



SECOND SUPPLEMENT

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MONDAY, 1 NOVEMBER, 1920.

War Office,
1st November, 1920.

The Colonial Office has forwarded for publication the following Despatch on military operations in the Somaliland Protectorate:—

From the Governor and Commander-in-Chief,
Somaliland Protectorate,
To the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Governor's Camp,
Sheikh,
15th May, 1920.

MY LORD,—

In continuation of my despatch of the 30th April, 1920, I have the honour to forward herewith for Your Lordship's information papers describing the aerial and military operations undertaken in Somaliland in January and February of this year against the Mullah Mohammed bin Abdullah Hassan, which, in the brief space of twenty-three days, resulted in the complete overthrow of the Dervish power. These papers comprise reports by Group Captain R. Gordon, C.M.G., D.S.O., Commanding "Z" Unit, Royal Air Force, by Colonel G. H. Summers, Officer Commanding

Troops, Somaliland Protectorate, by Captain G. G. P. Hewett, Royal Navy, H.M.S. "Odin," Senior Naval Officer, Gulf of Aden, and by Captain A. Gibb, Officer Commanding Tribal Levy.

2. As Your Lordship is aware, while the plans for these operations were under discussion in London, news was received that the Mullah had left Tale (lat. 9° 9', long. 48° 23'), a strongly fortified position in the south-eastern corner of the Protectorate, where he had been established since 1907. With dramatic suddenness he moved northwards in mid-September to Jidali (lat. 10° 43', long. 47° 43'), with his family and stock and nearly all his fighting men and war material, and established his *haroun* in a strong natural position in the hills at Medishe (lat. 10° 48', long. 47° 33'), twelve miles north-west of Jidali. Although this new development, created by the ceaseless activities of the Mijertein against the Mullah's stock in the open plains around Tale necessitated a change in our proposed line of advance, it was, on the whole, favourable to our plans, as he hereby not only deprived himself of easy access to territory where he would be immune from our pursuit, but increased the distance between

himself and the Bagheri country, his most likely retreat in case of need. At the same time the presence of the main Dervish force within fifty miles of our garrison at Las Khorai and their proximity to the Warsangli tribe constituted a direct menace to us and rendered the need for an early forward move the more imperative.

3. Early in October, 1919, His Majesty's Government accorded their sanction to the expedition, and the general scope of, and responsibility for, the operations were, under agreement between the Air Ministry and the Colonial Office, defined as follows: An independent Air Force, self-contained in all respects, under the command of Group-Captain Gordon, taking his orders from the Air Ministry, was to attack the Mullah, his followers and his stock, and to disperse them. In the event of these independent operations proving successful the rounding up of the Dervishes would be undertaken by the ground troops, when independent operations would cease and the Air Force would co-operate with the military forces of the Protectorate, the general direction of affairs being vested in myself by virtue of my dual functions as Governor and Commander-in-Chief. It was hoped that the unexpected attack, together with the moral effect created by the new Arm, would lead to the general disruption of the Dervish forces, which could then be hunted down and dealt with in detail by the Protectorate mounted troops.

4. Under the provisional operation orders for "Z" unit, issued by the Chief of the Air Staff, Berbera was to be the base for operations, with advanced bases at Las Khorai and in the neighbourhood of Eil Dab (lat. $8^{\circ} 57'$, long. $46^{\circ} 30'$). From Las Khorai the Mullah and his following would be effectively bombed while they remained in the neighbourhood of Jidali. Should they be forced to a southerly line of retreat aircraft would be transferred to the advanced base already established in the neighbourhood of Eil Dab, where they would be favourably situated to continue harassing the enemy's movements over long distances in the interior of the country. Subsequently, however, this plan required modification, as Group Captain Gordon found on inspection that climatic and other conditions rendered Las Khorai unsuitable as his main advanced base. Nevertheless, a good natural aerodrome site was selected there and proved most useful in the subsequent operations as an emergency landing ground.

5. It was fully appreciated at the outset that the success of the operations would depend largely on the measure of secrecy attained and the speed with which the aeroplanes could strike when once landed at Berbera. Steps were therefore taken early in November to disseminate the report that the long-projected oil boring operations were about to begin; and the presence of Group Captain Gordon's party—who had taken the precaution to remove their flying badges—and the preparation of the ground for the aerodrome and the Royal Air Force camp in Berbera were readily associated in the native mind with oil development. Thus the advanced party were afforded a month in the country in which the necessary preparations could be made without exciting undue suspicion. As soon as Las Khorai had been found unsuitable, Group Captain Gordon, after a con-

ference with myself and the Officer Commanding Troops proceeded to Eil Dur Elan (lat. $10^{\circ} 8'$, long. $46^{\circ} 22'$), 100 miles east-south-east of Berbera, on the main line of advance of the Protectorate troops, where he found a most suitable advanced base for the aerial attack. In the meantime parties were selecting and marking out sites for aerodromes at Burao and Ainabo. On the 12th December, when all preliminary investigations had been completed, I convened a conference at Berbera with a view to determining the detailed plan of operations; and at this conference the following scheme was drawn up in full agreement between Group Captain Gordon, Colonel Summers and myself:—

(a) The independent air attack from Eil Dur Elan was provisionally fixed for the 18th January.

(b) Eil Dur Elan would be occupied the first week in January by the Camel Corps and wing 1st/101st Grenadiers, Indian Army. Following this, Eil Afweina (lat. $9^{\circ} 55'$, long. $47^{\circ} 14'$) would be occupied and a strong infantry post established. Subsequently the Camel Corps, with one full company 101st Grenadiers, would take up a position of readiness in the vicinity of Durdur Dulbeit (lat. $10^{\circ} 12'$, long. $47^{\circ} 27'$), whence they could strike in any direction after the aerial bombardment of the Jidali area.

