

Rissaldar in recognition of the valuable services he had performed.

During August, this detachment and the British Armoured Car Section were sent to Egypt to refit—both these units returning subsequently to Akaba for employment with Sherif Feisal's Northern Army—and the Artillery units were, at the same time, withdrawn to Wejh; the only British-led troops temporarily retained in the interior being a detachment of Camel Corps and a machine-gun section, employed, under Major W. A. Davenport, upon raiding operations against the railway until the middle of September.

6. Throughout September and October the railway was again subjected to constant attack at various points between Tebuk and Medina, resulting in the effective dislocation of traffic and inflicting upon the enemy considerable loss in material and personnel.

Towards the end of October a further detachment of one thousand five hundred "regular" troops, under Sherif Zeid, left Wejh to join Sherif Feisal at Akaba, the latter, about the same time, absorbing into his army the Arab Legion, a force of some four hundred men, raised mainly from Arab prisoner-of-war volunteers, under the auspices of the Anglo-French Political Mission, and trained under British and French Officers in Egypt for employment in Arabia.

Early in November the last Turkish aeroplane remaining in Medina was brought down with rifle fire by the Arabs near Bir Nasif. The wrecked machine was, in fact, subsequently recovered by the enemy and returned by rail to Medina, but since that date no further aerial activity has been shown by the Turks south of Maan.

7. At the beginning of November a combined attack, carried out by Sherifs Abdulla and Ali, resulted in the destruction of an important section of the railway between Abu Naam and Bowat; and, following upon this operation, appeared, for the first time, definite indications that the general evacuation of the Hedjaz, excluding Medina, was in serious contemplation by the enemy.

8. In order to prevent the realisation of this project the necessity of greater activity against the railway was strongly urged upon the Sherifs, and at the end of November the agreement of Sherifs Abdulla and Ali was obtained to a fresh plan of combined operations, having as their objective the effective occupation and destruction of the whole section of the railway from Bir Jedid to Bueir.

Preparations were immediately commenced—Sherif Abdulla moving forward his Headquarters to Murebba in the Wadi Ais, in order personally to direct the operations—and were already well advanced when, by great misfortune, Colonel Wilson, to whose energy and personal influence the acceptance of the scheme was due, and upon whose presence its successful execution largely depended, fell seriously ill with dysentery, contracted in Sherif Abdulla's camp, and was compelled to return for some months to Egypt.

During the first two months of the present year there were repeated indications that, despite the failure of the Turkish plans for withdrawing northwards the troops of their Hedjaz Expeditionary Force, the evacuation of the Hedjaz—whether inclusive or exclusive of

Medina itself—was about to be attempted; but, although it was not possible for the Sherifs to undertake organised offensive operations on any large scale, their policy of persistent aggression against the railway was pursued with a measure of success that rendered such an attempt on the part of the enemy—if indeed actually in contemplation—impracticable.

9. During the past three months no less than five convoys, aggregating over one thousand five hundred camels, have been captured by Arab detachments from Sherif Ali's army; whilst in Abdulla's area the Arabs, under Major Davenport's direction, have carried out many important raids against the railway, notably at Seil Matara on 8th April, when five kilometres of track and three culverts were completely destroyed, and at Bowat on May 11th, when, in addition to extensive damage to the line, twenty Turks were killed and over forty prisoners taken. In the meantime, by the success of Sherif Feisal's recent operations about Maan, the main object of the Southern campaign—the isolation of Medina—has, in fact, been accomplished by the effective destruction of the vital railway communications of Medina with the North. Moreover, the re-action of Feisal's success upon his brothers has produced, in emulation, a degree of activity in the southern theatre never hitherto attained, and a determination on their part to undertake the long-deferred combined offensive north of Medina, with a view to securing the close and permanent investment of that fortress.

10. Although the record of these operations thus briefly surveyed contains few military achievements of outstanding importance, yet the general results attained by the persistent aggression of the Arabs against the enemy's communications must not be under-estimated.

Constantly harassed by a mobile and almost invulnerable enemy, the moral and material pressure to which the enemy has, during the past twelve months, been continuously subjected, may be estimated by the fact that between Tebuk and Medina during this period an aggregate of more than fifteen thousand rails, fifty-two culverts and five bridges have been destroyed, two trains have been completely wrecked by electric mines, several station buildings and considerable quantities of rolling stock have been burnt, communication by telegraph and telephone has been interrupted almost daily, four hundred and fifty Turkish dead have been buried by the Arabs and nearly double that number of prisoners taken, whilst material captures during the same period include five field guns, four machine guns, nearly one thousand rifles and large quantities of ammunition, in addition to £.T.25,000 in Turkish gold, and several big convoys conveying live stock and supplies to Medina from the east.

For this success the Arabs owe much to the unsparing efforts of the British and Allied officers attached to the Sherifian forces, and working often under intensely trying conditions.

11. With the development of the Arab movement the work of my staff in Cairo has steadily and considerably increased.

I am greatly indebted to General Sir Edmund H. Allenby, G.C.M.G., K.C.B., Commander-in-Chief of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force. To him and to his Staff, amongst whom I would especially mention