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**HISTORY**  
**OF**  
**THE 7<sup>th</sup> BATTALION**  
**THE PRINCE OF WALES'S**  
**(NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE REGIMENT)**  
**1914-1919**

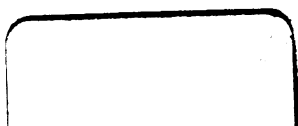
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**THE HISTORY OF THE  
7TH (SER.) BN. PRINCE OF WALES'S**







BRIGADIER-GENERAL T. A. ANDRUS, C.M.G.  
Commanding 7th Bn. N. Staff. R. 1914-1915, and after Kut, 1916.  
Commanding 39th Infantry Brigade, 1916-1919.

THE HISTORY OF THE  
7TH (SER.) BN. PRINCE OF WALES'S  
(NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE  
REGIMENT)

1914—1919

BY

Lt. R. MISSEN, M.C.  
*(Late Captain and Adjutant)*

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## PREFACE

THE record of the part taken by the 7th (Service) Battalion Prince of Wales's (North Staffordshire Regiment) in the Great War is one of unique and surpassing interest. Few units of our armies were called upon to undergo such vicissitudes of fortune, to fight in such strange countries, and to travel such immense distances by land and by water. Old Regular Regiments in their hoary history have travelled much and seen many strange lands, but, in truth, very few Battalions in the short span of four years had such wanderings and adventures.

The officers and men who so readily assembled in the first few weeks of the war to raise this Battalion, and all those who came after have died and suffered along a route thousands of miles long, in many cases with no mark remaining to show the last resting place of a gallant English soldier.

The vicissitudes of the Battalion were many. It was fighting throughout against the Turks—those old enemies of Europe—upon many fronts. Far from civilisation and thousands of miles from home, out of touch with news from England for many months at a time, sometimes badly clothed and fed, and often without water, these gallant men of Staffordshire were called upon to fight in summer amid dust and flies, dirt and disease, and beneath a fierce tropical sun; and in winter amid wetness and mud and cold.

They laid down their lives on the barren coast of Gallipoli first of all, and thence following a great circular path, they lie by the Suez Canal, at Basra (the old Busora of Sinbad the Sailor), away up the Tigris along the arid desert waste to Kut-el-Amara, and on again to ancient Baghdad. Scattered graves mark the places where they fell in subsequent fighting on the Marl Plain (where Nebuchadnezzar placed the golden image) and on the heights of the Jebel Hamrin, whence runs the road to ancient Nineveh. A few lone graves mark the journey thence of 600 miles through North-West Persia, two in particular in the little cemetery at Hamadan which overlooks the ruined palace of King Darius of Ecbatana, and the tombs of Esther and Mordecai.

The last great fighting took place still further away, over 200 miles of the Caspian Sea in Baku. Here, after a defence which will stand among the greatest recorded incidents of history, many lay unburied on the battlefield until the Battalion returned after the signing of the Armistice.

Still moving on in the circle, the Battalion passed in parties through the Caucasus on their homeward journey and so down to Batoum. After a voyage across the Black Sea they arrived at the capital of the nation they had fought against for four years—Constantinople—and then on down the Dardanelles and again past the barren shores of Gallipoli, the scene of the Battalion's baptism of fire.

The record of the Battalion is dear to the officers and men who formed a part of it, and to the relatives of those who fought in it and gave their all for King and Empire. There is very little left to show that this Battalion ever existed beyond the Battalion colour,

and a memorial window in Stoke Parish Church which is about to be dedicated to the memory of the fallen.

Hence this little history.

It is not intended to be a history of the war. As much care as possible has been taken in collecting and checking facts; and you are asked to overlook the remaining deficiencies of which, I am only too conscious, there are many.

I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness and thanks to Lieut.-Col. T. A. Andrus, C.M.G. (lately Brig.-General Commanding 39th Infantry Brigade) for valuable suggestions and assistance in the revision of proofs; to Major G. E. Leman, O.B.E. (lately Lieut.-Colonel Commanding 7th Battalion North Stafford. Regt.) for his invaluable help in compiling the Appendices, in revising the proofs, and for many helpful criticisms and suggestions; and to Major Giffard for the design of the crest on the cover.

LESLIE R. MISSEN, M.C.

CAMBRIDGE,

*June, 1920.*



## CHAPTER I

### THE FORMATION OF THE BATTALION

In the latter days of the memorable month of August 1914, the orders were issued for the formation of the first Service battalions of the New Army. Four of them were posted to the barracks at Tidworth on Salisbury Plain : and amongst that four there was a battalion which was destined to play a singular and glorious part on many battlefields of our world-wide front. The 7th (Service) Battalion of the Prince of Wales's (North Staffordshire Regiment) was at that time represented by its first Commanding Officer, Lieut.-Col. T. A. Andrus, and around him, within the next few days, there rallied a body of officers, warrant officers, and non-commissioned officers who were to raise one of the finest units of our New Armies.

Training commenced at once and great progress was made by Christmas time, not only on the drill square, but also on the playing field, where the Battalion gained its first athletic laurels in winning the Divisional Association Football Tournament.

In the mess and in the barrack room, on parade and in our games we came to know one another very well, and to assume that spirit of comradeship which served us so well throughout the days to come. The earnestness with which we assimilated the first lessons of military

training was but the forerunner of the unquenchable spirit which the Battalion showed under all circumstances throughout the war.

In the early days of January, 1915, the Battalion was moved by train to Basingstoke, where it was accommodated in billets, three companies being in the town and one in the schools. Company training was commenced here, but was interrupted at the end of February, when another move was made by route march to Blackdown, in the Aldershot Command. Here the four battalions from Tidworth—the 9th Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment, the 7th Battalion Gloucester Regiment, the 9th Battalion Worcestershire Regiment, and the 7th Battalion North Staffordshire Regiment—definitely became a part of the 13th Division, as the 39th Infantry Brigade, commanded by Brig.-Gen. W. de S. Cayley.

The training now became intensive and consisted of long route marches, night operations and Battalion, Brigade, and Divisional Manceuvres. The Battalion forged ahead in everything, and had the satisfaction, when training was completed, of being adjudged the most efficient unit of the Division. This result was in great part due to the Commanding Officer and to the excellent staff of trained soldiers with the Battalion.

The 13th Division being now ready for active service, there was great speculation as to its ultimate destination. Rumour was confirmed when a large consignment of Wolseley sun helmets arrived, and the officers were ordered to obtain khaki drill clothing and sun goggles. The Dardanelles was to be the scene of the Battalion's début in the front line. Final leave having been granted, the Battalion re-assembled and moved to Avonmouth,

where it embarked on transports on June 20th, 1915, and sailed 1100 strong with 28 officers.

After a smooth passage across the Bay, Gibraltar was passed on the 25th, and a halt was made at Malta for a day on the 27th. Finally the Battalion arrived at Alexandria, where all units disembarked and made a route march through the town. Orders were received for all regimental transport to be left there, as it could not be landed on the Peninsula.

After leaving Alexandria the convoy touched at Mudros, the Advanced Base of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, and then sailed direct to Cape Helles.

## CHAPTER II

### THE DARDANELLES

THE Battalion received its baptism of fire immediately after landing at Cape Helles on July 11th, 1915. At that time there was no place on the Gallipoli peninsula where the British troops were not under artillery fire. So the units of the Brigade had to provide themselves with cover by means of entrenchments as quickly as possible, in the many nullahs and gullies running down to the beach and to wait until orders for further movement should arrive.

The general situation on the Peninsula was one of standstill. The French were on the right, just in advance of a stream called the Kereves Dere, while the British on the left had captured the Gully Ravine. All efforts to move further forward by capturing the heights of Achi Baba and the village of Krithia had proved abortive, and those in command were beginning to realise that the task set before them was one which would tax very highly far more troops than they then had available. All units were being used to their uttermost strength.

There was to be no tour of the trenches for the Brigade, for on the 13th of July it was moved up to support the Lowland Division, which was attacking Achi Baba. The attack was only partially successful, but the 39th Brigade did not move up to the front line ; and

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on the 15th they were withdrawn and sent to take over a part of the line from the 28th Division. The North Staffords remained in the line for a fortnight, during which time the Turks were very active. On the 19th of July they made a desperate attack, which was driven off. During this action the North Staffords sustained their first casualties, one officer being killed, Capt. C. G. Grail, and 19 men, and three officers, Major W. A. S. Edwards, Capt. E. E. D. Henderson, Lieut. G. D. Wheway, and 39 men wounded. On July 30th the 28th Division took over the line again and the Brigade moved down to the beach, embarked on lighters, and proceeded to Mudros on the 31st for a short rest.

On August 4th orders were issued for the attempt to force a new landing at Suvla Bay, and the Brigade embarked on the 5th to sail to Anzac to take part in the operations. The Battalion's memories of the first day at Anzac are anything but pleasant. Landing at dawn from lighters they advanced over very open ground under an intense and accurate barrage from the Turkish guns. Orders were received to dig in at once, and the Brigade remained thus until nightfall. The low-lying country by the sea was completely overlooked by the enemy on the heights of Sari Bair, and they were able to inform their front line and their artillery of all movements and dispositions. The ground was devoid of cover, and any movement in the open was certain to bring disaster. Communication was very difficult, and it was quite impossible to take any ammunition or food and water to the front line, and equally impossible to evacuate any wounded. It was marvellous that the British troops were able to hold on as they did. The losses in officers and men were large, the North Staffords

receiving a particularly heavy blow in the death of their Adjutant, Capt. H. P. L. Heyworth.

When darkness fell, the whole Division concentrated and commenced to march towards Suvla. The route followed the cliffs, which ran right under the enemy's position. The Royal Navy had the Turks under observation with brilliant searchlights, while they kept them busy with 12 in. shells. Dawn broke at length, and the Brigade found cover in various nullahs and hollows, where it remained until nightfall. That night the march was resumed, and after moving slowly for hours the Division arrived at the foot of Arghyl Dere at dawn. The enemy outposts there were driven in and back to the Turkish main position on Sari Bair, while the landing of other units was taking place at Suvla Bay.

On the morning of the 9th the whole Division attacked, and pushed the enemy well up the heights. The landing at Suvla being only partially successful however, the enemy was able to turn his artillery on to Arghyl Dere, inflicting heavy losses.

For a time the advance was checked, and then the Turks sent over such a counter-attack that the left of the Battalion was driven back by sheer weight of numbers. Then followed one of the fiercest fights of Gallipoli. Every inch of ground was disputed with bayonet and bomb, and after a magnificent rally, the enemy was driven off, the line was readjusted, and the Battalion was able to hold on until nightfall. This fighting from August 5th to the 11th caused great depletion in the ranks of the 13th Division. The North Staffords alone lost ten officers wounded:—Lieut.-Col. T. A. Andrus, Capt. W. C. Ratcliffe, Lieut. J. Y. Robinson, Lieut. H. M. Robinson, Lieut. A. Menzies, 2nd Lieut. T. H.

Averill, 2nd Lieut. R. A. Hope, 2nd Lieut. R. Jesson, 2nd Lieut. C. G. Arbuthnot, 2nd Lieut. G. C. D. Cotes, and 266 other ranks killed, wounded, and missing.

The position now occupied by the Battalion was further consolidated and held until August 30th, when a relief took place, and the North Staffords proceeded to take over a part of the line in front of the Salt Lake at Suvla Bay. Here they remained for a few days, and then on September 7th proceeded to Salajik, where they took up a new position and dug themselves in.

The Brigade now settled down to a long round of solid trench warfare, during which time the principal occupations were digging forward, wiring, and patrol work.

Several amusing stories are told of this period, mostly concerning a warrant officer, who on one occasion fetched his wire back from the Turkish lines with grappling irons, and when he found that it had gone again, went out alone and fetched it in and tied it down to his own trench! When taking over a netted bomb-head once, and told to keep quiet, as the Turks could hear him, he is reported to have shouted, "But they shall hear me. Ahem! I'm X., of the North Staffords, and they shall know it!"

The Battalion was now commanded by Lieut.-Col. Walker, while Lieut. J. Y. Robinson was Adjutant.

It is quite impossible to describe the awful conditions which prevailed during this period. Heat, sand, and flies accounted for nearly as many lives as did the bullets and shells of the enemy. The splendid efforts of the medical staff and the supplies alone saved the situation. If the food supply (scanty as it was) had broken down, the plight of the troops would have been hopeless.

On November 26th the Great Blizzard burst upon the Peninsula—a deluge of rain, followed by snow—and then a series of sharp frosts and bitter north-east winds. The water poured down from the higher ground occupied by the Turks, and, rushing in a torrent through the trenches, swept everything before it. Many men were drowned in their dug-outs, caught without any chance of escape ; others were killed by collapsing trench walls and dug-out roofs ; while others were carried away by the rush of water, and were battered to death against the sides of traverses and trenches. Those who escaped were left destitute in a waterlogged morass. After nearly three months without rest of any description and in the physically emaciated condition in which they were no troops could withstand it. The suffering was terrible. The trenches remained in water waist deep, and in most places totally collapsed, so that breastworks had to be built in the front line. Frost-bite set in, and during the first three days over 8000 cases were evacuated from the divisional area.

From the 1st to the 17th December all troops worked hard at reconstruction, and were cheered to hear of a pending relief. The fire trenches were cleared of mud and slush, and breastworks were built all along the line in case of a second flood. Orders for the evacuation now arrived, and all stores and kit were sent down to the beaches at night, and loaded on to barges and lighters. This did not come altogether as a surprise, for it seemed to be generally recognised that the situation had become untenable, and that there was no hope of success unless a completely new and large army arrived as a reinforcement. This seemed to be out of the question.