(c) Simultaneously with the air attack the King's African Rifles, operating on the Las Khorai-Musha Aled (lat. $11^{\circ} 2'$, long. $48^{\circ} 22'$) line to prevent the escape of the Dervishes into Italian territory, would attack and occupy the Dervish fort at Baran (lat. $10^{\circ} 42'$, long. $48^{\circ} 24'$).

(d) A naval landing party from His Majesty's ships "Odin" and "Clio" would attack Galbaribur, a Dervish fort within a few miles of the sea, as soon as the main Dervish forces had been dispersed.

(e) A tribal levy of 3,000 men would be raised to hold various posts on the Mullah's line of retreat southward to the Bagheri and to intercept Dervish fugitives and stock.

This plan of operations was carried into effect subject to the stipulation by the Air Ministry that there should be no movement of troops eastward of Eil Dur Elan until it should be definitely too late for the Mullah to obtain information of this move—a restriction which was considered necessary in order that the attack from the air should be delivered, if possible, upon an unsuspecting, concentrated and stationary enemy. This necessitated the postponement of the movement of troops from Eil Dur Elan to 48 hours before "zero" day, so that they were at Eil Afweina instead of Durdur Dulbeit on the day of the attack. Also, the strength of the Tribal Levy was subsequently reduced to 1,500 rifles owing to the difficulty of keeping and controlling a larger force in the field.

6. Meanwhile, preparations for the forward move of the troops were proceeding rapidly under the orders of the Officer Commanding Troops. Steps had been taken in October to bring the Camel Corps up to an increased strength by drafting in a Special Service Company 150 strong from the Police; and arrangements were made for the purchase of remounts, saddlery, Stokes guns, ammunition, additional water tanks, etc., from Egypt, Aden and elsewhere. The supply question, always

difficult in Somaliland, required careful consideration. Additional supplies were ordered from India and an advanced dump established at Las Dureh (lat. $10^{\circ} 10'$, long. $46^{\circ} 0'$), where it was intended to collect three months' supplies and reserve ammunition for the whole force moving along the Eil Dur Elan—Eil Afweina—Jidali line. On the 8th November, the first King's African Rifles contingent (2 companies, 6th King's African Rifles), under Lieut.-Colonel J. S. Wilkinson, D.S.O., M.C., arrived and disembarked at Las Khorai and was moved up shortly afterwards to Musha Aied. Later, the wing 1st/101st Grenadiers (less two platoons left at Burao) was concentrated at Las Dureh. In the meantime, good progress was being made by Major H. Rayne, M.C. (temporarily transferred from the Administration to be Senior Supply and Transport Officer), in the formation and organisation of the Camel Transport Corps; and a number of companies were raised for immediate duty with the King's African Rifles and shipped to Las Khorai. This transport was recruited tribally in the districts through the administrative officer, and organised finally in 42 companies of 120 camels each. There can be no doubt that the voluntary collection of 5,000 burden camels under the hire system would have been an extremely difficult task, taking into consideration the fact that the Protectorate had been depleted in 1917 and 1918 of 10,000 burden camels required for the use of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, had it not been for the goodwill and co-operation of the Akils, and indeed the Somali tribesmen themselves. During this period the Director of Public Works, Mr. L. H. Macnaghten, had in hand the improvement of the Berbera-Burao road and was clearing a motorable track over the first 40 miles of the stage Berbera-Las Dureh which subsequently proved most useful. Medical arrangements for the local forces and all native followers, transport drivers, etc., were being organised with great care, forethought and ability by the Protectorate Senior Medical Officer, Dr. F. E. Whitehead. "Z" Squadron had their own medical unit under the charge of Wing Commander W. Tyrell, D.S.O., Royal Air Force Medical Service, the organisation of which was most complete and thorough in every detail.

7. Throughout November news as to the Mullah's movements and dispositions in the Jidali area was coming in, and, by the end of the month, his position had been accurately ascertained. He himself with most of his following and the Dervish leaders were in the *haroun* at Medishe, twelve miles north-west of Jidali; and the forts at Surud (lat. $10^{\circ} 43'$, long. $47^{\circ} 8'$), Jidali and Baran were occupied. Tale and the other Nogal forts were now but lightly held. The stock was reported to be in the "Guban" north of the Surud-Al escarpment and in the hills round Surud and Handeis. But large numbers of his rifles had been left behind under guard at Tale, for want of ammunition; and it was estimated that the Mullah's riflemen in the northern area did not exceed one thousand. It was impossible to come to any reliable conclusion as to whether the Mullah would receive information of the impending advance through his own intelligence agents or from partisans in Aden and Berbera and elsewhere. If so, the first intimation would probably be his precipitate retreat to the south. Consequently, we had to remain prepared to move at short notice from the

northern to the southern (Ain Valley-Noga) line until the date actually fixed for the advance, and this period was one of considerable suspense and anxiety. As already shown, every possible effort to preserve secrecy was being made, and not without success. But the manifold signs of activity, the collection of camel transport on a large scale at Berbera, the constant movement of supplies eastward, and the arrival of the King's African Rifles at Las Khorai, could not but tell their own tale to an intelligent and sharp-witted people such as the Somalis. News travels fast in Africa; and from mid-December onwards it was a question whether the conclusions drawn would or would not find their way to Medishe. Meanwhile His Majesty's ships "Odin" and "Clio" were closely patrolling our seaboard; and on the 8th December an armed dhow, posted off Mait and manned by naval ratings under command of a Sub-Lieutenant, intercepted under suspicious circumstances and drove off a native dhow approaching from the Arabian coast.

