valley, or in surmounting the heights of the Belasica Mountains, they have invariably met with the same ready response.

The Yeomanry have proved that the day of the mounted soldier is not yet over. Their only fault was their lack of numbers at the time when their services in the pursuit of the Bulgarian Army became invaluable.

The work of the Artillery, both Field and Heavy, desires special notice. The small amount available has necessitated their remaining in the line even on the few occasions when the infantry were placed in reserve. The organisation of the counter-battery work has reached a very high standard, and I am glad to be able to record the active co-operation of the Hellenic Heavy Artillery, whose training was placed in the able hands of Major-General W. H. Onslow, C.B., C.M.G., Commanding the Artillery of the Army.

During the past year the Royal Engineers have done splendid service in the construction of the numerous communications and lines of defence over very difficult country, and in the final operations. The difficulties of road construction were rapidly and energetically overcome by their efforts, under the supervision of the Engineer-in-Chief, Major-General H. A. A. Livingstone, C.B., C.M.G.

I must again direct attention to the excellent work of the Royal Air Force. Throughout the whole year their duties of reconnaissance, artillery co-operation, photography and bombing the hostile depôts have been continuously carried out. Once adequately provided with up-to-date aeroplanes, our pilots rapidly gained command of the air, and have succeeded in accounting for eight hostile machines for every one of our own missing. The present state of efficiency is largely due to the adminis-

trative energy of the late commander, Lieutenant-Colonel G. W. Dawes, D.S.O., while his successor, Lieutenant-Colonel G. E. Todd, has not only maintained the high standard of efficiency, but has handled his squadrons with marked ability during the late operations.

I desire to express my admiration for the gallantry and determination of the Hellenic Army during the late operations, and my gratitude to the corps and divisional commanders for their ready co-operation at all times.

During the year special attention has been directed to the military education of both officers and other ranks. Continuous courses of instruction have been held at the various Army Schools, both infantry and artillery, and it is satisfactory to note that the results have fully justified my expectations. In addition, training camps were instituted for the instruction of men withdrawn from the Royal Army Service Corps and Royal Army Medical Corps for duty in infantry units. These men, who had for the most part voluntarily enlisted during the early stages of the war, showed great keenness to learn their new duties, and formed a valuable, and my only source of, reinforcement. The greatest credit is due to the instructional staff, including the Army Gymnastic Staff, for the energy and ability displayed, and the results attained.

In this unhealthy climate the efficient administration of the Medical Services is naturally of extreme importance, and in this respect a very high standard of efficiency has been attained. In an army saturated with malaria and passing through a severe outbreak of influenza, heavy calls were constantly made on the strength and devotion to duty of the Royal Army Medical Corps, of whose work I cannot speak too highly. I am much indebted to Major-General M. P. Holt, K.C.M.G., C.B., D.S.O., and his subordinates for the admirable manner in which their duties have been performed.

I should like to call attention to the indefatigable and devoted work of the personnel of the Nursing Services and Voluntary Aid Detachment during the past three years. In many instances they have sacrificed their own health for the sake of the soldiers in their charge.

The members of the General Service Voluntary Aid Detachment organisation, although of comparatively recent arrival in this theatre of war, have proved their value.

To all these ladies the British Army in the Balkans, and many of our Allies, owes a deep debt of thanks.

Under the able direction of Hon. Lieutenant-Colonel H. L. Fitzpatrick the British Red Cross Society has been of the utmost service not only to this Army but to all our Allies. Its energies, like its resources, appear unlimited, and it merits the gratitude of all.

I desire to take this opportunity of expressing my admiration of the work of the Scottish Women's organisations serving with the Serbian Army.

The rapid movement of troops during the recent operations over a mountainous country, where roads are practically non-existent, has taxed the Signal Service to the utmost, but despite all difficulties communication throughout the Army has never failed thanks to the

able management of Colonel A. H. Grubb, C.M.G., D.S.O., and to the hard work of his staff, as a result of which a complete telegraphic and telephonic system has been established over Macedonia reaching to Sophia and Constantinople.

The reconstruction of destroyed standard gauge and the construction of new light railways has naturally in a country so destitute of communications formed a most important task, rendered possible only by the continuous energy of the railway troops, of whose excellent spirit I cannot speak too highly. The Allied Railway Commission, under the tactful and able management of Colonel Delauney, of the French Army, and Colonel G. D. Rhodes, D.S.O., Director of Railways, has continued in the harmonious administration of the various railway lines in Macedonia, Bulgaria and Turkey in Europe.

No very great strain has been placed on either the Royal Army Veterinary Department or the Remount Department, which have both proved equal to all demands made on them. The present uniformly good condition of the animals in the Force is largely due to the efforts of these two services to improve and simplify animal management and to the efficient administration of Brigadier-General G. M. Dowell, C.M.G., Director of Remounts, and Brigadier-General F. Eassie, C.M.G., D.S.O., Director of Veterinary Services, whose hospitals are models of their kind.