The severe frosts which followed the rain told severely on the men's feet, and all those who were not fit to march were evacuated. Oil was distributed for the remainder, who had to take their boots and socks off daily and rub their feet with it. Whale oil was generally used. On December 2nd a draft arrived for the North Staffords, who were now almost depleted to skeleton strength. It consisted of six officers and about 300 men. The usual routine of trench warfare was continued during the next few days so that the Turks gained no inkling of the pending move.

A week before the evacuation the North Staffords took over the fire trenches from the 7th Gloucesters, who were withdrawn on the night of the 17th-18th, taking with them two officers and 150 other ranks of the North Staffords. Fifty other ranks of the Gloucesters were left behind, and joined the North Staffords. On the 18th-19th, the Royal Warwickshire Regiment was also withdrawn. The Brigade was now holding the line with 1100 men, of whom 524 were North Staffords, the remainder being Worcesters.

On the 19th, one Company of the Battalion was sent to hold a second line, about a mile and a half in the rear of the front line. About midnight 19th-20th the troops commenced to leave the front line. Except for occasional sniping all was silent as they moved slowly down to the beach. The night, too, was favourable, for it was pitch black. The second line was passed without event, and finally the beach was reached. Quickly and quietly the men embarked on the waiting lighters, and as the last man stepped aboard, the low hum of engines signalled the successful evacuation of Suvla Bay. Every article of value in the form of kit, food, and equipment had

been removed during the preceding days, and now every man had been withdrawn with equal success. It was not until daybreak that the Turks suspected that anything unusual had been happening, and even then when they failed to see or hear any sign of the British troops, they were slow in moving down to investigate the cause.

The Battalion went into bivouac on the island of Imbros until the 23rd, when it embarked for Mudros, arriving there on the 24th. Over 800 details were waiting there to join the Battalion, which necessitated some re-organisation. The Battalion strength was now officers 23 and other ranks 1597.

After re-organisation, the Battalion was warned to return to Cape Helles and embarking on the 28th-29th, arrived about midnight at V Beach, and moved up to the Eski Lines, which were reached at four a.m. The Battalion was in the second line until the night of the 3rd-4th January, 1916, when it took over the front line from the 7th Gloucesters, and on the 4th-5th took over the front line of the Royal Warwicks in addition. The line held was almost identically the same as that which the Battalion first held in July, 1915. The enemy trenches were, however, very much closer in many places, being only ten to fifteen yards away. The Turks seemed to be watching very closely as though they expected another movement on the part of the British troops. At 11.15 a.m. on January 7th they commenced a violent bombardment of the first and second lines, with heavy high explosive and high velocity shrapnel. This bombardment continued until 3.45 p.m., when it increased in intensity and was accompanied by heavy rifle and machine-gun fire. About 4.15 p.m. bodies of Turks





LIEUT-COL. F. H. WALKER.

Commanding 7th Bn. N. Staff. R. on GALLIPOLI, 1915-1916.  
Killed in Action at CAPE HELLES, 1916.

came out of their trenches for the assault, but seemed disinclined to face our rifle fire, notwithstanding the urgent efforts of their officers. The bombing was particularly violent, and our supplies ran short, as it was almost impossible to get them up the mule track, which was under very accurate and intense fire. All the telephone wires were cut, and messages had to be sent from Battalion headquarters to the companies and to Brigade headquarters by orderly. The firing died away about 5 p.m. The losses were heavy, and included Lieut.-Col. F. H. Walker and 44 men killed, while Capt. B. E. Nicolls, 2nd Lieut. S. W. Smyth, 2nd Lieut. B. E. Atkins and 106 other ranks were wounded.

During the night of the 7th-8th and the day of the 8th, all men, except a rearguard of 200, were sent to the beaches. The night of the 8th-9th was quiet, the Turk having no intimation of the exact time of the withdrawal. At last the word came, and silently the two hundred left the line and moved down to the beach. When all had embarked, the dumps were fired. Great beacons of flame leapt up, and the Turk, realising that he was just too late, opened up a wild and scattered bombardment. Thus the evacuation of Cape Helles was successfully accomplished, and the campaign of Gallipoli was brought to a close.

## CHAPTER III

### THE ATTEMPT TO RELIEVE KUT-EL-AMARA

AFTER leaving Cape Helles the Battalion landed at Mudros, where a busy time was spent reorganising and training and assimilating the strong reinforcements which joined the Battalion. On 11th January, 1916, Lieut.-Col. G. E. Leman assumed command, and on January 21st the Battalion embarked upon H.M.T. *Varsova* and proceeded to Egypt, landing at Port Said on the 26th.

The Battalion was now joined by further large drafts of officers and men from England. The strength of the regiment in fact became so great that a surplus of 320 men had to be transferred to two other Battalions in the Brigade. The Transport section also rejoined. After being left at Alexandria in June, 1915, they were taken to Salonica, where all the animals were handed over to the 10th Division. The personnel then returned to Port Said. During the period at Port Said the Division was entirely refitted in clothing and equipment. Training, bathing, sunshine and good food soon restored the vigour and morale of these sorely tried troops, and within a month they were in every way an "Iron" Division, as they had been appropriately named on the Peninsula.

The situation in Mesopotamia was now demanding the attention of all the troops in the near East. After a

magnificent advance up the Tigris with a mere handful of troops to the culminating victory of Ctesiphon on November 22nd, 1915, Major-General Townshend had been forced by vastly superior numbers to retire, and had finally come to a stand in the little village of Kut-el-Amara on December 17th, where he was now surrounded and besieged.

A relieving force, hastily gathered by General Aylmer, had at once proceeded up the Tigris, and in two battles—those of Sheikh Saad on January 6th-8th, and Wadi on January 13th, had defeated and driven back the advancing host of the Turks. They were, however, so weakened that a third attack on the 20th of January at Umm-el-Hanna was unsuccessful. It now became quite obvious that the relief of the forces in Kut could not be effected without the aid of strong reinforcements, and on February 12th the 13th Division received the news that it had been selected to proceed to Mesopotamia.

On February 16th the 7th North Staffords embarked on H.M.T. *Marathon*, and, after an uneventful voyage, anchored off Koweit at the head of the Persian Gulf on the 29th at 11.30 a.m.

The *Marathon* lay about 2½ miles out in Koweit Bay and waited for the arrival of other transports from Basra, as she was unable to cross the bar, at the mouth of the Shatt-el-Arab. No ships turned up until the 4th, and as there was only a limited quantity of food on board, troops had to go on short rations and water.

At 7.30 a.m. on the 4th the *Edevanha* came alongside to take off the stores. There were 450 tons to be moved. Everybody worked with a will, and it was all transhipped by 2 p.m. on the 6th—a very fine feat, on which all ranks were congratulated. The *Edevanha* sailed at

3.45 p.m. on the 6th, and arrived off Basra on the 8th, moving up to the Magil wharf on the 10th. The weather was a little warmer than it had been in Egypt (about 95° in the shade), and it was also very damp. Disembarkation commenced at 10 a.m. on the 11th, and the Battalion marched away to Makina Masus camp, about three miles inland from the river, where they went under canvas on a flat alluvial deposit at the edge of the desert.

At 1 p.m. a tropical storm burst on the camp, and within a few minutes most people and most things were floating nearly knee deep in water! Later, when the flood subsided, the troops moved about ankle deep in mud. It rained daily, with thunders and lightnings, and the gods seemed to be displeased. Add to this the dismal stories from "up the line" and the spectacle of the convoys of wounded arriving, and one may say that the Division had a cheerless welcome to the country in which they were to win undying fame.

The transport was entirely reorganised on the Indian Army scale, necessitating the employment of some 80 pack mules, and all ranks were busy learning how to form loads and how to lash them to the pack saddles.

On the 15th orders came for the move up country; 300 men embarked at Magil on the s.s. *Julnar*, and 372 on the Paddle Steamer No. 2. "B" Company and a part of "D" proceeded on the s.s. *Medjidieh*. Officers and men were crowded like sardines on the open decks, exposed to the heat of day and the cold of night. Fortunately the river was in flood and no delays were caused by running aground on sandbanks, so that the convoy arrived at Sheikh Saad on the 20th of March.

The diary of the journey was as follows :—

Basra, 8 a.m., 16th.

Kurna (Garden of Eden), 4 p.m., 16th.

Ezra's Tomb, 8 a.m., 17th.

Devil's Elbow, 2 p.m., 17th.

Amara, 18th.

Ali Gharbi, 19th.

Sheikh Saad, 5 a.m., 20th.

No parades were held on board !

The chief feature of the scenery on this journey was a dull, drab monotony, relieved only by occasional date palms. The River Tigris is more like a canal than a river, inasmuch as the banks are higher than the surrounding country in many parts of its course. As far as Kurna it is bordered on both banks by frequent clumps of date palms. At Gurmat-ali, just above Magil, we passed the junction of the Euphrates and Tigris. From Kurna to Amara date palms are found only at so-called towns or oases. On this stretch of river we passed the tomb of the prophet Ezra, and the Devil's Elbow—a place where the river is so narrow that navigation is difficult and dangerous. The river steamers are generally of the paddle variety, and almost invariably have two lighters with them, one lashed on each side.

The river itself was in flood when we went up. This season lasts from the end of March to the end of May, and is due to heavy rains and the melting of snow in Asia Minor. The current then reaches 5 knots per hour. In the low water season, July to September, there are innumerable sand banks which shift their positions in the river in a most uncanny way. The river boats are nearly always piloted by Arabs, who appear to have the instinct of scenting sand as described

by Mr. Erskine Childers in his book, "The Riddle of the Sands."

At Sheikh Saad pack mules were waiting to be taken over as regimental transport. Further practice was carried out in training all ranks in loading them. They are singularly intractable animals on first acquaintance, and have a marked aversion to noisy loads such as camp kettles and entrenching tools. The Battalion remained at Sheikh Saad until April 2nd. Local intelligence was cheery—it prophesied a very wet winding up of the rains! Incidentally, thunderstorms continued; in the intervals, when the sun shone, it was depressingly hot and steamy! The Brigade worked hard repairing and building up the river bunds and banks to prevent floods; and in the intervals some Battalion training was carried out.

On the evening of the 2nd of April, orders arrived for the Division to concentrate for the assault of the Turkish position of El Hanna, their front line of defence against the relief of Kut-el-Amara.

As the Battalion set out at night to march to Orah (about 15 miles) a terrific storm burst. Rain descended in torrents, the wind blew half a gale, and the heavy thunder caused the animals to stampede and to shed their loads all over the countryside. In the darkness, the column lost its way, and it was not until breakfast time that Orah was reached. The men were thoroughly exhausted, and soaked to the skin with rain and mud.

The Brigade crossed the Tigris by the bridge of boats, and stayed at Wadi for the day. Rain continued at intervals. When darkness fell there was another trying march up to the trenches, which were hopelessly waterlogged, and falling in for want of timber revetment,

the country being practically treeless except for the few scattered date palms.

During the night the Brigade relieved the troops holding the front line, and they spent the day of the 4th inspecting the Turkish front line—distant 150 to 200 yards—and making final preparations. The rain ceased at last, but it was very hot and steamy in the trenches. Food was scarce, and the men were on quarter rations.

At dawn on the 5th, the Brigade went over the top and assaulted the El Hanna position with the bayonet. The Turkish trenches were flooded in some parts, but they got on well, and by 6 a.m. had secured the whole of their front line system. In fact, the Battalion did so well that they pushed a little too far forward, and suffered from the barrage of their own guns. Immediately it lifted the 40th Brigade moved through to reconnoitre the Turkish second position of Fallahieh. In the afternoon the Brigade moved up, and the 38th Brigade also, and as evening came on the 38th and 39th made a very determined bayonet attack on this position. Fighting continued throughout the night, and by dawn the whole position was in their hands.

It was a splendid beginning—in spite of adverse circumstances—for the relief of Kut-el-Amara. From dawn of the 5th to dawn of the 6th, the 13th Division—the “Iron” Division of fame—had fought two separate actions against a strongly entrenched enemy, well supported by his artillery and machine-guns. The result was decisive—complete possession; and the distance of the advance was six miles, over a flat stretch of watery country, with not so much cover on it as would hide a rabbit. The Battalion’s casualties were very heavy in

proportion to the numbers in action ; they were 10 officers and 200 men.

On the 7th of April the Battalion moved down to the river bank at Fallahieh and spent the day re-organising. Lieut.-Col. T. A. Andrus, C.M.G., rejoined the Battalion and took command, as Lieut.-Col. G. E. Leman had been wounded on the 6th. On the 7th orders were received for the assault of the Sanna-i-yat position, the key to Kut-el-Amara, which had been previously unsuccessfully assaulted by the 7th Indian Division.

The Sanna-i-yat position is a famous one in history, fulfilling as it did all the requirements of the "ideal" position as enunciated in the Army text-books. On the right flank was a rapid and impassable river—the Tigris. On the left flank there was a deep and treacherous marsh—the Suwaicha marsh, stretching to the Persian foot hills. In front there were several miles of ground as flat as a billiard table, without a vestige of cover. Kut, by the latest advice, could only hold out until the 15th, so this position had to be taken.

The advance of the Division commenced just after dark on the 8th. The men were still wet, and the mud was bad. At 3 a.m. on the 9th the Battalion had reached its allotted position on the left of the 39th Brigade, which was in two ranks in line at 50 yards distance, the order from right to left being Worcesters, R. Warwicks, N. Staffords ; and the men lay down to rest, with bombers and wire cutters out in front. There was to be no barrage, no supporting fire—just cold steel. There was nothing to prevent the Turks firing as long as they wished to do so. They were under good cover and subject to no fire themselves, while our attack was made with the bayonet only.