8. By the 12th December preparations were so far advanced along the Berbera-Eil Dur Elan and the Burao-Ainabo lines that there was no necessity to delay further the arrival of the main body of "Z" unit, Royal Air Force, then in Egypt. Accordingly a telegram was sent asking for the despatch of His Majesty's ship "Ark Royal," which had been made available by the Admiralty, to bring the main body and stores direct from Alexandria, and she arrived at Berbera on the 30th December. "Z" Squadron was now at the following strength: 32 officers and 164 other ranks Royal Air Force; 4 officers and 26 other ranks Royal Air Force Medical Service; one flight of aeroplanes (D.H. 9) with six spare machines. On the 18th December, 150 rifles, 1st/101st Grenadiers, had been ordered forward from Las Dureh to Eil Dur Elan, in order that work on the main advanced aerodrome might be undertaken at once and the forward movement of supplies from Las Dureh begun. On the 2nd January the second contingent King's African Rifles (1 Company 6th Battalion and 1 Company 2nd Battalion) under Major L. G. Murray, M.C., arrived and disembarked at Las Khorai. Now that the Royal Air Force unit was actually landed in the country and the aeroplanes were being erected, there was no need to delay further the formation of the Tribal Levy. I accordingly proceeded on the 1st January to Burao, where I had summoned a meeting of all the tribal leaders, and acquainted them with our intentions and asked for the co-operation of the friendlies on the following lines:—

(A) A force of 1,500 tribal rifles to be supplied to hold the line of the southern Nogal, the Akils and responsible leaders of the tribes supplying the men to accompany them in the field.

(B) The necessary food, water and transport to be provided by the Somalis themselves under tribal arrangement, Government assistance being confined to the issue of ammunition.

(C) The Levy to assemble at Ainabo not later than the 15th January.

After some demur as to condition (B) the Akils expressed their readiness to participate in the operations, and Captain Gibb, whom I had selected from the Administration for this command, to be assisted by Risaldar-Major Musa Farah, I.S.O., was instructed to proceed forthwith with the raising of the Levy. The

concentration took place at Ainabo on the 15th January as directed and, after completing work on the aerodrome, Captain Gibb moved forward with the tribal rifles to take up his position at Duhung (lat. $8^{\circ} 33'$, long. $47^{\circ} 23'$), on the line Yaguri (lat. $8^{\circ} 43'$, long. $46^{\circ} 57'$), to Gerrowei (lat. $8^{\circ} 20'$, long. $48^{\circ} 20'$) which he proposed to hold. On the 19th January 500 riflemen under 13 Akils were sent forward to Gaolo (lat. $9^{\circ} 2'$, long. $48^{\circ} 14'$) with orders to watch Tale.

9. On the 4th January Group Captain Gordon informed me that he would have to postpone the date of the opening attack on Medishe until the 21st January. But by the 17th the concentration of Royal Air Force *personnel* and stores at Eil Dur Elan was complete. Wireless communication had been established with Berbera on the 31st December. On the 5th January the Camel Corps, under the command of Lieut.-Colonel H. L. Ismay, moved out from Burao and on the same day the Officer Commanding Troops left Berbera for the advanced base. I arrived at Eil Dur Elan with the Headquarters of Government on the 18th January. All arrangements were now complete. "B" Force, under Lieut.-Colonel Wilkinson, composed of one composite battalion King's African Rifles at a strength of 700 rifles (less one platoon and two Lewis guns at Las Khorai), with two Stokes guns, four machine guns and 14 Lewis guns, supplies for two months, and field ambulance, portable wireless and transport, was concentrated at Musha Aled ready to advance on Baran 24 hours before "zero" day. "A" Force, composed as under, was concentrated at Eil Dur Elan with supplies, transport and water ready to move forward on the 19th:—

Headquarters and Staff.

Somaliland Camel Corps, 700 rifles, 2 Stokes guns, 8 machine guns, 4 Lewis guns.

1st/101st Grenadiers, under Captain R. Le Fleming, M.C., 400 rifles (less 2 platoons posted for the defence of "Z" Force Camp, Eil Dur Elan), 2 Stokes guns, 8 Lewis guns.

Field Ambulance, tent section and bearer section, under Surgeon-Commander E. Cameron, Royal Navy, with 6 Medical Officers.

1/2 kilowatt portable camel-pack wireless set.

300 *Illaloes*, under the orders of Captain J. F. Godman, Royal Field Artillery.

On the 17th January His Majesty's ship "Clio" (Commander C. H. Jones, D.S.O., Royal Navy), carrying Mr. H. M. O'Byrne as Political Officer, left Berbera to inform the local Italian authorities at Alula of the impending operations and to ask for the co-operation of the Mijjertein Sultan Osman Mahmoud in the event of the Mullah escaping across our border in that direction. On the 18th "A" Force camp was struck at Eil Dur Elan and the force bivouacked for the night in readiness for the forward move to begin the following day. On the 19th seven machines arrived from Berbera and another on the 20th with Group Captain Gordon. Meanwhile scouts returned from the Jidali area reported that there were no signs of special activity at Medishe and the Mullah himself remained unsuspecting in the Dervish *haroun*.

