

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