It was a bitterly cold night, and especially so to hungry, tired, and wet troops. The hours passed slowly without incident. At last a movement! At 4.20 a.m. the assaulting lines moved forward. A challenge rang out, followed by a flight of flares, and all was discovered. An absolute inferno of fire swept the level plain. As soon as the first streak of dawn appeared units of the whole division were seen to be rather mixed up; all the officers were plainly visible right out in front cheering their men on, helmet in hand, as if at a hunt at home. The attack, however, had failed. Daylight disclosed the Turkish trenches to be full of men with further troops lying behind the paradoss. A very accurate and intense fire was poured in on the attacking troops, and it seemed impossible for anyone to live through it. Men dug small places for cover just where they lay, and so they remained throughout a scorching day—the quick with the dead. A few sought cover from view, though not from fire, in a small patch of corn, while others got into a shallow observation trench of the 7th Division. As darkness fell a fierce storm burst, and the cries of the wounded were drowned in the roll of thunder and the deluge of waters. The vivid and continuous lightning made the work of the stretcher parties well nigh impossible, as the enemy fired at everything moving. The survivors of the Battalion remained out until 11 p.m. on the 9th, when they were relieved and, assembling behind the 7th Division's old line of trenches, marched back to Fallahieh, where they remained from the 10th to the 15th. There were no tents, and rest and sleep were impossible, owing to continuous storms and the flooded nature of the ground.

Our losses during this fortnight were the heaviest we ever suffered in Mesopotamia. Among the officers, Capt. R. L. Armes, Capt. E. A. Hart, and Lieut. Duguid were killed ; Major W. A. S. Edwards and Capt. and Adjut. J. Y. Robinson, M.C., were wounded and afterwards died of wounds ; and Lieut.-Col. G. E. Leman, 2nd Lieuts. J. A. Marks, H. Ogier, G. C. English, J. A. Unwin, R. Burton, C. H. Turkington, W. L. Cowley, H. D. G. Holt, P. F. C. Pendock, R. G. Thomson, M.C., J. P. Sill, R. F. Gridley, B. H. Sparrow, J. E. Clark, C. C. B. Ward and C. Lewis were wounded.

A hundred men were killed or died of wounds, and over 300 were wounded.

During the night of 15-16th the Battalion, with the rest of the Brigade, moved to the right bank of the river, marching up stream to Masons Mounds, and then, in the late afternoon of the 16th, relieved a Battalion of the 3rd Division. The position consisted of picquet posts with support and reserve lines in rear opposite the northern front of Beit Aiesa, held by the Turkish Army. The ground was wet and marshy. At dawn on the 17th, Lieut. Cargin and two men were wounded. A successful attack was carried out by the 3rd (Lahore) Division the next day, and in the evening the 13th Division was ordered to relieve them. The North Staffords were to relieve a Battalion of the 7th Indian Brigade. Late in the afternoon, while the company commanders were making a reconnaissance of the trenches, the Turks made a very violent counter-attack with two divisions, and retook more than half the ground which had been previously won. The reconnoitring officers got back without mishap.

At 3 a.m. on the 18th "A" and "B" Companies went into the captured Turkish trenches. It was ascertained by previous reconnaissance that only a small portion was occupied by the Turks after the counter-attack. Battalion Headquarters and "C" and "D" Companies remained in support at the Twin Pimples, which were violently bombarded in the evening.

At dawn on the 19th our artillery and all available machine-guns opened fire on the enemy, and a frontal attack was executed by the whole of the 39th Brigade, the 4th Battalion—7th Gloucesters—having arrived the previous evening. The attack was carried out under most exceptional conditions, and was doomed to failure from the start. The North Staffords on the left were actually in bombing touch with the Turks on their left, and were exposed to the full force of the hostile fire from the front, from the left flank at about 200 yards range, and even from the rear at point blank range.

Capt. Dingley was killed whilst most gallantly leading "A" and "B" Companies; 2nd Lieut. Atkins, who was Acting Adjutant, was wounded, 33 men were killed or died of wounds, and 65 were wounded. "A" and "B" Companies were reinforced by the two remaining companies in their precarious hold on the short length of trench captured, and immediately began bombing along the trench to extend their hold.

The story of the next four days—20th to 23rd—was one of continuous fighting, building up the trench, getting away the wounded at night and advancing the bomb-head step by step by means of incessant bombing. The trench was only some 2 feet deep, and, from our point of view had a small parapet but no parapet in front, whilst it was under close and accurate fire of Turkish

snipers to our front and on our left flank. There was no pause or rest for anyone ; those who were not bombing forward were feverishly working at the consolidation and improvement of the trench as it was won step by step.

After the first two nights' continuous bombing nearly 200 yards of trench had been gained and consolidated, but at a heavy price. The bombing officer had been wounded, the bombing sergeant was killed, and some of the men had been bombing continuously for 31 hours, of whom Ptes. Phillips and Meyer were subsequently awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal. It was decided, therefore, to relieve Col. Andrus and 2nd Lieut. Goode, the only other officer left in the fighting line, from the fighting in the actual bomb-head on the night 21st-22nd by Col. Fairlie, a fresh bombing officer (Lieut. Garrard), and bombers from the 38th Brigade ; there was no relief, however, for the bayonet men, the carriers and the consolidating party.

At dawn on the 22nd, Col. Fairlie, Lieut. Garrard, and the bombing sergeant were all killed after having done very fine work, and the whole trench was again entrusted to Col. Andrus and the North Staffords. Owing to all the officers having become casualties Company Sergt.-Major Drake and Company Sergt.-Major Riley were now acting as adjutant and in command of the consolidating parties respectively, and their assistance was invaluable. Corpl Alexander received the Distinguished Conduct Medal for conspicuous gallantry in going out on three successive nights to bring in wounded men. On the 23rd the Battalion was finally relieved and went back into reserve trenches for a much-needed rest until the end of the month.

Such is the story of the very gallant effort to relieve General Townshend in Kut-el-Amara, where he was forced to capitulate on April 29th after a memorable siege of nearly 5 months.

The early days of May found the Battalion back in the trenches, and some very welcome reinforcements arrived. The middle of the month showed a marked rise in temperature, and cases of heat stroke occurred. On the 19th a reconnaissance was carried out. It was extremely hot, and the men were heavily laden with 220 rounds of ammunition per man, tools, and machine-guns, and they suffered considerably from the heat, 20 men being overcome. On 23rd May the Battalion marched back to Abu Roman, where tents were very welcome, the thermometer registering 110° in the shade, and a bathe in the river was very acceptable; clothes also could be washed at last.

From 10th to 26th June a line of redoubts and strong points near Sinn Atbar was held, but the weather was now far too hot for active operations, and the end of June found the Battalion in camp at Gomorrah, on the banks of the Tigris. The months of July, August, and September were spent holding a block-house line guarding the road and light railway from Sheikh Saad to Twin Canals. On 11th July, Lieut.-Col. Andrus was appointed to command the 39th Infantry Brigade with the temporary rank of Brigadier-General, and Lieut.-Col. G. E. Leman assumed command of the Battalion. These changes were caused by the promotion of Sir Stanley Maude to command a corps, and of Brig.-Gen. W. de S. Cayley to command the 13th Division.

## CHAPTER IV

### TRAINING AT AMARA

IN the early days of August the Arabs made occasional raids on the blockhouse line, but otherwise there was no excitement. The summer was very hot and the tentage provided, which was very thin, was made more sunproof by adding strips of matting. The Shamal, a strong north-west wind with clouds of dust, made things very unpleasant at times. The temperature varied round about 120° in the shade, and men were forbidden to leave their tents between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.

The 13th Division which had sailed from Egypt in so fine a state of training in February was now a mere skeleton of its former strength, and the problem of supply on the long line of communication was a difficult one. So orders were issued for all its units to proceed down river to Amara, where they would be made up to strength with reinforcements, and where the Division could train to become again an effective unit for the next offensive.

The awful heat of the summer was waning in October when the Battalion embarked at Sheik Saad and sailed down to Amara, where they arrived on the 8th. They then moved into the Divisional camp at Abu Shitaib, and were joined by a draft of six officers and over 300

men, including a party of 32 Regular soldiers from the 2nd Battalion North Stafford Regiment in India.

The Battalion remained at Amara until November 29th a period of seven weeks, which was spent in most vigorous training. The weather had cooled down, so that it was possible to be about during the day, except between the hours of 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. The nights were also cooler, so that one could enjoy a sound sleep when there were no sand-flies about !

Parades were held from 5 a.m. to 7 a.m., and from 8.30 to 10.30, with an hour in the evening. In the early part of the training two days were set aside in each week—the one for a Battalion field day, the other for Brigade training. In the latter weeks, however, most of the time was spent on Brigade and Divisional work, both by night and by day. Those of us who were with the Battalion in November, 1916, witnessed a unique sight in the Divisional manoeuvres, for every unit was at full war strength, all 12 battalions being able to turn out 1000 strong. This was due to the large drafts which had arrived to make good the heavy summer wastage.

The country at Amara was very suitable for a camp and for manoeuvres. Abu Shitaib was situated just above the town, so that we were free from the odorous crowds of town Arabs. The country between the river and the Pusht-i-Kuh mountains was as flat as a pancake, being in most places formed of dry mud. A little vegetation grew near the river, in the form of camel thorn, and a species of cactus known as Nebuchadnezzar's Grass. The latter was eaten as a vegetable in the Officers' Mess. It is said that the Great King fed on it when he was turned out as a beast into the fields !

Our Brigade lines in the north-west corner of the camp were out of the traffic route, so that we escaped from dust, except when storms were blowing. These occurred fairly frequently. Mosquitoes had all gone by November, but sand flies were still a nuisance, though not as vicious as they had been at Sodom and Gomorrah.

Most of the tents were of the double-fly "bell" type, and were very hot in the day time. There were a few E.P. (European pattern) tents for offices, messes, stores, and hospital. We dug a big underground meat safe to keep food stores in, and tanks were also constructed for storing drinking water.

The whole camp was surrounded by a thick barbed-wire fence and "apron," with picquet posts sunk in at intervals.

The picquet posts were manned at night to prevent surprise from hostile Arabs, and to fire on any native attempting to get through the wire. In spite of these precautions, however, several thieves did get in, though not in our area. In one part of the camp they cleaned out an officer's tent, leaving only one pair of socks! A few rifles and revolvers were also stolen. These thieves were Marsh Arabs who lived round about Amara, and have always been famed as the most clever and unscrupulous thieves in Mesopotamia. They never hesitated to stab or shoot anybody who caught them in their work, and several officers and men unfortunately lost their lives in this way.

In our Battalion a small pit was dug in the centre of each tent, and into these the rifles were put at night, with the bolts removed. Five or six men slept close together across the top of the hole.

Food supplies at Amara were good. This was due to

General Maude's splendid re-organisation, and the fact that we were nearer our base than we had been up at the front. For the first time we ate a full ration, and this was supplemented by eggs, oranges, and fish bought from the local Arabs. Several batches of comforts were received from India and England, generally in the form of the ever-welcome cigarettes.

The morale of the men reached a magnificent height during our training. Apart from the training itself, the regular mails, the recreations, the food, the rest and the organisation all helped to keep us cheerful. General Maude himself was frequently with us, and the knowledge that he was at the head of affairs gave us the feeling that all was right with the world. So we looked forward to the moment when we should redeem the sad past of our Mesopotamian campaign, and be up and at the Turk, showing him that on equal ground he could not stand up to the British soldier !

About a week after we had arrived at Amara, Lieut.-Col. G. E. Leman, our Commanding Officer, was taken ill with paratyphoid. He was in hospital at Amara for a while, but eventually was invalided to India. Lieut.-Col. J. W. Ley, of the 2nd Battalion, who had been out in Mesopotamia for some time commanding the Devons, and latterly the Cheshires, came over and took command in Lieut.Col. Leman's place.

Our stay at Amara was marked by several episodes of great interest. On Monday, October 23rd, General Sir Charles Munro, who was visiting Mesopotamia en route to take up the duties of Commander-in-Chief in India, held a levee of all the officers of the Division. After presentations, he addressed us, and hinted at the work to come, wishing us all the best of luck.

The first week in November the Divisional sports were held. We were represented in several events, but only succeeded in the 120 yards open, where Emery came in second.

On Sunday, November 5th, a Divisional parade was held for the presentation of V.C.'s by Lieut.-General Sir Stanley Maude. The parade was held at 6 a.m., just as the sun was rising. The air was so still that the whole Division was drilled by one word of command, an instance I believe without previous record, in Mesopotamia at any rate. After the presentation, General Maude made a stirring speech, after which he received three rousing cheers, and the Division marched past in column of fours, under Major-General Sir W. de S. Cayley.

On the evenings of the 6th, 7th and 8th November, the Divisional boxing tournament was held. In this again we were represented by Lce.-Corpl. Hall, who was unfortunately knocked out in the first round of his weight. The tournament was managed by Lieut.-Col. J. W. Ley, our C.O., himself the ex-amateur champion of the (Army) officers' middle-weights. On Saturday the 11th the Mesopotamian "Derby" was run, and on the 12th the Division was inspected by the Divisional Commander.

When the 13th Division was in Egypt in the early part of 1916, a football tournament had been commenced for the "Maude Trophy." Only a few rounds were played before fighting commenced again, and this tournament was now revived and finished. On October 14th the ball was kicked off in a match against the 8th Cheshires. This proved to be an easy victory for us—6—1. Several friendlies were subsequently played, in all of which the men from North Staffordshire kept up

their reputation. On November 14th we met the 7th Gloucesters in the semi-final. The first game was a draw, two all, but the re-play the following day resulted in victory for us, two goals to nil. On this occasion the Band of the 119th Infantry played selections during the interval.

On Friday the 24th we played the final against the King's Own Royal Lanc. Regiment. General Cayley and his Staff and many nursing sisters and visitors from Amara were entertained to tea at the match, while the Band again played both before the match and during the interval.