10. On the 21st January six machines left Eil Dur Elan for the attack on Medishe, but, owing to clouds and the difficulties presented

by the intervening country, which was unknown and unmapped, only one machine found the position. Four machines located and bombed the Dervish fort and stock at Jidali, and one was forced to proceed to Las Khorai and land with engine trouble. The machine that found Medishe inflicted great damage. Subsequent reports of captives and deserters, present at the time, show that Amir Hassan, the Mullah's uncle and one of the best known of the Dervish leaders and ten riflemen were killed by the explosion of the first bomb. The Mullah himself, standing by Amir, narrowly escaped death, his clothing being singed. It is said by Dervishes that he saw in the approaching aeroplanes a divine manifestation; by others that he was informed by a Turk in the *haroun* that they were Turkish aeroplanes on their way to him from Stamboul to convey the Sultan's greetings. None at Medishe apparently knew that the European War was ended. However that may be, it is known that on the approach of the aeroplanes (the whole flight passed within sight of Medishe) the Mullah collected his people around him and awaited their coming under the white canopy used on State occasions. In the subsequent bombing and shooting up on this day the total casualties amongst the Dervishes in the *haroun* amounted to some twenty killed and twenty wounded. On the two succeeding days the aerial attacks on Medishe and Jidali were maintained morning and afternoon, causing further casualties and great panic among the Dervishes, who finally fled in all directions utterly demoralised. Machines descended to 800 feet bombing and to 300 feet machine gunning. The *haroun* was set on fire by incendiary bombs and the stock scattered.

11. Meanwhile the Camel Corps, with Colonel Summers and his staff, moving rapidly forward from Eil Dur Elan, arrived at Eil Afweina early on the morning of the 21st January, and work was begun at once on the construction of a defensive post and the preparation of an emergency landing ground. Parties of *Illaloes* were pushed forward that night to Gud Anod (lat. $10^{\circ} 6'$, long. $47^{\circ} 20'$) and Durdur Dulbeit, while the mounted troops, held in readiness to move out at a moment's notice, if required, remained at Eil Afweina waiting for the infantry and supply column (3,500 camels) to come up. This column arrived on the afternoon of the 22nd. Eil Afweina was now established as an advanced base with one month's supplies and reserve ammunition for the whole of "A" Force, wireless telegraph station and section field hospital. A fresh line of supply to the south could thus be organised from this point without delay, and it proved of the utmost value in the later stages of the operations. The post was held by 130 rifles 1st/101st Grenadiers and 1,700 transport camels were kept here in reserve. At the same time a supply column of 1,800 camels carrying three weeks' rations, reserve Stokes gun and rifle ammunition, hand grenades and explosives was organised to follow in the rear of the mounted troops towards Jidali, under escort of one company 1st/101st Grenadiers and one dismounted company Somaliland Camel Corps. On the afternoon of the 23rd the Camel Corps moved forward to Gud Anod and thence, on the 25th, to Eil Der. As yet no sign of the enemy had been seen, nor was there any information as to his movements. The results of the aerial bombardment had been communicated to the Officer Commanding

Troops by wireless and by messages dropped from aeroplanes. Extensive reconnaissances over Medishe and Jidali and Bariat (lat. $10^{\circ} 33'$, long. $47^{\circ} 33'$) on the 24th failed to reveal the presence of any large bodies of Dervishes or stock, and it was clear that the Mullah's forces were now scattered and in hiding. Orders were accordingly given for combined operations to begin. Colonel Summers decided that he would advance at once on Jidali, and, moving via Megedu (Bariat), he arrived with the mounted troops within sight of Jidali fort in the early morning of the 27th. It had been arranged between the Officer Commanding Troops and the Officer Commanding "Z" Unit that aeroplanes should bomb Jidali up to 10 o'clock that morning, after which the troops would move forward and attack the fort if still held.

12. During the preliminary aerial bombardment of Jidali on the 27th some of the Dervish defenders hastily evacuated the position, fleeing in all directions into the bush; but the fort remained lightly held, and the Camel Corps was ordered forward at 11 o'clock. As the troops advanced Dervishes were observed firing over the top of the fort, but their fire was kept down by machine guns; and Stokes guns were then brought into action, first at 250 and then at 180 yards distance, about twenty shells being dropped on the roof. Of these some failed to detonate, but it was found afterwards that four breached the roof, and it was only the number of small chambers on the ground floor and the thickness of the walls that saved the garrison from heavy casualties. Patrols now sent close up to the walls of the fort under the nullah bank reported that the Dervishes were still holding out, firing and singing, and, as dismounted attack would have been very costly, Colonel Summers decided to break off the operations and renew the attack on the following day, on the arrival of further shells, explosives and grenades with the dismounted column. That night the Dervishes completely evacuated the fort under cover of darkness, leaving seventy-six rifles and two dead inside the fort.

13. "B" Force, at a strength of 23 British officers and 667 African combatant ranks with 63 Illaloes, meanwhile had moved out from Musha Aled in the early morning of the 20th January. After an arduous march the column arrived at a point about two miles north-east of Baran at 8.30 a.m. on the 23rd January. Here a line of platoons was formed and the force moved forward to 1,200 yards distance from the fort. From this point the main attack was developed, one company moving round the eastern flank to cut off any Dervish attempt to retire. When the troops were within 600 yards of the main fort the Dervishes opened an enfilade fire, but this was kept down well by machine guns employing covering fire. Stokes guns were brought into action at 500 yards and the attack pushed forward to 300 yards, but the effect of Stokes gun fire on the forts appeared very slight, although direct hits were obtained on the roofs of the towers. At 4.30 p.m. two alternatives were open: either to make a costly assault on the forts, or to continue the fight till evening and then withdraw and resume the following day. Colonel Wilkinson decided on the latter course as the assault would have entailed heavy casualties. The force, therefore, encamped for the night

four miles south of Baran, the enemy having been engaged until after dark. The attack was renewed on the next day at 2.30 p.m. During the advance the Dervishes maintained a brisk fire. The Stokes guns came into action at 270 yards, and twelve direct hits were obtained on the roof of the towers within the parapets. Despite the heavy fire, which must have been very demoralizing in so limited a space, the Dervishes continued to hold out, and it was decided to attempt to breach the fort with gun-cotton after dark. Charges were prepared, and at 7.45 p.m. Lieutenant Godfrey and Quartermaster-Sergeant Wood moved forward and, covered by machine-gun fire, tamped the charges against a corner tower. There was a terrific detonation; but it was decided to await daylight to observe results. Early the next morning a platoon found the Dervishes in the act of retiring from the fort. Opening fire, they rushed the main gate and occupied three of the four corner towers of the fort. The fourth tower was stoutly defended by a sniper, and it was not until Lieutenant Minnery climbed up the inside ladder to the roof and shot him with his revolver that the tower was taken. Only some ten or twelve of the Baran garrison escaped.