The work of all branches of the Royal Army Service Corps deserves special praise. Their responsibilities include not only supplying the British Army's requirements but those of the whole Greek Army and a very large proportion of the supplies for the other Armies in Macedonia. That, in spite of difficulties by sea and by land, the supply and transport services of forces extending from the Black Sea to the Adriatic has never failed for one day is a great tribute to the work done by all ranks serving both with the British and with the Serbian Army, and reflects great credit on the organising ability of Brigadier-General A. Long, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., Director of Supplies and Transport, and his staff. Large areas of country have also been brought under cultivation in order to supply the troops from local resources, under the management of the Royal Army Service Corps.

The Ordnance Services, under Brigadier-General W. H. U. Smith, C.B., D.S.O., have continued to be well carried out, and have fulfilled all requirements. The workshop organisation is excellent; considerable ingenuity has been displayed in making full use of waste material.

Praise is due to Colonel A. G. Payne, C.M.G., Command Paymaster, and his staff, and to officers and men of the Third Echelon, General Headquarters, who have performed their irksome but necessary duties to my entire satisfaction. Graves registration has been carried out in an efficient manner; attention is now being directed to the graves of those who fell on the Gallipoli Peninsula.

The results of the labours of all branches of the Field Survey Company, Royal Engineers, have proved invaluable, and full advantage has been taken of the opportunity for obtaining accurate maps of Macedonia, in close

co-operation with the French and Siberian Topographical Sections. This task, undertaken in addition to the numerous trench maps, required on a front one hundred miles long, has thrown a considerable strain on the personnel of one company.

The regularity with which the Army Postal Service has been conducted in spite of many difficulties is most gratifying, and is largely due to the energy of Lieutenant-Colonel J. S. Henderson, M.C., the Deputy Director of Postal Services, and to his excellent staff.

The religious welfare of the Army has been ministered to by a devoted band of Army Chaplains, who have received considerable assistance from that magnificent organisation the Young Men's Christian Association, ever ready to establish its tents in the most inhospitable localities and to whose devoted assistants I take this opportunity of offering our hearty thanks.

Another institution of incalculable value to the comfort of all ranks is the Expeditionary Force Canteen. Major E. V. Wellings and his staff have rendered yeoman service and shown great resource in establishing depôts and maintaining supplies in spite of great difficulties of transport.

The Meteorological Section has been of great assistance in a country subject to such sudden changes in the weather, and some valuable records have been obtained.

The conduct of the Military Police during our occupation has been a fine object lesson in organisation and steady unruffled discipline under all conditions. By force of example they have gained the respect of the inhabitants of the occupied territories as well as that of all of our Allies, and this tact and forbearance have contributed greatly to the complete absence of all friction between the various nationalities. Crime is now practically unknown in Macedonia, where previously robbery by violence flourished. Lieutenant-Colonel C. W. Villiers, D.S.O., Deputy Provost Marshal, has shown tact and judgment in dealing with the difficult and delicate questions which naturally arise in an allied army.

The directorate of Inland Waterways and Docks, under the orders of Lieutenant-Colonel J. B. Parkhouse, has proved of the greatest value.

I am much indebted to Colonel A. B. Beavis, C.B.E., for his valuable advice and the general assistance he has rendered in relation to questions of finance.

My thanks are specially due to my two Corps Commanders, Lieutenant-General Sir H. F. M. Wilson, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., and Lieutenant-General C. J. Briggs, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., from whom I have always received the greatest assistance, and to Major-General G. N. Cory, C.B., D.S.O., Major-General, General Staff, Major-General H. J. Everett, C.B., C.M.G., Deputy Adjutant-General, and Major-General Sir W. H. Rycroft, K.C.M.G., C.B., Deputy Quartermaster-General, whose experience and tact in dealing with the many allied administrative questions have proved invaluable.

I am glad to be in a position to report that our relations with our numerous allies have been of a most cordial and intimate character, and that during the two-and-a-half years of my command I have received no complaint of serious injury to person or property against any

one in the army, the discipline of which is of the highest.

I desire to place on record the consideration I have always received from the Allied Commanders-in-Chief, General Guillaumat and General Franchet d'Esperey, and the complete harmony which has existed between the Allied staffs.

I cannot close this report without expressing my high appreciation of the splendid spirit and devotion to the service of their Country shown

by all ranks of this Army, the majority of whom will return to their homes with constitutions shattered by a prolonged stay in this malarious and inhospitable country.

I have the honour to be,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's obedient Servant,

G. F. MILNE,

General, Commanding-in-Chief
British Salonika Force.

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