The game proved to be one of the most exciting ever witnessed. Up to within five minutes of "time" the scores were even, and the thousands of spectators were surging with excitement. Just before the whistle blew, however, a fine shot from Aylett put us one up, and the game ended in a victory for us, 3—2. The winning team was as follows :—

Sergt. Talbot, goal ; Banks and Thompson, backs ; Sergt. Copestake, Lce.-Corpl. Reeves, and Colclough, half-backs ; Corpl. Oakes, Lce.-Sergt. Davies, Pte. Aylett, Corpl. Emery, and Pte. Regan, forwards.

In addition to the excitement of the Battalion matches, there were inter-Company games, Officers' hockey matches, Battalion sports, swimming matches in the Tigris (where our Medical Officer, Capt. A. J. Ireland, M.C., R.A.M.C., distinguished himself), and sing-songs. Thus our minds were, for a period, thoroughly rested from the war, and our bodies were brought up to a great pitch of fitness. The end of November found us "bristling with the offensive spirit"—to quote the words of our C.-in-C.

At the end of November orders were received for a move. The Division was to proceed to the front by route march, and take part in a forthcoming offensive. Everything was prepared accordingly; clothing and arms were overhauled; kits were cut down, and unnecessary stores and apparel were dumped at Amara.

So the early hours of November 29th found us on trek once more, setting out to complete another phase of the Great Adventure.

## CHAPTER V

### THE RECAPTURE OF KUT-EL-AMARA

THE Division proceeded up country from Amara, on the Tigris, in several echelons, one of which went by boat. The 7th North Staffords and the 9th Worcesters were detailed as escort to No. 2 composite echelon, under the command of Brigadier-General T. A. Andrus, C.M.G., and consisting of Divisional Artillery, Ammunition Column, Waggon Lines, Machine-Gun Company, Veterinary Section, Field Ambulance, and 39th Brigade Headquarters.

The column set out on November 29th (1916), and reached Twin Canals (east of Kut-el-Amara) on December 8th, having completed the march in 10 days. The distance covered was about 105 miles, over a very indifferent track, which was deep in sand and dust nearly the whole way. A start was generally made about 7 a.m., and we got into bivouac about an hour or so after mid-day. The weather was very hot and cloudless until the day we marched into Sheikh Saad, when a heavy shower warned us of the approach of winter rain. Very few casualties were sustained on the march, which was due to the magnificent fitness of all ranks. The two Battalions of Infantry took the duties of rearguard and advanced guard turn and turn about. No hostile Arabs were encountered, and the march was completed without any untoward incident.

On the evening of the 7th of December, at Sheikh Saad, a Regimental dinner was held in the Battalion Head-quarter Mess. Those present were Brig.-Gen. T. A. Andrus, C.M.G. (1st North Staffords), Commanding 39th Infantry Brigade; Lieut.-Col. J. W. Ley, D.S.O. (2nd North Staffords), Commanding 7th North Staffords (afterwards died in Persia, 1918); Major A. S. Weldon (2nd North Staffords), 1st-4th Dorsets (died of wounds, 1917); Capt. A. Punchard (2nd North Staffords), Adjutant 7th Battalion (killed in action, 1917); Capt. (afterwards Major) B. A. J. Havelock (2nd North Staffords), then G.S.O. III., Line of Communications, Sheikh Saad (killed in action, Baku, 1918); Capt. and Quartermaster F. Baker, M.C. (1st and 2nd Battalions); Capt. A. E. Bankhead Browne (4th North Staffords), 7th Battalion; Major W. C. Ratcliffe, 7th Battalion; Capt. A. J. Ireland, M.C. (Medical Officer); and 2nd Lieut. L. R. Missen (Assistant Adjutant), 7th Battalion.

The march to Twin Canals from Sheikh Saad was a singularly wet affair. As the column passed Sodom station, about 8 a.m., a heavy downpour commenced. Within a short time everybody was soaked through; and the track, which had hitherto been nearly two feet deep in light powdery dust and sand, became a perfect morass.

It was six hours later when the column completed the 12 mile march, and waited for the transport to arrive with the tents. When these were ready for pitching, it was found that the whole country was under several inches of water. The next day, however, was hot and sunny, and we soon dried our wet clothing and cleared up the camp.

We spent three days at Twin Canals, and dumped all clothing and equipment which we could dispense

with. Rumours began to circulate of some wonderful manœuvres in which we were to march with an irreducible minimum of baggage for many miles, and to find ourselves behind the Turks. All unfit men and all surplus to the war strength were sent to a reinforcement camp.

On the 11th the C.O. and Adjutant attended a conference and reconnaissance, and on the 12th orders arrived to march at sunset to Sinn Abtar where the Division was concentrating for the operations. We duly arrived at our position at midnight, and bivouacked beneath the stars. We saw no more tents for the next six months.

The following morning the Operation Orders were received, and at a conference of the Battalion officers the Colonel explained the scheme.

The Turks were holding Kut with the following defences: Sannaiyat, on the left bank of the Tigris, which did not concern us at all. On the right bank, the bend in the river immediately east of Kut, known as the Mohamed Abdul Hassan bend, was strongly entrenched and held. This line continued in a south-westerly direction, and ended on the bank of the Hai river. This position, where the Hai joins the Tigris, was very strongly held, and there was a bridge of boats across the Hai. The line then ran south down the Hai which was held by strong posts with garrisons at Bessouia and Atab. On the west bank of the Hai, and in the bend on the west side of Kut, known as the Dahra bend, a very strong and complicated trench system had been constructed, especially round the Liquorice factory opposite Kut. On the west side of the Dahra bend there was another bridge of boats over to Shumran. South of Shumran a further trench system had been dug to prevent

any movement up the right bank of the Tigris. British troops held a line from Magasis, on the Tigris, through Sinn Banks and Dujailah, southwards to the Hai, and throughout the summer had carefully watched all Turkish movements. Our aeroplanes had also been busy with photographic work, and the survey and map section were able to furnish us with very accurate trench maps.

The general idea now was to attack the Turk along the whole front of the east and west banks of the Hai and if possible drive the enemy all away from the right bank of the Tigris. A crossing would then be forced west of the Dahra bend, and this having been achieved, Kut and Sannaiyat must fall.

The immediate objective was to get in as close as possible to the enemy, and then gain possession of his line in sections, commencing on our right at Mahomed Abdul Hassan.

The Turkish forces defending Kut consisted of the 51st and 52nd Divisions, with various irregulars and cavalry, under General Khalil Pasha. The troops to operate against Kut on the right bank of the Tigris consisted of the 13th (British) and 14th (Indian) Divisions, under Lieut.-Gen. W. R. Marshall, assisted by a mixed cavalry division.

Operations commenced on the night of 13th-14th December. The Division concentrated again at a mosque in front of the line, known as Imam-al-Mansur. It was a bitterly cold night, and sleep was impossible in the open. At 2 a.m. the Division commenced to move forward on compass bearings, guided by Staff Officers. The 38th Brigade was on the right, our Brigade (the 39th) in the centre, and the 40th Brigade on the left. Progress was

very slow until dawn. All the animals were silent that night, and hardly a sound could be heard except a faint rumble of gun wheels. At 5.30 a.m. a halt was made. No enemy patrols had so far been encountered. The 40th Brigade was now detached and headed for Atab, which place they seized and held at sunrise, while a bridge was built over the Hai. Meanwhile, the 39th and 38th Brigades, having cleared the area north of Atab, wheeled and commenced to advance up the east bank of the river Hai. The North Staffords were on the extreme left, next to the river. The Turk was taken altogether by surprise, and very little opposition was encountered during the morning. Several Turkish posts were captured after a short resistance. Our aeroplanes reported guns and troops being hurried over the bridges from Shumran and Dahra to the front line. At the same time the Turks opened up with their 5.9's. About mid-day a position was reached, and consolidation commenced; but as a further advance was possible, we pushed on again just before sunset. Heavier opposition was now met, and we began to have casualties, particularly from snipers hidden on the river bank. Orders were received to dig in for the night and push on again next morning. This appeared to be so easy that one officer exclaimed: "Give me an unpaid lance-corporal and two men, and I will be in Kut in 24 hours." This officer unfortunately did not have an opportunity of carrying out his idea!

Patrols during the night discovered the enemy's front line to be heavily wired, and strongly held.

On the morning of the 15th a further advance was made to within 1000 yards of the enemy; but his line was found to be so strong that immediate assault,

without due artillery preparation, was out of the question. The position was accordingly consolidated, and at night work was carried on wiring and patrolling.

On the 16th, the 14th Division pressed further forward on our right in preparation for an assault on Mohamed Abdul Hassan. Casualties were experienced on our left, where "D" Company were holding the river bank, three men being killed, and Capt. E. G. Shepherd and 38 men were wounded.

On the night of the 16th-17th the 39th Brigade was withdrawn from the line on the east bank of the Hai, where the 38th Brigade relieved us, and crossing the river at Ummas-Saad ford, pushed forward up the west bank to a position known as Kala-Haji Fahan, as far forward as the 38th Brigade on the opposite bank of the river. The line was then extended westwards, with the Worcesters on the right, the North Staffords on the left, and the Royal Warwicks echeloned to the left rear. This night operation was a very "ticklish" one, as ground which had not hitherto been covered had to be crossed in pitchy blackness on compass bearings only. Several snipers' nests were run into, which livened things up very considerably. The successful accomplishment of the task reflected great credit on all ranks. Work was carried on steadily by night in improving the line, and patrols were active in exploring the enemy's lines and works.

From now until the 30th, when the North Staffords moved into the reserve position, work was continued nightly on the line, and great efforts were made to overcome enemy snipers. The lairs were marked down by day and raided by night, very often with success. Meanwhile, on the left bank of the Hai, sapping had

commenced in the 38th and 40th Brigade sectors, while the 14th Division was almost ready for its final assault.

Christmas Day passed quietly on all fronts. We did not fare badly, for there were extra rations and bread, plum pudding, and cigarettes from the ladies of Ceylon and other Comforts Funds, with a little champagne for the officers' mess from Lord Curzon.

On the 29th, the 40th Brigade made a rapid march into the "blue," and attempted to cross the Tigris upstream of Kut. Heavy opposition was met with, however, and the attempt failed; but this served to confirm the Turkish belief that any such attempt was doomed to failure, and caused them later on to relax their watch on the banks.

About this time the Firefly gunboat, which the Turks captured in the retreat from Ctesiphon, commenced her afternoon bombardments. About four p.m. daily she came downstream until within range of our sixty pounders, and bombarded our front line with naval krumps. About a month later a direct hit from one of our sixty pounders put her out of action. We sustained a few casualties from shell and sniper fire.

About this time there was a succession of short but violent storms, and the last days of December passed in a continual downpour. The mud was indescribable, and the ration party did valiant work, carrying rations very often ten miles to the front line.

The troops in the front line also suffered great hardships. Since the 12th they had not had their clothes off, nor seen any shelter at all, and the nights were so bitterly cold that one blanket was quite inadequate. It was impossible to build dug-outs, as there was no roofing material in the whole of Mesopotamia. What little

wood there was had to be used for fuel. The arrival of some braziers the first week in January was very welcome. The Christmas mail from England also arrived to cheer us.

On the 7th of January, 1917, the North Staffords moved back into the front line on the left of the Worcesters. Orders were now received for preparations for a final assault to be made on the right bank of the Hai. The 3rd and 14th Divisions accounted for all the Turks in the Mohamed Abdul Hassan bend after a very fierce fight lasting two days. The 14th was then withdrawn and sent up in reserve to the 13th Division. The 38th and 40th Brigades had sapped forward, and were almost ready for their final assault. The sixty pounders had smashed up the bridge over the mouth of the Hai, so that the Turks in the Hai salient were more or less isolated. They got their food and ammunition across the river from Kut by barge, and several times these barges were sunk by direct hits from our guns.

On the night of the 11th-12th, the North Staffords advanced between 400 and 500 yards, and commenced digging in on a new line. Unfortunately there was a bright moon, and when the Turks discovered the movement, they put down a heavy barrage, and attacked, attempting to surround and wipe out "C" and "D" Companies on the right. The fight continued the greater part of the night, and our losses were heavy, but the enemy was driven off. There were three officer casualties, 2nd Lieut. Naismith being killed, and Capt. H. M. Robinson and Lieut. Murphy being wounded, while amongst the men there were 20 killed and between 30 and 40 wounded.

The following night, 12th-13th, a further advance was made, and the final jumping-off position for the assault was reached. At dawn, on the 15th, the Commanding Officer, Lieut.-Col. J. W. Ley, was wounded. Lieut.-Col. Fleming, of the Royal Warwicks, joined the Brigade just now, and assumed command of the North Staffords. By the 23rd all was ready for the assault, and orders were issued for it to take place at 10 a.m. on the 25th. It was known that the Turks had massed troops opposite to us and a very stubborn fight was expected.

The 25th of January was a cold, bright, sunny day. At 9.15 a.m. the artillery put down their final bombardment, and at 9.45 the assault was delivered, with the North Staffords on the left and the Worcesters on the right. The order of Companies from the left was "A," "B," "C," with "D" in reserve. Going in with the bayonet, the enemy first line was soon cleared, and consolidation commenced. Intense machine-gun fire on the left flank from skilfully concealed positions caused "A" Company heavy casualties. At 11 a.m. the Turks counter-attacked fiercely, and the right of the line gave, while the centre was penetrated by the Turks. The position was critical, but the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, led by Lieut.-Col. Henderson (North Staffordshire Regiment), fiercely counter-attacked the Turks, and driving them back, re-established the line. Lieut.-Col. Henderson was wounded early in the charge, but led his men on until wounded several more times. He gave instructions and cheered his men on to the last, until he died. He was afterwards awarded the V.C.

The Turks now commenced heavy bombing. Only one officer, of the North Staffords, 2nd Lieut. McDowell, who was awarded the Military Cross, remained alive.