14. By the 28th January, one week after the commencement of operations, Jidali and Baran had thus fallen into our hands and Medishe had been practically destroyed by the Royal Air Force. But the situation as to the whereabouts of the Mullah and the main body of the Dervishes was still very obscure. He and his scattered forces had apparently retired into the hills to the north, but they had not been located, and no deserters or prisoners had as yet been brought in. Machines left Eil Dur Elan twice daily to reconnoitre the country about Surud and Medishe, and the foothills were searched as far as Las Khorai, landings being made there and at Baran and at the headquarters of the Officer Commanding Troops. A reconnaissance also was made towards Tale. Illaloes had been sent out in the direction of Surud and orders issued for standing Illalo patrols to be posted at Bariat, Garab Ghari (Lat. $10^{\circ} 27'$ Long. $47^{\circ} 27'$) and Eil Der to watch for signs of Dervishes moving southward from the Surud and Dalau Range. Pending receipt of some reliable news, Colonel Summers decided not to advance on Medishe or get the mounted force involved in the hills. On the 30th a Dervish deserter arrived in the camp and reported that the Mullah had broken south. He had left the Dalau Hills with his family and a force of mounted men on the 28th and was making for the Nogal with a view to escaping to the Webbi Shebeyli via Las Anod (Lat. $8^{\circ} 25'$ Long. $47^{\circ} 21'$) and Galadi (Lat. $6^{\circ} 58'$ Long. $46^{\circ} 26'$). The deserter stated that he himself had left the party near Jitasale at 3.30 the previous afternoon and that he could point out the tracks of the Dervish horse-men. Instructions were at once sent to the Officer Commanding "B" Force to move the whole of his force to Jidali to continue the operations in the Medishe-Surud area, and the mounted troops prepared to take up the pursuit. According to the Dervish's story, which was subsequently confirmed, the Mullah had been entirely taken by surprise by our advance, and after the first aerial attack on Medishe had taken refuge in the cave at Hamas near by,

afterwards moving to a cave on the Hela Tug, fifteen miles north-west of Medishe, where Le deposited his two machine guns, arms, ammunition and treasure. Here he hid until he was informed of the presence of the troops at Jidali and the capture of Baran, when he decided to flee south. Ibrahim Boghol, one of his best known leaders, had been sent back to arrange for the complete evacuation of the Surud-Jidali area and the flight to the Nogal, and it was clear that the whole of the Dervish force and stock would already be streaming south. The estimate of the Dervish riflemen was given as 700. There were great numbers of other people in the Mullah's following, but their fighting value was negligible.

15. The Camel Corps took up the pursuit from Jidali at 6 p.m. on the 30th and, marching through the night, with a brief halt seven miles south of Bariat, arrived at Eil Der at 9 a.m. on the 31st. The tracks of the Mullah's party, crossed near Jitasale, were apparently leading towards Danan (lat. $10^{\circ} 7'$, long. $47^{\circ} 49'$). After despatching a mounted patrol to follow their tracks, Colonel Summers decided to push straight on, moving parallel to and west of the Mullah's line of retreat in the most direct line to the Nogal with the intention of cutting in if once ahead of the party. At Eil Der the Camel Corps crossed the main line of the Dervish retreat, littered with discarded property. Small parties of Dervishes were now seen moving in every direction driving stock. A few shots were exchanged and a considerable quantity of camels, cattle, and sheep, as well as some ponies, were rounded up. But driving the stock entailed delay, while the Mullah at the head of the retreat was reported to be moving fast. It was most important to head him off before he got right away south, and in any case it seemed certain that with the Camel Corps once ahead of the main retreat all the Mullah's property in the Surud and Jidali area must subsequently fall into our hands or be taken by the friendlies. Consequently the stock collected was handed over to Illaloes, and after a short rest at Eil Der, the column pressed on reaching Gud Anod by 8 p.m. That morning at 10 o'clock aeroplanes patrolling the country east of Eil Afweina intercepted near Daringahiye (lat. $9^{\circ} 57'$, long. $47^{\circ} 34'$) bombed and shot up from 100 feet a party of horsemen escaping south with the Mullah's own baggage and faster moving stock. At Gud Anod Colonel Summers had to decide whether he would cut straight across to Daringahiye or move to Eil Afweina. Believing that the Mullah was still well ahead and the chase would be a long one he chose the latter course. The column moved on at once and reached Eil Afweina just after midnight, having covered the 70 miles in 30 hours. With replenished supplies the mounted column continued the pursuit next morning, moving towards Hudin (lat $9^{\circ} 8'$, long $47^{\circ} 25'$) via Ber Waiso (lat. $9^{\circ} 43'$, long. $47^{\circ} 33'$). Colonel Summers himself returned to Eil Afweina to organise, in the absence of his "Q" Staff Officer at Jidali, a light supply column to follow the mounted troops; and Lieut.-Colonel Ismay, in command of the Camel Corps, had orders to establish a post at Hudin. The Camel Corps reached this point at 6.30 p.m. on the 2nd February, having thus covered a distance of 150 miles in 72 hours. Animals and men now needed a rest.

