

(c) Slavo-British Legion, numbering 3,000, consisting of refugees of all nationalities.

At the moment it was impossible to forecast what might happen in Europe, but it was certain that the Archangel Force would be cut off for eight months by ice, and every effort was devoted to securing the position, increasing the Russian Forces, and filling the food, ammunition and clothing depôts at Archangel.

I cannot speak too highly of the Supply and Ordnance Authorities in England and Archangel for the manner in which the safety of the Force was ensured. The bringing in of stores under convoy of icebreakers, manned by the Royal Navy, was carried out by the Naval Transport Service under great danger to the crews concerned. That the Force was never short of anything essential is a result which speaks for itself.

2.—Period after the European Armistice.

The Port of Archangel began to freeze up in the first week of November, before the declaration of the Armistice, and it was then too late to withdraw the force until the port opened again.

The Bolshevik Forces, which, at the original landing, had been small in number, increased rapidly in strength and organisation. The most active propaganda was carried out amongst the rank and file of all the Allied Contingents by the enemy, and discontent showed itself in many places.

The British Contingent, thanks to the efficiency of its officers and the systematic physical training, which was found possible even under Arctic conditions, behaved magnificently. Many of the men were of low category, but they withstood the hardships they had to undergo with courage and spirit.

3.—Russian Mobilisation.

The objective of the Force at Archangel had now become the organisation and training of the Russian Forces, so that, with the opening of the port in June, 1919, the Russian Government might be in a position to continue the struggle by itself. Mobilisation was ordered in October, 1918, and proceeded quietly, there being few absentees. Training was under the supervision of British Officers, and the results achieved were excellent. I cannot speak too highly of the young officers sent out from England for this purpose. They raised, organised and trained the Russian Forces to a total of 25,000 men, and earned the respect of the Russians with whom they served.

4.—Winter Campaigning.

As the winter drew on the Bolshevik efforts to turn the Allies out of Archangel became stronger and stronger. The Allied Forces were often hard put to it to maintain their extended positions against superior forces. But during March and April we were successful in breaking up the final Bolshevik attacks with great loss, and the safety of the Force in Archangel was assured.

The passing of over 2,000 men of General Maynard's Murmansk Force as reinforcements from Soroka to the Archangel front by land route, a distance of 400 miles, using local sleighs, was a military achievement of which all could well be proud.

Fighting took place in over 80 degrees of frost, and, despite the Arctic conditions, the men carried out their duties magnificently.

The Bolshevik operations can be divided into four phases, as follows:—

(1) *Dvina River Offensive (4th October-15th November, 1918).*

A strong offensive after heavy bombardment by river gunboats during October and November immediately preceding the freezing of the Dvina. Matters were once or twice critical, but, frost intervening, the weak Allied Forces were given a respite. The defeat of our forces was prevented on one occasion by the exceedingly gallant behaviour of the drivers of a Canadian battery; on the 11th November they turned out and annihilated a strong enemy force which had got round the rear of our forces and threatened them with capture.

(2) *Shenkursk Offensive (19th January-10th March, 1919.)*

Our forces, practically Russian and American, had been pushed forward to this town, the most important after Archangel in the Northern Region. They were, from a military point of view, too far advanced, but it was decided for political reasons to maintain them there during the winter.

The evacuation undoubtedly raised the enemy's moral, and for a time his continued attacks against our Vaga front were the cause of great anxiety.

(3) *Offensive to cut off Dvina Force (25th January-5th April, 1919.)*

This took the form of heavy attacks against Tarasevo, Shred Mekrenga and Morjegorskaya. Our forces were forced to evacuate Tarasevo, but the enemy suffered heavy defeats at Shred Mekrenga and Morjegorskaya. Actions at these places were successful owing to the personal bravery and power of leadership of Major G. H. Gilmore, D.S.O., M.C., and Lieut.-Colonel J. W. Carroll, C.M.G., D.S.O., respectively. On several occasions the position was critical at both places, and it was solely due to the energy of these officers that our whole line had not to be withdrawn, which would have meant the collapse of the Dvina Force.

(4) *Vologda Railway Offensive (16th March-18th April, 1919.)*

This started with a surprise attack against the village of Bolshe Ozerke, when the garrison of French troops and French Foreign Legion was overwhelmed. Had the enemy attacked on the railway at the same moment it is possible that the railway front would have collapsed. An attack against Volchenitsa was beaten off by Russian troops, and the situation settled down.

5.—Arrival of Relief Force.

The arrival of General Grogan's and General Sadleir-Jackson's Brigades enabled me to free all those who had spent a winter in North Russia and to ensure the disengaging of our forces when the time came to do so.

6.—Summer Operations.

During the Spring it was hoped that a junction with the forces of Admiral Kolchak could