Fighting was continuous until 3 p.m., when the Turks again made a massed counter-attack and penetrated the line. It became clear that the position was untenable, and the survivors were ordered to retire. A further attack by the Turks on our own line was driven off, and at midnight the 35th Brigade relieved the 39th, which moved into reserve. Our losses were heavy, and included eight officers and 300 men. 2nd Lieuts. J. R. Samuel, R. F. H. Bradley, L. M. Thomson, and N. Green were killed, while 2nd Lieut. J. Hird died of wounds, and Lieut.-Col. Fleming, Capt. B. E. Nicolls, 2nd Lieut. J. L. Fenton, 2nd Lieut. R. McDowell were wounded.

On the 26th, at 10.30 a.m., the 35th Brigade attacked the same Turkish position, and very soon captured the Turks' second, third and fourth lines, the backbone of his resistance having been broken the previous day.

During the night of the 25th-26th, there were several patrol encounters. The Turks came out and looted our wounded and dead. Several of the wounded who offered resistance were bayoneted, a few of whom lived to tell the tale. Others were stripped naked, and left to freeze in the bitter cold night until found by our stretcher parties. The Turks removed all clothing, boots, and equipment which they could lay their hands on, but left ammunition and bombs. When the Turkish position was searched after having been taken by the 35th Brigade on the 26th, nearly a thousand Turkish dead were counted, thus showing the fierceness of the fight. The Battalion remained in reserve until the night of the 2nd-3rd February, and was now commanded by Major W. C. Ratcliffe.

The 14th Division now took over the works on the right bank of the Hai, while the 13th Division moved out

to the left, with a view to closing up the Dahra bend. On the night of the 2nd and 3rd February the Battalion moved by night march and dug in in an advanced position. Between the 3rd and the 14th, by a succession of night advances, the Turks were gradually pushed in until only a small gap remained, to the S.E. of Shumran. Our losses were light during this period. The Battalion was very low in strength, but was replenished by a small draft on the 11th. On the 15th, "C" Company and a Company of the Worcesters effectively closed the gap, and the Turks in the Dahra bend were cut off. The 39th Brigade then held a line running south from Shumran, with the North Staffords on the right, on the river bank.

Meanwhile, the other two Brigades of the 13th Division and the 14th Division assaulted the enemy positions and eventually captured or killed all the Turks in the Dahra bend, including two or three Generals, and over 2000 prisoners. There was some particularly fierce fighting in the Liquorice Factory. The Turkish bridge in the Dahra bend had previously been moved by the Turks to the west side of Shumran, and this was now hit and destroyed by the 60 pounders. The Turks opposite the 39th Brigade were then cut off from Kut. Two battalions the Gloucesters and Warwicks, advanced accordingly and cleared the area west of Shumran to the place where the bridge had been.

The time was now considered to be ripe for an attempted crossing, and the night was fixed for the 21st-22nd, but heavy rains delayed preparations, and it was postponed to the 22nd-23rd.

The crossing of the river Tigris at Shumran will always take a first place in histories of the Great War. In the

face of superior opposition, a force was ferried over a very rapid river, 400 yards wide, and later a pontoon bridge was built, and the enemy was driven from his lines at the point of the bayonet.

The troops detailed to force the crossing were the 14th Division, the Norfolk Regiment and the Gurkhas being chosen to make the first attempt. The 13th Division was in reserve, with our Brigade in position to cover the bridge-building. The North Staffords, being on the actual river bank, had an excellent view of the operations. During the night of the 22nd-23rd, the bridging train and troops of the 14th Division moved to the appointed place in such silence that the enemy on the opposite bank had no intimation of local movement. But downstream, opposite Kut, loads of wood were dumped during the night, and so much noise was made that the Turks were deceived, and thinking an attempt was being made to cross, hastily rushed their reserve troops there to repel it.

The night passed quietly at Shumran, and at dawn a few dark figures could be seen launching a pontoon at the water's edge. Another—and another! Their crews quickly embarked, and with muffled oars they commenced to row and disappeared in the slight mist on the broad surface of the river.

Suddenly a challenge and a rifle shot rang out, and then a burst of bombs, followed by absolute pandemonium. The Gurkhas were seen and fired at just as they arrived at the opposite bank, but after vigorous bombing they managed to land and seize some ground. A whole fleet of pontoons now put across and the landing was established.

As the sun rose our guns opened on the enemy and he in turn opened on the river. The water raged like a

cauldron round the boats as 5.9's crashed hither and thither, sending up great cascades of spray. The air became thick with shrapnel, and the droning fire of machine-guns covering the crossing was continuous.

Meanwhile the Engineers were at work. Under this fire pontoon after pontoon was launched, and the bridge rapidly took form. Several mines were caught floating down, thrown in higher up by the Turks.

In spite of many hits the bridge was completed about 3 p.m. (in eight hours), the Infantry rushed across, and deploying on the opposite bank, advanced and drove the Turks back at the point of the bayonet, taking many prisoners, amongst whom were some Germans. By nightfall we had advanced half way up the Shumran peninsula, and the ground was consolidated.

The troops of the 14th Division, which were rowed over at dawn, were in pontoons which were manned by volunteers from the 13th Division. Our Battalion contributed the allotted number of four per Company ; needless to say, the whole Battalion had volunteered for the work.

Fighting continued during the night ; and at sunrise on the 24th the attack was again pressed forward. Progress was made throughout the day by the 14th Division and the Cavalry Division, both of which had crossed the river. By nightfall a line had been reached running across the northern end of the Shumran peninsula.

In the meantime the 7th Division, at Sannaiyat on the 22nd, had attacked the Turkish positions and captured the first two trench systems, but were forced before nightfall to abandon them in face of fierce and frantic counter-attacks from the Turks, who were now beginning to realise the seriousness of their position.

On the morning of the 23rd, however, while fierce fighting was in progress at Shumran, they again attacked, and by noon had recaptured the Turks' first two systems. In the afternoon the third and fourth lines were attacked and carried at the point of the bayonet, and Sannaiyat had virtually fallen.

On the 24th splendid progress was made, and the question now was whether the British troops on Shumran would be able to cut off the retreat of the enemy from Sannaiyat and Kut. At 6 p.m. on the 24th, the 13th Division moved over the bridge and bivouacked in the north-west part of Shumran at a point known as K 64. The Turks kept up a brisk fire until just before dawn, when patrols reported him to be evacuating the positions north of Shumran. The 13th Division was ordered to pursue the enemy, the 38th Brigade leading. At dawn we had a hurried meal of tea and biscuit, and then assembled at the starting point on the road to Baghdad.

As we were watching the advanced guard moving out on to the desert a fleet of monitors and gunboats passed line ahead up the river to move with the left flank of the advanced troops. Our aeroplanes reported the enemy to be retreating a few miles up the road.

Looking back, we saw the British flag floating over Kut in the morning sun.

So our fortunes had been retrieved, the enemy was on the run, and it was with light hearts that we swung along the road towards the far-famed city of the Caliphs.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE CAPTURE OF BAGHDAD

ON every hand there were signs of the Turks' precipitate retreat, corpses, wounded stragglers, guns, waggons, stores and ammunition. About 10 a.m. the monitors opened fire on the enemy rearguard which was reported to be taking up an entrenched position several miles ahead. The Turks replied with accurate fire, as they had marked down the ranges on the river.

Just after mid-day on the 25th February the advanced guard of the 38th Brigade came into action with the enemy, and the 38th Brigade went straight in and attacked, but were held up, as the Turkish front line overlapped their skirmishing front.

The 39th Brigade were ordered to move up on the right to co-operate, while the Cavalry Division covered the extreme right. The 39th Brigade marched on and moved up in artillery formation to the assigned position, completing a march of 14 miles since sunrise. The two Brigades together then assaulted the enemy's front line, and captured it with small loss, the enemy retiring a thousand yards to a previously prepared trench system.

Orders were now given for this to be attacked, but by some misunderstanding the Brigade on our left did not advance with us, but only gave covering fire.

The 39th Brigade went over the top and attacked, the North Staffords being on the left. After an advance

of 1000 yards over flat, open desert, under a hail of fire, the enemy trenches were carried at the point of the bayonet.

The Turks counter-attacked at once, and fierce hand-to-hand fighting took place. "D" and "C" Companies on the left suffered very heavily from enfilade fire. "B" Company pushed very far in advance into the Turkish line and had heavy casualties, while "A" Company escaped with least damage. The Turks were routed, however, and suffered severely everywhere. Nearly 200 prisoners were taken by the North Staffords, while the total for the Brigade was over 400. The booty in machine-guns, rifles, bombs, ammunition, and stores was very large.

Our casualties were very heavy, six officers and about 200 men. Act.-Capt. B. E. Atkins, 2nd Lieut. R. McDowell, 2nd Lieut. J. C. Marks, 2nd Lieut. Myers were killed, while Major W. C. Ratcliffe, 2nd Lieut. H. E. Rose were wounded. At dusk Lieut.-Col. J. W. Ley, D.S.O., arrived at Battalion Headquarters and took command.

The dead were buried at dawn the next morning, and the wounded were safely evacuated.

About 8 a.m. on the 26th the advance was continued. The day was a very trying one. The ground we passed over was rough and broken, and in most places was inches deep in powdery dust. The 40th Brigade was advanced guard, while the 39th formed part of the main body. We were suffering from lack of water, which we had not seen for 48 hours, and were very glad when Bhagailah was reached and we went into bivouac.

On Tuesday, 27th February, the pursuit was resumed. It was a trying time for us and for the Turk, for we both

had to struggle through a blinding dust storm, which blew all day. His rearguard was caught, however, and engaged by our advanced troops, who again inflicted heavy losses. We marched 12 miles and again bivouacked.

The 28th was a day of rest for the Infantry, as there was no food for us. The advance had been so rapid that the ration boats had been unable to cope with it. Having been on half-rations of bully and biscuit for two days, we were glad when a flock of sheep was rounded up in the afternoon, and a small fresh meat issue was made.

On Thursday, March 1st, we marched 14 miles to Umm-at-Tubul, passing abandoned waggons, guns, trench mortars, ammunition, and stores. The marching was easier, but it was excessively cold at night, as there were several degrees of frost, against which one blanket was not much protection.

On the 2nd we marched eleven miles to Azizieh, and there we were told we were to rest, as the War Office or Government at home had not yet given permission for us to go on to Baghdad.

General Maude landed from his steamer, and spent some time ashore talking to the troops. He also held a parade on the river bank for the presentation of immediate awards. The first day at Azizieh we ate our iron ration, but the arrival of the ration boats saved the situation. The 7th Division arrived on the 4th, followed by the 3rd Division, both having marched up from Kut.

The necessary permission having arrived from England the advance was resumed on the 5th, the 13th Division leading. We marched seventeen miles to Zeur, where our cavalry and the advanced guard drove the enemy from his position. This day was another long

struggle. A hot south wind and a dust storm blew continually, while the track lay for miles through dense and prickly scrub.

The advance was carried on again on the 6th, when we marched 15 miles to Bustan. Our Brigade was the advanced guard, and on arrival at Bustan the Battalion was detailed for outpost duty. Our left was to rest on the famous Arch of Ctesiphon, and our line ran among the old trenches captured by General Townshend and his gallant force in 1915.

The next day we marched to a spot distant about five miles from the Dialah. Here the advanced guard was held up as the river was very strongly defended by the Turks.

The 14th Division crossed the Tigris at Bawi by a bridge constructed by the Engineers, and moved up to attack the Turks on the right bank, as they now held positions on both sides of the river.

The crossing of the Dialah had to be made in the light of a full moon, and was unfortunately not so successful as the Shumran attempt. We moved up in reserve, and our Brigade found all the volunteer rowers for the attempt. Two of these from the North Staffords were casualties, one being killed and one wounded. On the night of the 9th-10th, the crossing was successful, and the enemy was driven back by the 38th Brigade.

The Turk now took up his last strongly entrenched position in front of Baghdad, at Quaradah.

At dawn on the 10th, the 39th Brigade was ordered to attack this line. Slight delay was caused in crossing the pontoon bridge, which the Engineers built over the Dialah, but about 1 p.m., touch was established with the enemy. The Brigade went into action with the Royal

Warwicks on the left, Worcesters and North Staffords on the centre, and the Gloucesters on the right. Enemy outposts were driven in and good progress was made with slight casualties, until everything disappeared in a blinding dust-storm, which raged until 3 a.m. the next morning.

During the evening the Turks, in spite of the dust-storm, opened an intense artillery bombardment, accompanied by rapid machine-gun and rifle fire, with a view to expending all ammunition which would otherwise have to be abandoned at Baghdad.

About midnight strong patrols were sent forward, and parts of the enemy line were entered and held. Large dumps were found to be on fire in the direction of Baghdad, and the Division was ordered to assemble at dawn for the advance on the city.

The Division assembled on the road east of Quaradah just after dawn, and commenced the march to Baghdad. The troops on the other side of the river also commenced to move, and General Maude himself came up the river on the P51, preceded by a flotilla of gunboats and monitors. As we issued from a grove of palm trees, the rising sun was just touching the many mosques of Baghdad, whose blue-tiled domes and decorated minarets scintillated in the light. As we drew nearer every flat-roofed house in the city became crowded with people, and a vast concourse issued from the south and east gates, rushing down upon us with cigarettes and oranges which they threw to the troops with great clapping of hands and chanting of "Allah-il-Allah," meaning "There is no God but God."

The Division did not enter the city, but marched along the "bund" on the east side to a place known as Es

Salek, about two miles north of the Bab-el-Muadham. Here we bivouacked at 2 p.m.

The evening was spent in cleaning up, as all ranks were anxious to make a brave show when entering the city. The Turks had been driven northwards and other troops were pursuing them, our Division being given a rest for a few days. We needed it, too, for we looked rather dishevelled after the rapid and dusty pursuit of the Turkish Army.