16. While these operations and movements

were in progress His Majesty's ships "Odin" and "Clio" had been ceaselessly patrolling the Somali coast and had performed invaluable service by maintaining wireless communication between "A" and "B" Force, and assisting officers of the Royal Air Force who had made forced landings on the coast. With the disruption of the Dervish forces in the Jidali area the time had come for the projected naval attack on the Dervish fort at Galbaribur. Accordingly a naval contingent from the two ships consisting of 8 officers, 91 petty officers, non-commissioned officers and men, with 3 Lewis guns, 2 Maxim guns and 1 12-pounder 4 cwt. Naval field gun, under the command of Captain Hewett, disembarked on the 5th February at Sanak. The contingent arrived within sight of Galbaribur fort at 4 p.m. on the 6th February. Early next morning the first attack was delivered, the field gun opening fire with high explosive shell at a range of 525 yards, which was later reduced to 400 yards. After two hours' bombardment, during which the 12-pounder had fired 47 rounds, a considerable breach had been effected in the upper story of the fort; but the rubble and debris at the foot of the wall was not sufficiently high to make it scaleable without storming ladders. Captain Hewett accordingly decided to withdraw to the *zariba* to await the arrival of fresh ammunition. At 8.15 a.m. on the next day the attack was renewed. By 9 a.m. the breach seemed practicable for storming, and at 9.20 a.m. a storming party consisting of 10 marines, selected from both ships, and the "Clio" Lewis gun detachment, under the command of Lieutenant Philip H. Calderon, Royal Navy (H.M.S. "Clio"), advanced with Mills bombs and short signal lights under cover of a Lewis gun. In the meantime the whole firing line advanced by sections and closed in on an arc around the western face of the fort. Within four minutes the storming party had scaled the breach and were firing into the interior of the fort with Lewis gun, rifle and pistol. Working their way on to the roof they threw their bombs into the covered portion of the courtyard, where the garrison were now sheltering, firing through the loopholes, and some fodder was set alight which blew up the Dervish ammunition. At 10.35 a.m. the commander of the garrison left the fort with his rifle and attempted to make off in an easterly direction, but was shot dead before he had proceeded 50 yards. At 10.40 a.m. the Illaloes swarmed into the courtyard and the remainder of the garrison, which refused to surrender, were killed. The fort was subsequently demolished by a party under the command of Lieutenant Charles V. Jack, Royal Navy (H.M.S. "Odin").

17. As soon as the flight of the Mullah south was known Eil Afweina had been commissioned by Group Captain Gordon as an advanced base for the Royal Air Force; and on the 1st February an aerial reconnaissance was carried out to Tale, which was located and bombed, valuable photographs being taken. These photographs revealed that Tale was a formidable, strongly-fortified position consisting of a main walled enclosure surmounted by 13 forts, with three covering forts of great height and strength distant about 200 yards. Subsequent inspection, after the capture of the position, showed that these fortifications were all stone built, 12-14 feet thick at the base and about 6 feet at the top, and the covering forts were not less

than 50-60 feet high. There were wells inside the fortifications and room within the encircling walls of "Silsilat" (i.e., "the chain") for many hundred head of stock; while the numerous stone granaries forming part of the defences were well filled with jowari from the Mullah's gardens at Gaolo, 10 miles distant. For 12 years the Mullah had been engaged on the construction of these fortifications, which, carried out under the supervision of Arab masons from the Yemen, must have entailed immense labour to his Dervish following. In an earlier part of this despatch I have recorded that 500 tribal rifles had been sent forward by Captain Gibb to Gaolo on the 19th January, with orders to watch Tale. By the aeroplane proceeding on the reconnaissance of the 1st February I sent letters in Arabic to the Somali leaders acquainting them with the position and instructing them to keep a close look-out as the Mullah and his following were in flight and now heading for Tale. On the following day I was able to communicate by the same means with Captain Gibb, who was with the headquarters of the Tribal Levy at Duhung, in the central Nogal, and I instructed him to gain early touch with the Camel Corps. As the friendlies had by this time been let loose to participate in the round-up of the Dervish fugitives and stock, and as it was impossible to distinguish between friendlies and Dervishes, Group Captain Gordon issued orders to his officers to cease bombing. But preparations were made for an aerial bombardment of Tale, and three machines left on the 4th for this objective. In the course of the raid three direct hits with 112-lb. bombs and four with 20-lb. bombs were obtained on the main position, and a 20-lb. bomb was dropped on the Mullah's own fort without, however, effecting great material damage. The machines then flew low, machine-gunning and setting fire to the Dervish huts inside and outside the fortifications with incendiary bombs, and part of the *haroun* was destroyed. The garrison returned the fire strongly from the forts. Good photographic work was done, and on the return journey the Camel Corps was located at Hudin, and messages dropped to the Commanding Officer. From this time onwards, owing to the complete breakdown of the portable wireless sets with the troops, "Z" force undertook the maintenance of communication and the carrying of despatches, which was of the greatest assistance.

18. On the morning of the 4th February tribal horsemen arrived at Duhung from Gaolo and reported to Captain Gibb that the Mullah and a few men had entered Tale fort at midnight on the 2nd/3rd February, followed in the early morning by a party of about 60 horsemen. A later message, while confirming the arrival of Dervish parties, expressed some doubt as to whether the Mullah himself had entered the fort. Captain Gibb, who had in the meantime gained touch with the Camel Corps, set out at once for Gaolo with all available tribal rifles. On the 3rd, while he was waiting at Kurtimo (lat. 8° 38', long. 47° 35') for other detachments to join him, Akils arrived to report that small parties of Dervishes were continually arriving at Tale, some of whom had been intercepted and killed, and that the tribal leaders at Gaolo were now convinced that the Mullah was in the fort and that the whole remnant of the Dervish force from

