weeks. On two occasions aeroplanes came down in hostile territory, and the airmen fell into enemy hands. Their capture caused much embarrassment to the General Officer Commanding the Waziristan Force in his conduct of the operations, but political negotiations secured their comparatively early release.

14. By the beginning of the new year the general Mahsud situation had become so grave that it was imperative to stabilize matters before carrying out the plans as originally formulated.

It was decided, therefore, to deal a heavy blow at the Abdullai stronghold of Makin before commencing the withdrawal of the Takhi Zam line. Orders were accordingly issued for combined operations against Makin by the 9th Brigade of the Waziristan Force, and the 7th Brigade of the Razmak Force, the latter Brigade to come under the command of the General Officer Commanding the Waziristan Force for the operations; but, owing to the fact that all supplies and stores had been backloaded, it was impossible to commence these operations before the end of January. In the meantime the villages in the Makin area were shelled by 6-inch and 3·7-inch howitzers from Ladha, and considerable damage was inflicted.

15. By the 30th January, Advanced Waziristan Force Headquarters opened at Piazha and the following special dispositions had been made for the advance against Makin:—

Ladha	9th Brigade Headquarters. 5 battalions of Infantry. 2 pack batteries.
Piazha	Advanced Waziristan Force Headquarters. 3 battalions of Infantry. 1½ pack batteries. 1 section of 6-inch howitzers.
Sorarogha ...	21st Brigade Headquarters. 2 battalions of Infantry. 1 section of 4·5-inch howitzers. 400 Scouts.
Kotkai	2 battalions of Infantry. 1 section, pack battery.

16. On the 1st February, Ladha was evacuated and the 9th Brigade group withdrew to Piazha in a heavy snowstorm which continued all day.

On the 3rd, Advanced Waziristan Force Headquarters moved to Marobi with the 9th Brigade column, meeting with some opposition during the march, and the next day junction was effected at Tauda China with the 7th Brigade group of the Razmak Force.

Operations of the Razmak Force.

17. The narrative having reached the point at which junction between the two Forces was effected, it is now convenient to describe the operations of the Razmak Force leading up to this event.

18. The main object of the Razmak Force was to establish a force of all arms on the Razmak plateau, and, as the Force was dependent for its line of communication on the Isha-Razmak road, its movements were largely regulated by the progress made in the construction of that road.

19. Work on the road was commenced on the 11th July, and progress was at first slow, owing to the difficulty in obtaining civil labour and to the inadvisability, for political reasons, of employing technical troops. As time went on, however, the necessity for expediting the work was allowed to over-rule other considerations, and by the middle of November, five companies of Sappers and Miners and two battalions of Pioneers had been sent up to the Razmak Force and were engaged on the construction of the road at, and forward of, Tal. By the 15th December, Ford vans were running from Tal to Asad Khel; by the 30th December the road was fit for heavy mechanical transport as far as Damdil; and by the 5th January it was in use by Ford vans up to within a mile of Razani. The rapidity and skill with which this road was constructed reflects very great credit on all those concerned with the enterprise.

20. The composition of the Razmak Force is given in Appendix 2. The operations of this Force, up to the occupation of Razmak, were briefly as follows.

21. By the 12th December, 15 days' supplies for the whole Force had been collected at Tal. The 5th Infantry Brigade, which had concentrated at Idak on the 13th, moved to Tal on the 15th, and to Asad Khel on the 16th, the 8th Infantry Brigade being responsible for the protection of the road from Bannu to Damdil. By the 31st the 5th Brigade had, without encountering any hostile opposition, established permanent piquets as far as Tamre Oba camp.

Meanwhile the 7th Brigade, with two pack batteries and a company of Sappers and Miners, had concentrated at Asad Khel, and on the 1st January this Brigade marched through the 5th Brigade and encamped at Tamre Oba. On the 4th the advance was continued, without incident, to Razani.

22. From the 5th to the 10th January the 5th Brigade was employed in establishing piquets along the road forward towards Razmak, and, in particular, in securing the high ridge east of the track, known as Alexandra Ridge, and immediately overlooking Razmak Narai. The piquetting of this ridge was undertaken by the 2-3rd Gurkha Rifles, who were opposed by a gang of Mahsuds, but succeeded in driving them off after a fight in which both sides suffered casualties.

23. By the 22nd January the route from Razani to Razmak was firmly secured and the track had been made passable for laden camels. On the following day the 7th Brigade marched to Razmak. The advance up the track, which had a gradient of 1 in 9 and a width of only 6 feet, took place in a blinding snowstorm, and the passage over the Narai of some 1,500 camels and 1,100 mules, which accompanied the column, was a fine performance. The march commenced at dawn, and, though the distance to be covered was only 6 miles, the last camel did not reach camp till 10.45 p.m. Fortunately, the enemy opposition was slight, and was easily brushed aside by the advanced troops.

24. The 7th Brigade now proceeded to make itself secure at Razmak, and the next few days