On the morning of the 12th, greatly to our joy, we were chosen to be the first Battalion to march in and commence the searching of the city. Every available man paraded, just about 300, and at mid-day we marched away from our bivouac as smart a battalion as was anywhere to be found. We entered the city by the north gate—the Bab-el-Muadham—over which the Union Jack was floating in the breeze, and led by Lieut.-Col. J. W. Ley on his pony, Blue Boy, we marched down Khalil Pasha Street (now New Street) towards the centre of the town. Vast crowds of men, women, and children pressed upon us on all sides, clapping their hands in rhythm and chanting “ Allah-il-Allah ! ”

Arriving at the top of “ Bridge Street ” we turned to our left into the Jewish quarter, and commenced searching houses, each Company being allotted several streets.

The procedure was as follows : The street to be searched was cleared, and picquets were posted at intervals. The Company Commander and Platoon Officers with escorts went into the houses and searched them for arms, ammunition, hidden Turks, or loot. If all was correct a pass was given to the householder.

For two or three hours the work went well. Any who offered resistance to our entry had their doors burst

open, but they were few. Gifts of eggs, milk (full of cholera germs), and oranges were presented, and in most cases refused, for even eggs and oranges are dangerous to the inner man when not fresh.

Owing to a certain amount of sniping from the Kurdish quarter, "C" Company were detailed to commence searching there. There was now some excitement. The Kurds on the night of the 10th-12th, in the general confusion while the Turks were evacuating, had looted all the Christian shops.

The very first houses we entered were full of this loot, consisting of sugar, fruit, linens, clothing, arms and jewellery. When we commenced to remove it the crowd became violent and rushed our picquets, but were held. At one moment hand-to-hand fighting appeared to be imminent, but the arrival of reinforcements and the tactfulness of the men solved the difficulty. We arrested about 30 or 40 Kurds and Turks armed with long knives and revolvers, and we also unearthed 17 Turks who were hiding in cellars. Having completed the search of our allotted quarter, the Battalion formed up and marched off to the bivouac. On the way through the town there was a shower of rain, and many Bagdadis offered their umbrellas to the men, some of them even offering to walk along holding them up so that we should not get wet.

The following days at Baghdad we spent in cleaning up and training. There were passes for all ranks to visit the city, and we spent very interesting times wandering round the bazaars. Unfortunately we ran out of British rations and were fed on Indian rations, with an issue of meal and ghi. So the evenings were spent in frying chupatties in canteen lids. There was no food in Baghdad,

and we were only able to get oranges and a few eggs from local Arabs.

Most of us were disappointed with Baghdad. Perhaps we expected a little too much, having heard so much about the place beforehand. But since seeing Constantinople—a very European City—most of us have changed our minds. Baghdad is an “ Eastern ” city, and must be taken as such. Then it does indeed appear picturesque. But Active Service does not allow one to form unbiased judgments on places.

Some of us were in Baghdad a year later for the Sports Meeting, and then we hardly recognised the place. Clean streets, which in some places had been coated with tarmac. Corporation scavengers, local Arab police, telephones, electric light, water supply, motor 'buses, and a Mayor and Corporation !

## CHAPTER VII

### AFTER BAGHDAD

ABOUT the end of the first week of our stay at Baghdad news arrived that the Turks were advancing down the Tigris on the left bank, while three divisions under Ali Ishan Pasha were coming from Persia down the Dialah to retake Baghdad. The weather was now summerlike and it was uncomfortably hot in shirt sleeves at mid-day, even in the shade.

The 40th Brigade marched away up country to meet the Turks on the left bank of the Tigris, while the 3rd and 7th Divisions pushed up the right bank, along the Baghdad railway.

We rested in peace a few days longer, when suddenly, at 2 p.m. on the 23rd March orders arrived for us to move at three p.m. We trekked up country to a place called Daudie, a distance of about 12 miles, and bivouacked for the night under the stars, as usual. At 8 a.m. on the 24th the march was resumed, and we moved along the river bank several miles to Tokala, through an Arab village called Yahudie. The heat was excessive at mid-day, and we had a few cases of sunstroke. The dust and the flies were very bad on that march. The 25th we rested, while disquieting rumours arrived of hordes of Turks ahead who were determined to annihilate us out and recapture the beloved and holy city of Baghdad.

On the 26th we moved to Jadida village, a distance of about 15 miles, arriving at dusk. Here we took up a position behind the 40th Brigade and dug in. The 40th Brigade were holding an extended picquet line along the southern edge of the Marl Plain, a great expanse of open desert, and the Turks were out in front apparently waiting for their force from Persia which had reached the Jebel Hamrin.

During the 27th the Turk shelled the line at intervals with 5.9's, and our Battalion moved over to the right, being in reserve at Deltawa. On the 28th we received orders for operations against the Turkish forces on the Tigris, who were to be dealt with before the troops from Persia arrived. On the right bank of the Tigris the 3rd and 7th Divisions had been fairly successful, although they had encountered very heavy and stubborn resistance.

We heard that the 38th Brigade had left Baghdad on its way up to help us, and also that the Cavalry Division was in the vicinity, near the Dialah.

The general scheme was that at dawn on the 29th the 40th Brigade were to make a frontal attack on the enemy, who were dug in south-east of the Adhaim river. During the night 28th-29th the 39th Brigade, less the Worcesters, were to night march a distance of about 12 miles over the desert in order to deliver an attack on the enemy's left flank.

At dawn on the 28th March, Brig.-Gen. T. A. Andrus, C.M.G., commanding the 39th Infantry Brigade, who was to carry out the wide turning movement on the left flank of the Turks, commenced a personal reconnaissance, accompanied by his Battalion and Battery Commanders.

The situation was a little difficult, as the aeroplane photos of the left flank of the Turkish position, apart from the fact that they were not correctly marked on the map (the map itself was inaccurate, and showed but little detail), could not, in a featureless flat plain, show accurately enough the projected line of attack to troops who would have to advance by night with a view to an attack at dawn.

This small party, consisting of Brig.-Gen. Andrus, Major Scott, the Brigade Major, and seven officers, accompanied by 25 troopers of the Herts. Yeomanry, left Jadida one hour before dawn, and assembled at dawn at the little Arab hamlet called Abu Tamar (meaning in Arabic, "The Father of date palms"), one of the prettiest spots in Mesopotamia, situated on the very fringe of the desert, but watered from the Persian Hills. The party then proceeded due north for roughly 5 miles so as to avoid the Turk left flank, and on arriving at a slight eminence in an otherwise absolutely flat plain, the Turkish position was clearly seen.

The Turks had, luckily for us, placed their extreme left (which was much thrown back) on a collection of old ruined Arab mud houses (the action on the 29th March was named after it). These ruins, apart from the small eminence we were behind, were the one solitary feature in a bare plain completely devoid of any other distinguishing feature, and became on the following day the main direction of the assault made by the 39th Infantry Brigade. The Turkish position was estimated at 3 miles due west from this mound, and although all distances were arrived at by estimate only, these distances as estimated during the reconnaissance proved afterwards to have been extraordinary accurate.

The reconnoitring party returned to Abu Tamar, followed rather closely by Turkish cavalry, but with definite information of the left flank of the Turks, who could be seen standing up in their trenches along their front and left flank.

At 1 a.m. on the 29th the column, which was under the command of Brig.-Gen. T. A. Andrus, C.M.G., moved into formation, the Gloucesters and Warwicks leading in column of companies, followed by the artillery in columns of batteries, while the North Staffords formed the rearguard.

At 1.30 the forward march commenced. A short while after an enemy patrol was encountered asleep in a nullah. They were dealt with speedily, and the march continued in silence.

The advance was slow on reaching a narrow gauge railway embankment, which had been commenced by the Turks, as a means of bringing down coal from the hills to river craft on the Tigris. This embankment had to be cut through in four places to allow the Batteries through, and delayed the advance.

Just before dawn the whole column wheeled to the left due west, and getting into artillery formation, advanced direct on the ruins, which, however, could not yet be seen.

The Royal Warwicks on the right, the North Staffords on the left, the Gloucesters in reserve in the centre, the Herts. Yeomanry, armoured cars, and the 39th Machine-gun Company protecting our right flank. All had apparently gone well.

At 5.30 a.m. dawn broke, and the ruins came clearly into view. We were exactly opposite the Turks' left flank, which appeared to be about 2 miles distant. This

information was telephoned back to the Division, and the advance continued.

The Turks had already commenced shelling us with their 5.9 howitzers and field guns, and at about 6.15 a.m. the two leading battalions deployed for attack.

Unfortunately, very soon afterwards the mirage, so common in Mesopotamia at the time of year, commenced to show itself. It was the beginning of an intensely hot day, and within a quarter of an hour everything in front began to get a distorted appearance, and practically nothing of the Turkish position could be seen. The ruins appeared to be in more than one place, and it was impossible for our Artillery to cover our further advance with any hope of accuracy. Our leading battalions, who were getting a certain amount of rifle and machine-gun fire from the Turks, were halted, and slightly entrenched themselves in the plain. Our guns were brought up close to the leading battalions. To make things more uncomfortable still, the telephone lines running back from Brigade Headquarters to the Division were cut, and communication for the time being ceased. Turkish and Arab cavalry appeared on our rear, and killed one of our dispatch riders. The line was repaired as soon as possible, but the Arab horsemen were definitely employed on cutting the wires behind us, and shooting at our signallers engaged in repairs. During the intervals the telephone was working, we learned that the 40th Infantry Brigade had already attacked the Turk front line, but for the time being were held up by very determined opposition. We were also informed that aeroplanes had reported that advanced troops of the Turkish force on the Dialah were moving on our rear, and that we must be prepared for a possible

move on our left rear. The day was unmercifully hot, with no sign of any breeze, and cases of heat collapse commenced to occur. We were short of water also, the nearest being in the Tigris, and the Turks were between it and us. However, soon after noon, the mirage began to lift, and by 1 p.m. visibility gradually became normal. It was then seen for the first time that the Turks had extended their left flank beyond the ruins, and that our attack must be made on a wider front.

Orders were then received that the whole Brigade would attack. All three battalions were put in, finding their own local reserves. The armoured cars and the 39th Machine-gun Company pushed forward on our extreme right with a view of assisting the advance by enfilading the ruins and the trenches leading up to them.

The Brigade had no reserve. Every officer and man joined in the attack. It was a curious situation; the whole force was attacking due west, whilst Brigade Headquarters, consisting of servants, clerks, cooks, grooms, orderlies, etc., were formed up as one unit in line, facing due east, facing the Arab irregular cavalry, who were on our immediate rear.

At 1.50 p.m. orders were issued for immediate attack. Our guns galloped up and from positions in the open put down a barrage on the Turks, while the Brigade moved into action in one long line, the North Staffords on the left, the Gloucesters and Royal Warwicks in the centre and on the right. In the Battalion the Companies in order from the left were "A," "B," "D," with "C" in reserve.

Immediately the attack commenced the Turk opened up an intense fire with all arms. We pushed forward in a long thin line over the 3000 yards of flat desert, and

commenced to have casualties. It was impossible, owing to the heat and the state of the men, to charge the whole distance. Our efforts had to be confined to a final rush.

Heavy enfilade fire was opened from the left flank, which was speedily dealt with by "A" Company with the assistance of one armoured car.

"B" and "D" Companies were in the final rush, when the enemy's front line was magnificently taken.

After a short pause, during which the artillery moved up, his second line was carried too. The Turkish flank having collapsed, his whole line commenced to retreat across the open, with the setting sun behind them. They were heavily shelled by our guns, and machine-guns and patrols harassed them until darkness.

The Brigade then formed a semi-circular line of defence while the guns moved up closely, and picquets were established all around. Several hundred prisoners had been taken, besides machine-guns and much other booty. These were placed in the centre of our perimeter bivouac.

The night passed anxiously for all. We were surrounded by the enemy or by hostile Arabs, and were eleven miles from our base, with bad communication. Verrey lights were fired as signals to the 40th Brigade during the night.

When day broke, we found to our relief that the Turks had retreated to the Adhaim, and our line of communication was clear. This action was a most important and decisive one, as it effectually prevented the Turks on the Dialah from joining hands with those on the Tigris. Orders arrived for us to move back to Jadida, where we arrived at 10 p.m., and found water. Thus ended the battle of the Marl Plain.

We lost four officers and nearly 50 per cent. of the men who went into action. Capt. and Adj. A. Punchard and 2nd Lieut. Goode were killed, and 2nd Lieuts. Salt and Smyth were wounded.

We rested in an old caravanserai in Jadida village until Good Friday, the 6th of April. During this time the ration party performed Trojan work—as indeed they always did—in getting up our food. They and the Quartermaster always had a twenty-mile trek each day—generally in the heat.

The Divisional General came and visited the Battalion, and expressed his own and the Army Commander's satisfaction with our work on the Marl Plain.

The general situation was now as follows : The enemy on the right bank of the Tigris had been driven back by the 3rd and 7th Divisions. The Turks on the left bank were holding the Adhaim bridge head. The Turks from Persia, under Ali Ishan, had crossed the Jebel Hamrin and were advancing down the right bank of the Dialah with the intention of retaking Baghdad. The Cavalry Division had gone forward to meet them and feel their strength, and was now falling back before them. The 13th Division was concentrating near Deltawa.

On Good Friday orders were received to march to Kuwair Reach, about five miles down stream of the Adhaim. The 38th Brigade led, and on arrival there they dug themselves in opposite the bridge head. The 39th and 40th Brigades remained in reserve on the river bank.

We remained at Kuwair until Tuesday, the 10th. Easter Sunday was a most appalling day. The heat was now intense, and we were without any cover from the sun. At the same time, millions of young locusts—

in the hopping stage—swarmed over our bivouac, and made life uncomfortable with their eternal biting. "Fritz," our Hun-Turco airman friend, visited our camping area daily, and made things unpleasant. We witnessed some very thrilling air fights.