Medishe and Jidali was converging on Tale. 200 men were despatched as an urgent reinforcement to Gaolo; and the Camel Corps arrived at Kurtimo about 7 o'clock that evening. During the halt at Tagabei (lat. 8° 55', long. 48° 15'), on the morning of the 8th, a party of mounted Akils arrived from Gaolo and reported that all was well, and that the Tribal Levy had most successfully engaged a large party of Dervishes, escorting the Mullah's main caravan, trying to make their way into Tale on the evening of the 5th. Amongst the Dervishes killed in the fight were the notorious Haji Sudi (the ex-naval interpreter) and Ibrahim Boghol and other leaders, and the captures included 1,400 camels, 450 cows, 50 ponies, 51 rifles and 2,000 rounds ammunition, and 300 camel loads of supplies; while amongst the personal belongings of the Mullah which fell into the hands of the friendlies were his correspondence, clothing, and silver jewellery. Only a few of the party apparently got away into the forts. Such was the position on the morning of the 8th. Captain Gibb, with the Levy and the Camel Corps under Lieut.-Colonel Ismay, moved on to Gaolo the same evening.

19. Early in the morning of the 9th February the Mullah's second son, Abdul Rahman Jahid, and his uncle, Haji Osman, who had deserted from Tale overnight, were brought into the Camel Corps *zariba*. They confirmed the report that the Mullah was in Tale, and stated that he had made up his mind to leave the previous evening, but had been deterred from making the attempt by the presence of 200 of the Tribal Levy who had been posted in the vicinity to watch developments. They stated that the Mullah would leave that night. The Tale garrison was estimated at 250 rifles. After 200 men of the Tribal Levy had been despatched to reinforce the party watching the forts, Colonel Ismay and Captain Gibb held a consultation, at which it was decided to make a demonstration in force round Tale. It was agreed that Captain Gibb should march at 2 p.m. with his 800 footmen, and that the Camel Corps should follow an hour later. Colonel Ismay had only two days' rations in hand, and a transport column had first to be organised to bring up supplies from Hudin. Also his animals were tired, and it was hoped that by advertising the presence of the mounted column the Mullah might be induced to remain within his stronghold, where he could be shut in. Unfortunately, the Mullah forestalled this movement, and before effect could be given to the plan information was received that the garrison of Tale had made a sortie in strength against the 200 friendlies and had driven them back from their position about one and a half miles. Captain Gibb, already on the march, pressed forward rapidly, and soon heard heavy firing proceeding from the direction of Tale. On arriving within sight of the forts the Dervishes could be seen running back inside. Directly afterwards, at 5.30 p.m., he saw a party of seventy to eighty mounted men come out and ride away in a northerly direction. Presumably this was the Mullah and his personal following escaping. Word was sent back to the mounted column, the dust of which was already visible, and, advancing close to the forts and finding them lightly held, Captain Gibb attacked with all available men. A general panic ensued, men, women and children rushing precipitately out of the forts, and the

position was occupied by the friendlies by 7 p.m. A number of Dervish riflemen still remained in parts of Silsillat Fort, some of whom were killed, and others escaped during the night. Dervishes were also holding out in Tale Fort, and two unsuccessful attempts were made by the Levy during the night to effect an entrance. But the few defenders opened the door and surrendered in the early morning on being promised their lives. It was past sunset by the time the Camel Corps arrived, and too late to take up at once the pursuit of the Dervish horsemen, but a strong patrol was sent forward with orders to get on their tracks and be ready to guide the column as soon as the moon rose. This patrol returned just after midnight to report that, owing to the hard gypsum surface, it would be impossible to follow the tracks till dawn, and that on their return they had met other parties of Dervishes escaping from the forts under cover of darkness. It was fortunate that the capture of Tale was thus easily effected, for had the Dervishes made a determined stand here, under the cover of their immensely strong forts, we should have become involved, with the limited weapons at our disposal, in a difficult and costly operation. Against this had to be set the fact that the Mullah was once more at large. Much booty, including 600 rifles, 450 camels and cattle, and 40 ponies, fell into the hands of the Tribal Levy at the taking of Tale, and the Turk, Mohammed Ali, and the Arab masons were among those taken prisoner. Many of the garrison were killed, and hundreds of Dervish women and children were captured. Nine men of the Levy were wounded, two severely.

20. Moving at dawn on the 10th February, the Camel Corps took up the final pursuit, following the Mullah's tracks, which led first north and then, turning right-handed, south by east. After crossing the river bed at Halin (23 miles) the tracks began to divide, and by nightfall the column had encountered only exhausted ponies and the debris of the flight. Moving on again by the moon at 3 a.m., the column was checked by the tracks breaking up completely, and patrols were sent forward to clear up the situation. Three miles south-west of Galnoli (lat. 8° 40', long. 48° 38'), on the frontier, the tracks converged again, and from this point all but the fittest animals were sent back, the pursuit being continued with 150 rifles, three machine-guns and two Stokes guns. At 3.45 p.m. a Dervish picket was caught and information obtained that an enemy party was watering in the Bihen nullah a mile ahead. This party was surprised, and 12 riflemen were shot down at close range, the pony troop galloping round the right flank accounting for the remainder. All the fighting men were killed and all the women, children and ponies captured. The party consisted of the Mullah's wives, children and near relatives under escort of 30 riflemen. At 9 o'clock next morning, the 12th, pickets reported that a force of Dervish horse and foot were approaching Gerrowei. Leaving 20 rifles to guard the prisoners, Colonel Ismay at once gave chase with the rest of his force, and came up with the enemy in the broken ground north-west of Gerrowei stream. "C" Company ponymen galloped straight through the Dervish footmen holding a narrow neck, and, joining hands with another patrol at Gerrowei, went off in pursuit of the Dervish horse. These were eventually galloped down, and only a few