On the 10th orders were issued for the 13th Division, less the 38th Brigade, to execute a night march across the Marl Plain and attack Ali Ishan's force on the Dialah at dawn.

The Battalion moved off at 9.30 p.m., and marched steadily for 50 minutes in every hour until dawn the next day, completing a distance of about 15 miles. The night was not very cold, but we all felt extremely tired. A halt was called at dawn for two hours while the enemy position was reconnoitred. At the very moment when we advanced to attack the Turks, they advanced to attack us, and an encounter battle took place. The fight was fierce, and lasted until after nightfall. The 39th Brigade went into action on the left of the line, but about mid-day were withdrawn and sent into the centre.

Two Battalions were attached to the 40th Brigade Commander, and the North Staffords were sent to fill a gap on the right of that Brigade. This we effectively did, with a few casualties, and got into touch with the 35th Indian Brigade, which was moving up between the Dialah river and the Khalis canal. Unfortunately the day was intensely hot and we lost between 50 and 60 men who collapsed from heat exhaustion. During the night the enemy commenced to withdraw, leaving several hundred dead upon the field. Just after mid-day the next day the Division concentrated, the cavalry having taken up the pursuit. They found the enemy dug in on a wide front from Sarajik westwards, and the

13th Division moved up and got into touch with him that night.

We were now plagued again with swarms of young locusts; mosquitoes and sandflies also appeared in abundance to warn us that summer had come.

Soon after dawn on the 13th the Division and the 35th Brigade attacked and drove in the enemy's advanced posts. They then pressed in to within a thousand yards and dug in. During the day our Brigade was in reserve, but at 6 p.m. was ordered to relieve the 40th Brigade. The North Staffords relieved the South Wales Borderers at 8.30 p.m.

During the whole of the next day the Turk kept up heavy shell fire upon us. But about 6 p.m. our guns opened fire, and at the same time a flank attack was made on the Turkish right, making his position untenable, and during the night he retreated to Deli Abbas.

The night of the 14th-15th was remarkable for a terrific electrical storm which raged with hardly any rain until dawn. The enemy was pursued next morning to within a few miles of Deli Abbas, when all movements were suddenly countermanded.

In the afternoon the Division split up into three parts. The 40th Brigade marched away to rejoin the 38th Brigade on the River Adhaim.

The Cavalry, less two regiments, the Indian troops and the 39th Brigade, with the exception of two battalions, all moved back to Deltawa.

The North Staffords and the Worcesters were formed into two mobile columns, the Worcesters to remain and watch the Turks on the Khalis Canal, while the North Staffords watched the Dialah. Our mobile column was under the Command of Lieut.-Col. J. W. Ley, and

consisted of 7th North Staffords, Pioneers, Engineers, Royal Field Artillery and a Medical unit.

We marched that night to Bint-el-Hassan, about 11 miles, and continued the next day to Qualat-el-Mufti on the Dialah, a further distance of 14 miles. Here we were joined by the two regiments of cavalry.

We remained on outpost work at Qualat-el-Mufti until April 23rd. During that time we took several prisoners on patrol, and were plagued by millions of mosquitoes from the marshy banks of the river. So we were not sorry when the Turks issued forth from Deli Abbas and forced the Worcester Column back, because we went back too, and after a long march by night of 28 miles (the Battalion record for Mesopotamia), we found ourselves at Deltawa, whence we moved the next evening to some mounds north of Jadida and received orders to rest for a few days.

The sun was now so hot that it was almost impossible to move about in the middle of the day. Sickness was setting in amongst the men after their prolonged hardships, as they had eaten nothing much except bully and biscuit since leaving Kut.

We rested until May 8th. During this time khaki drill clothing arrived. A small draft of men and two drafts of officers joined the Battalion here, and we sent our first leave party of one officer and 15 men to India.

During this time the 38th and 40th Brigades forced the crossing of the Adhaim and routed the enemy, afterwards, on April 29th and 30th, defeating Ali Ishan's force, which attacked them on the Adhaim near the Jebel Hamrin.

On the 8th orders arrived for the Battalion to join a new mobile column consisting of the North Staffords,

the Worcesters, a Medical unit, and Royal Field Artillery, under Col. Fergusson, of the Royal Artillery. The Battalion moved on the evening of the 8th.

On the night of the 8th-9th we marched ten miles to Shialah, resting the next day and proceeding in the evening to Sarajik, a further eleven miles. Outposts were established, but another advance was decided on. Turkish outposts were met with and driven in on Deli Abbas, and we again halted to watch the enemy.

Unfortunately, two days later an armoured car of ours got bogged right in front of the Turkish position, and the North Staffords moved out to cover its withdrawal. A general action appeared imminent, but was broken off.

The enemy's strength and dispositions being known, we now commenced a withdrawal and marched back by easy stages to our old bivouac.

On our return to the mounds we found that a canvas camp had been prepared for us at Sindiyeh, about half-a-mile from the Tigris banks, and into this we moved.

A large draft arrived from India and made up our depleted numbers. So we commenced our second hot season in Mesopotamia.





LIEUT-COL. G. E. LEMAN, O.B.E.

Commanding 7th Bn. N. Staff. R. in EGYPT, 1916; at the attempted relief of KUT, in 1917-1918; and in the CAUCASAS, 1918-1919.

## CHAPTER VIII

JULY 1917 TO JULY 1918

AT the end of May we entered camp and slept under canvas the first time for six months. This camp was known as the Battalion Sindiyeh Camp, as the Battalion was alone. On July 1st we moved down on to the Tigris into the Divisional Camp.

A day or two after we had arrived at the Battalion Camp, General Sir Stanley Maude arrived, and presented medallions to the members of the team who represented the Battalion in the Maude Football Tournament at Amara, 1916. A handsome silver plaque had already been given to the Battalion and forwarded to Lichfield for safe custody, where it is now in the Officers' Mess at the Regimental Depot. At the same time the Army Commander sanctioned the allotment of a machine gun (captured by "D" Company on the Marl Plain, 29th March, 1917) as a regimental trophy. This was also sent home.

On June 20th we welcomed back Lieut.-Col. G. E. Leman, who took over the Battalion again.

Three more officers—Lieut.-Col. J. W. Ley, Capt. A. J. Ireland (the Medical Officer), and 2nd Lieut Salt—and 100 men went on leave to India, all of whom had been on service since June, 1915. Many officers and men who had been on active service for an equally long period were unable to go, as the numbers allotted were small.

A large strength had to be kept up, and preparations had to be made for General Falkenhayn's coming winter offensive against Baghdad.

Throughout the summer the Battalion found large working parties, which went up to the line at night to dig for the 38th Brigade. The 38th Brigade were holding the line during the summer until relieved by the 39th Brigade on September 15th.

In the early mornings specialist and general training were vigorously carried on, with lectures for officers and men after breakfast. Orders were received for all troops to be at war strength and fully trained by the end of August.

The summer of 1917 passed slowly and was exceptionally hot. But everything possible was done to alleviate our inevitable hardships. To begin with, the Divisional Camp was pitched on top of the cliffs overlooking the river, and we had excellent bathing every evening at sundown.

Several concert parties from India visited us, and the band of an Indian Infantry Battalion, the 104th Wellesley's Rifles, was sent up from Baghdad. In the intervals excellent regimental sing-songs were organised. The casualties from heat were far less in number than in 1916, and deaths from the same cause were few. The Field Ambulances were supplied with ice for treatment of such cases. No activity was allowed during the heat of the day except watering of animals. The Transport section were hard worked during the summer, for there were always rations to be fetched, and the men in charge of the water supply had an arduous time, as water necessarily had to be fetched at all times of the day. A soda water factory and a cinema were sent out to the

Division by Miss Maude's Comforts Fund Committee, and were greatly appreciated.

Dust storms and whirlwinds were a perpetual nuisance during the summer, not to mention sand flies and the hosts of other plagues peculiar to Mesopotamia. Towards the middle of July our temperatures in the shade were daily over 117 degrees, and at night never below 100 degrees. On July 19th we reached 133 degrees in the shade, the hottest we ever had it. Throughout August it remained between 117 degrees and 127 degrees daily, and it was not until late in September that any appreciable drop took place. It is impossible to describe what it feels like to undergo such heat ; only those who have been through it can understand.

Throughout the summer sports were kept up as far as possible. Platoon, Company and Battalion football matches were played, ten minutes each way, at 110 degrees in the shade, just as the sun was setting. Several officers' hockey matches were played (five minutes each way), and the Battalion swimming team did well. Many men were taught to swim, and to row in an army pontoon.

Early in September we received orders to prepare to relieve the 38th Brigade, who were to take over our summer camp. The actual relief took place on the night 17th-18th, the North Staffords relieving the South Lancashire Regiment at Abu Tamar Wood. Early this month also the honours for the Baghdad campaign were announced ; Major J W. Ley receiving the Distinguished Service Order, and the Military Cross being awarded to Lieut. and Quartermaster F. Baker, 2nd Lieut. Bollington D.C.M., and Capt. A. J. Ireland, R.A.M.C.

The Battalion remained in the line known as the Windiyeh-Sindiye line until the night of 30th November—1st December. During this period of two months and a half there was very little activity on our front. The line itself consisted of 12 lunettes with strong points close in rear. The Battalion was now nearly 900 strong, and every advantage was taken of the lull in the operations to train as many men as possible in specialist subjects such as the Lewis-gun, bombing, signalling, scouting, and sniping, wiring, first-aid and sanitary duties; reserve transport men were also trained. During October box respirators were received, and all ranks, including the Indian followers, were trained in their use. Sport was not forgotten, and an inter-platoon football league, which aroused much interest, was started. The ration party had plenty of exercise, as the daily drawing of rations involved a 12 mile march.

Further honours were announced, the Distinguished Conduct Medal being awarded to No. 19370 Pte. Nuttall, No. 8586 Pte. Price, No. 13732 Corpl. Thomas, No. 6496 C.S.M. O'Brien, and to No. 8350 C.S.M. Robinson. The following were also mentioned in dispatches:—Major J. W. Ley, D.S.O., Capt. and Adj. H. M. Robinson, 2nd Lieut. H. E. Rose, 2nd Lieuts. B. E. Atkins and R. F. H. Bradley, who were both killed in action, No. 7619 Sergt. Boardman, No. 8431 Pte. Evans, No. 7/10294 Pte. Rowley, No. 15453 Pte. Walsh, and No. 8632 Sergt. Patrick.

Early in November we lost a Battalion pet named Ginger, a Mesopotamian sheep, which had been with the Battalion since July, 1916, and had marched up from Amara to Baghdad. He was badly mauled by a jackal,

and, notwithstanding the skill and attention of Capt. Ireland, he had to be destroyed. Gen. Cayley, commanding the 13th Division, inspected our lunettes, etc., at this time, and remarked that evidently great pains and trouble had been expended on the works, and that the condition of the line left nothing to be desired.

The 38th Brigade moved out in October, cleared the right bank of the Dialah, and seized the gorge where it passes through the Jebel Hamrin.

Further to the north-east, on the left bank of the Dialah, operations were progressing against the Turks in the Jebel Hamrin. On the Tigris and Euphrates the offensive had also been taken by us, and hearing of others' victories only made our inactivity more boring. So we hailed with joy the news of a "stunt" at the end of November.

But in the meantime, the whole Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force had received a heavy blow in the death of their great leader, Lieut.-Gen. Sir F. S. Maude, K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.

We heard the news on the morning of the 19th November, in the following message :

"The Commanding Officer regrets to announce the death of Lieut.-Gen. Sir Stanley Maude, at 6.25 p.m., on the 18th inst. The funeral takes place to-day at 4 p.m. Interment takes place in cemetery outside the North Gate, Baghdad."

The news came as a great blow to all of us, for but a week or two earlier General Maude had inspected the line and had been speaking with officers and men. Throughout the war we had been associated with him, learning first to admire and respect his soldier-like qualities in the Gallipoli campaign, when he

commanded the 13th Division. Later, in Mesopotamia, we learned to love him as our great leader, the man who put everything straight and led us to glorious victory. Always up in the line with his troops, he was constantly amongst us in the pursuit to Baghdad. He held investitures for immediate awards actually under fire. He never forgot the wounded and always visited hospitals after the fighting and chatted with his old fighting comrades. When up in the line he always showed remarkable thought for the men. He was particularly keen that we should have everything that could possibly be provided in the rations. Early in November he was at the Advanced Base Camp when a draft of men for the Battalion were just leaving. Seeing the parade he approached and asked the men what Regiment they were going to join.

"The North Staffords, Sir," was the answer.

"A very fine Battalion, too," he replied.

So one of England's greatest Generals passed to his rest in the country where he had not spared himself for our King and Empire.

On the night of the 30th November—1st December (1917), the Battalion left the line at Abu Tamar, after being relieved by the Worcesters, and marched a distance of about eighteen miles to Sarajik, where we relieved the Royal Welsh Fusiliers in the reserve line and became part of the reserve troops. During the following week we held a line from the Serai to Sarajik, with a view to watching for any flanking movement by the Turk against Deli Abbas. But nothing happened, for the Turk was severely beaten. We saw the assault of the Jebel Hamrin and the taking of the Sakaltutan Pass. On the 8th of December the Battalion was relieved

and marched back to Abu Tamar in two stages, via Bint-el-Hassan and Shiala, arriving on the 9th.

We now went into a Battalion camp under canvas and prepared for Christmas, our third in the field.

Christmas 1917 was quite an enjoyable time. The weather was fine, and we got a good mail. An inter-company 6-aside football tournament was played, also a match between the followers and the Indian mule drivers, which caused great amusement; a sing-song and camp fire completed the day's festivities.

The Battalion remained in reserve after Christmas, and, in fact, did not—as a complete unit—take part in any further operations until the Baku Expedition in the summer.