men escaped on foot. The party of footmen soon broke, and most of them were accounted for. Reports as to the whereabouts of the Mullah himself were still conflicting, and an exhaustive drive was now begun. At mid-day a patrol reported the tracks of a few horsemen, footmen and camels further south, moving into the Haud. In the hope that this would prove to be the Mullah's own party, Colonel Ismay, leaving Major C. A. L. Howard, D.S.O., to continue the drive, set out in pursuit with some 20 ponies (all that could go out of a walk) and one camel troop, and by 3.30 p.m. had hunted down the fugitives. They turned out to be a party under the Abyssinian Fitaurari, Bayenna, who had been in the Dervish camp for some years. Subsequent reports show that the Mullah was, in fact, close at hand at this time, and from a neighbouring hill witnessed the fate of the Fitaurari's party, of which eight were killed and two captured. The column concentrated at Gerrowei that evening, and returned to Bihen after dark. The Camel Corps had thus pursued until there was nothing further to pursue—from the sea to the southern borders of the Protectorate. Not less than 60 of the Mullah's personal following had been killed, including seven of his sons and seven close relatives; also four of his *kasooi* (i.e., immediate advisers and leaders). Six of his sons, his five wives, four daughters and two sisters had been captured, and only his eldest son, Mahdi, a brother and three or four well-known Dervishes had escaped, with the Mullah himself. They had left the main party early, keeping to the east and seeking safety in isolation. It is now realised that the Mullah's whereabouts were unknown to any but the few actually with him (at no time more than ten), and he himself consistently avoided water holes and other dangerous places, sending his ponies to water under escort, and often moving to a new position before they had returned, for fear the escort might have been captured and revealed his position. By this means he made good his escape into Abyssinian territory, and finally crossed the Haud to Galadi.

21. This marked the close of active operations. At the final destruction of Medishe by a company of the 101st Grenadiers, 600 rifles were collected, and the King's African Rifles in due course cleared up the whole of the northern area, the Dervish forts at Surud and elsewhere being destroyed. The demolition of Tale, on account of the great strength of the fortifications, had to await the arrival of further supplies of explosives from Egypt, when the work was completed by the Camel Corps. I proceeded myself to Tale by aeroplane on the 15th February to decide the various questions requiring settlement, such as the disposal of the large numbers of Dervish prisoners who had fallen into our hands or had surrendered, and the temporary occupation of new territory; and I was glad to have this opportunity to congratulate the Camel Corps and the Tribal Levy on their very excellent services. As the outcome of one small but very successful operation near Eil Der on the 4th February, much of the Dervish stock from the Surud area was captured by a column under the command of Captain Allden; and five thousand head of cattle and camels, apart from sheep, were brought in to Eil Afweina. The rest was rounded up by the friendlies or intercepted by the Tribal Levy in the Nogal.

Thus the whole of the Dervish stock in the Protectorate fell into our hands as well as all the Mullah's rifles, the two machine guns lost by us at Erigo and Gumburu in 1902/1903, and practically all his belongings, including his family. The Mullah himself is still at large—but as a discredited refugee without possessions and without power. Adherents, at all events, he will never get again, for Dervishism as a cause in Somaliland is ended. In my previous despatch I explained the causes of the steady decline of the Dervish power during the last six years; and 23 days of active operations, from the 21st January to the 12th February, have now sufficed to effect its final overthrow. For this the credit is primarily due to the Royal Air Force, who were the main instrument of attack and the decisive factor. They exercised an immediate and tremendous moral effect over the Dervishes, who in the ordinary course are good fighting men, demoralizing them in the first few days. There was thus no serious opposition and the operations assumed, almost from the start, the nature of a hunt. Our casualties among troops were confined to three native ranks killed and eight wounded; and one officer of the Camel Corps was slightly wounded. Neither the Royal Air Force nor the Royal Navy suffered casualties.

22. An outstanding feature of these operations was the sustained and determined pursuit by the Camel Corps, often on half and no rations, over a great stretch of country regardless of privation and fatigue. The pursuit was pressed with success to the utmost possible limits. The success, also, attending the employment of an untrained levy, under one British Officer assisted by Risaldar-Major Muss Farah, has been most striking, and confirms the view that six years of effort on the part of the local administration to build up the power of the tribal leaders and to induce cohesion among the friendlies has not been in vain. Both the King's African Rifles and the Naval Contingent were confronted with difficult tasks in the taking of the Dervish forts at Baran and Galbaribur, defended with great bravery

and the utmost contempt for death by a band of resolute fanatics who held out to the last; and it was only through good leadership and judgment that these forts were reduced without serious casualties. The Wing 101st Grenadiers, given fewer opportunities, performed indispensable duties with energy and keenness. Finally I desire to pay a tribute to the Supply and Transport services—most difficult of all in Somaliland—which, in the capable hands of Major Rayne and Captain Alden, met all the calls made upon them both by the troops and the Royal Air Force over an extended area without breakdown, and indeed, without hitch. Many different units were employed during this short campaign; and I would most strongly emphasize the fact that it was largely due to the spirit of whole-hearted co-operation and enthusiasm displayed by all that the operations were carried through to so speedy and successful a conclusion.

23. The good work of the Officers of the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force will no doubt obtain recognition through their own service channel, but I desire to bring to Your Lordship's notice the conspicuous services rendered to the Protectorate by Group-Captain R. Gordon, C.M.G., D.S.O., at request of Air Ministry, and the valuable work performed by Captain G. G. P. Hewett, Royal Navy, H.M.S. "Odin." I am glad to avail myself, also, of this opportunity to acknowledge the great assistance afforded me at all times in the matter of supplies by Major-General Sir James Stewart, K.C.M.G., C.B., Resident of Aden.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

G. F. ARCHER,

Governor and Commander-in-Chief,
Somaliland Protectorate.

NOTE.—The names of other Officers and Men who have been brought to notice in this Despatch will be published separately in the London Gazette.

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