In January and February a musketry course was fired, and general work on the trenches was continually being carried out. Hostile aeroplanes were a perpetual nuisance, but they never bombed our camp. Four Lewis guns were always mounted for anti-aircraft work.

In November, 1917, steel helmets were served out to all ranks and worn throughout the winter, being handed into stores in April. They could not be worn between the hours of 11 a.m. and 3 p.m., owing to the heat which they collected from the sun's rays, and before April they had to be discontinued altogether.

The weary months passed quickly until April arrived and news of further operations came, to take place north of the Jebel Hamrin.

The whole of the 13th Division, less two Battalions, was to take part in them. These two battalions were the Worcesters and North Staffords. In their cases, the Lewis guns only were to form part of a special column,

the composition of which was quite unknown to any except the Colonel and the Lewis gun officer.

On Tuesday evening, the 16th of April, 25 Ford vans arrived in our camp, and the following morning the column left. The North Stafford Motor Lewis Gun Company consisted of 48 N.C.O.'s and men and 16 guns (one N.C.O. and two men to each gun). The Ford vans were divided into sections of six, each section carrying four guns and twelve N.C.O.'s and men. There was one car for the officer in charge. Signalling flags, helios, binoculars, and cooking utensils were taken. The only kit allowed was one blanket per man.

This column left Abu Tamar on the morning of the 17th under the command of the Battalion Lewis Gun Officer, Lieut. L. R. Missen, and joined a similar company of the Worcester Regiment's Lewis guns.

On the 17th the column moved to Longridge Hill at the foot of the Jebel Hamrin, a distance of about 40 miles, and bivouacked, to await the commencement of operations.

On the 19th we were inspected by our Divisional Commander, Major-General Sir W. de S. Cayley, C.B., C.M.G., who complimented us on our smart turn out. He wished us good luck in the forthcoming operations and hoped we would justify our existence, as we were the first motor Lewis gun column of the kind to be tried.

Heavy rain on the 20th, 21st and 22nd postponed operations for a little, the final date being fixed for the 24th.

The general scheme was as follows :

The Turks were holding Bund-i-Adhaim, a very important and strong flank position through Umr'-Mandan to Kara Tepe, and thence to the N.E. into the

hills. The force was divided up into five columns. No. 1, consisting of cavalry and armoured cars, was to advance up the Adhaim and deliver a frontal holding attack on the Turks there. No. 2, 38th Brigade, etc., was to issue from the Ain Lailah Pass and attack Bund-i-Adhaim simultaneously with No. 1. Nos. 4, 40th Brigade, etc., and 5, Cavalry, etc., were to hold the centre, while No. 3 (our column), consisting of the 6th Cavalry Brigade and Motor Lewis Gun Columns, under Brig.-Gen. Holland-Pryor, C.B., D.S.O., was to burst through Umr'-Mandan and get astride the Turks' line of communications at Kulawund. The other columns would then drive hard, and it was hoped to surround the whole Turkish Army, 2nd and 14th Divisions.

At mid-day on the 24th all columns were ready to move. At 11 a.m. on 25th the Columns 2 and 3 moved from Abu Hajar to Ain Lailah, a distance of 17 miles, while Column No. 1 moved up the Adhaim to within striking distance of the enemy. At the same time Columns 4 and 5 crossed the Sakaltutan Pass and Diala River respectively, and debouched upon Kara Tepe.

At dawn on the 26th our adventures began.

No. 1 Column attacked Bund-i-Adhaim, while No. 2 Column made a forced march to catch the Turk in rear.

No. 3 Column (ours) headed for Umr'-Mandan, and Nos. 4 and 5 attacked Kara Tepe.

Splendid progress was made throughout the day. At 3 p.m., the cavalry entered Umr'-Mandan, which the Turks left without a fight.

The Motor Lewis Gun Column, accompanied by a few armoured cars, then pushed ahead with a bridging section

and covered the construction of a bridge over the river Chinchal. When it was completed (about 9 p.m.), we crossed and formed outposts for the guarding of the bridge. The Turks hovered round, but did not come into close contact with us.

That night Columns 4 and 5 reported that the Kara Tepe force was retreating, and so we found there would be a race to get to Kulawund.

A terrific electrical storm burst upon us at 10 p.m., and from then to dawn the roll of thunder was continuous, while the night was rendered as light as day by vivid flashes of silver and purple electricity—a marvellous display. Luckily we did not get much rain, but the other Columns were thoroughly drenched, and so were the Turks, who were marching all night.

At dawn Columns 1, 2, 4 and 5 reported no enemy in sight, and we set off for Kulawund. The ground was appallingly boggy in places, but we got those Ford vans along somehow, generally by carrying or pushing them, and we were well up with the advanced guard of the Cavalry Brigade the whole way.

At 8 a.m., touch was established with the enemy, who showed his teeth by opening fire with rapid salvos from mountain batteries. By 10 a.m., after reconnaissance by cavalry and aeroplane, it was found that the enemy main body was just entering Tuz (after marching for nearly 24 hours), and his rearguard was at Kulawund.

The North Stafford Company and the 13th Hussars were sent off to get in between the rearguard and the main body, while the main body of cavalry feinted on the enemy's front.

By 12 mid-day we were behind the enemy and had cut him off. The whole Brigade then joined us, and

formed a line north of Kulawund. At a given signal from the Brigadier, the Cavalry moved forward at the "trot," with machine-guns and motors on the right flank. The Turk, seeing what was coming, formed squares of his infantry and opened up a rapid fire, at the same time putting down a good barrage with his mountain guns. The order was given to draw sabres, and as they flashed in the morning sun, the whole line burst into ringing British and Indian "Huzzas," and galloped down upon the enemy. Our aeroplanes flew overhead, machine-gunning the Turks also. Riderless horses showed that we were having casualties, but almost at once we were in them, slashing and lunging, and the Turks were surrendering all round.

Unfortunately, as one Indian Regiment charged through, the Turks threw down their rifles, afterwards taking them up and firing into the Indians' backs. Several were killed, and the Indians turned in fury and charged again. Over 600 prisoners were taken by the Cavalry, large quantities of stores, guns and machine-guns, and over 150 dead were left upon the field. The horses were exhausted after their charge, so the motors took up the pursuit. The North Staffords took about a dozen prisoners near Tuz, and then assisted an armoured car to extricate itself from a bog. While this was going on Turkish aeroplanes machine-gunned us, luckily without casualties. At dusk the whole force drew off about five miles and bivouacked with outposts out.

The advance was resumed on the morning of the 28th, and the enemy main body in Tuz was engaged and held. At the same time the North Stafford Company moved to Kasradala village, and covered the crossing of the cavalry there.

During the night of the 28th-29th the 40th Brigade (Column 4) and the 38th Brigade (Column 2) moved up to assault the enemy at dawn, No. 2 column crossing the river at mid-night to attack Tuz from the north.

During the night, much to our annoyance, a German cavalry squadron, a German wireless set, and several German officers, including Von Dorfell (O.C. Flying Corps), escaped from Tuz and never again came near our hands. Dawn broke, and under cover of a splendid barrage, our Infantry moved to the assault, supported by cavalry and motor machine-guns. The fight raged fiercely until mid-day, when Tuz fell into our hands, together with stores, hospital, guns, over 2000 prisoners, etc.

At mid-day the motor Lewis gun columns passed over the river Aq-So. This stream was very rapid, 100 yards wide, and four feet deep. Men had to wade through, while motors were all pushed over by hand. This procedure took two hours, after which we commenced the pursuit.

About 7 or 8 miles north of Tuz, the North Stafford Company came into action against a Turkish machine-gun company and, after a short, brisk fight, in which we miraculously sustained no casualties, we captured the whole of them, including five officers, 70 odd men, four machine-guns, eight mules, and various wounded stragglers, abandoned stores, papers, etc. The Worcester Company, which also was acting independently, captured some Turks in another spot.

That night we returned to Tuz, and bivouacked.

On the 30th the Motor Column reconnoitred Tauq, the next town up the road, and found that it was held by the enemy. The fords over the Tauq Chai were

found to be too deep for crossing. Moving upstream, we seized a stone bridge in the gorge in the Jebel Daudie, which the Turks attempted to blow up. But, luckily, their charges did not all go off and we were able to cross on foot. We held the bridge all night and were relieved by some infantry the following afternoon.

We returned to Tuz for two days' rest, for the Ford vans to be overhauled. Some had been damaged beyond repair and had to be abandoned, so companies were cut down to three sections each with 12 guns.

The weather was not very fine just now, but operations were resumed on the 5th. Tauq fell at once, and we pushed on on the 6th to Taza, which the Infantry carried at mid-day.

The Cavalry and Motor Column now received orders to make a dash for Kirkuk. We pushed on as fast as the tired horses could go (they had just completed 40 miles in 24 hours), and in the afternoon got into action with the enemy north-west of Kirkuk.

Unfortunately a deluge of torrential rain prevented a repetition of the Kulawund charge, and while the enemy bolted from the town that night our cars became hopelessly bogged in the open plain.

We stayed at Kirkuk, which was entered the next day, until the 12th, when (our services being no longer required) we left the front, and returned via Taza, Tauq, Tuz, Kifri, and Kara Tepe to Longridge Hill, in two days. Thence we marched to Abu Saida (23 miles), on the Diala (north of Baghdad), arriving at 6 a.m. on May 15th, very tired and dusty, having completed 500 miles by road in the motors.

The winter season 1918 was remarkable for very heavy rains which flooded our camp on more than one occasion

and necessitated constant work building up and repairing the bunds or banks of the canals and streams in the vicinity of Abu Tamar. "B" Company in particular were busily engaged in this work on detachment at a place called the Babe Bridge. Temp. Capt. B. H. Sparrow, 3rd Battalion the King's Shropshire Light Infantry, was awarded the Military Cross for gallant services in the period 1st April to 30th September, 1917. All ranks of the Battalion showed their sympathy with the sufferers in the Minnie Pit disaster at Halmerend by contributing 100 guineas to the Relief Fund. The Battalion owed a deep debt of gratitude to certain ladies of Staffordshire and to the 2nd Rawalpindi Division Comforts Fund, who provided us with gifts and comforts in Mesopotamia. When the latter organisation closed early in 1918 the ladies of Ceylon were equally generous in providing for our creature comforts. Lieut.-Col. A. E. Blizzard, T.D., of the 5th Battalion, organised two football matches at Burton-on-Trent and in the Potteries from the proceeds of which a sum of no less than £150 was dispatched to the Battalion and administered by Mrs. B. A. J. Havelock in India to provide gifts and comforts for the men.

During April the Battalion moved from Abu Tamar to Abu Saida, about 12 miles distant, on the river Diyalah, where bathing was once more possible. The tents were all dug in, that is to say, the floor space was excavated to a depth of three feet, thus giving more head room and air. It was found by experiment that these tents were quite five degrees cooler than those on the surface of the ground, a material difference at temperatures exceeding one hundred degrees. So the Battalion prepared for a third summer in Mesopotamia.

## CHAPTER IX

### THROUGH PERSIA TO THE CASPIAN

*“Prepare to move into Persia at short notice. Detailed instructions follow.”*

THE Adjutant read the short message to us one evening as we sat at dinner on the banks of the river Dialah. The news was not altogether a surprise, for a rumour had spread during the week that there was a possibility of a move eastwards. But great was the speculation as to the method of transport and ultimate destination of the expedition. The following morning we were called to a conference, and the whole plan was unfolded :

Our Brigade—the 39th—was to move at once up into Persia ; and our Battalion—the 7th North Staffords—was to be the first column to move. The only transport available was a “Peerless” Lorry Company—with just over fifty lorries. A minimum of kit was to be taken, consisting of one blanket and one waterproof sheet per man, one valise, blankets, and change of under-clothing per officer. A dump was formed of all surplus kit. Regimental and medical equipment were reduced to a minimum ; and all the transport was left behind to follow by route march. Some of us were very excited about the move, others were sceptical ; but we were all glad about it, for we could expect a cooler climate on

the high plateaux of Persia and there was a possible escape from mosquitoes, sand flies, and dust.

The tenth day of July was a busy one for everybody. The C.O. disappeared to a conference, while Company Commanders perspired freely at final kit inspections. Our Quartermaster, with cheery smile and smoking pipe, directed the "Q" operations. In the evening the Battalion, together with two Companies and Headquarters of the 9th Royal Warwicks, entrained at Abu Saida and moved to Ruz, at the foot of the Jebel Hamrin.

The greater part of the night was spent in practice loading, for the convoy was to start at dawn. The troops were distributed at one officer and twenty-eight or twenty-nine men to each lorry. Three days' rations were carried, plus three extra days' groceries ; there were also spare petrol for the lorries, repair vans, kit and equipment, Lewis guns, and cooking utensils. The whole column consisted of 1075 all ranks, under the command of Major J. W. Ley, D.S.O.

Shortly after dawn the order was given to "start up," and with a roar of engines, the head of the column entered the Kurdaruz Pass. The sun had just risen when the top of the pass was reached, and we all paused to take our last look at Mesopotamia, the "land between the rivers," our home for the past two years. With the exception of two halts, the convoy pushed steadily on all day, to the accompaniment of the hum of motor engines. The road was good in some places and bad in others, but everywhere it was deep in dust, which rose in clouds to choke us all. When the column started it only covered a stretch of road about one and a half miles long ; but by the middle of the afternoon this distance had increased to ten to fifteen miles.

The first night was to be spent at Pai-Tak, a little village at the foot of the Tak-i-Girri Pass. This spot was in sight about seven o'clock in the evening, but unfortunately the second lorry in the convoy ran over a cliff and fell some eight or ten feet, precipitating the Adjutant and twenty-eight men into a chilly mountain torrent. Some time was spent collecting kit from the water, and great amusement was caused by a bottle of whisky which eluded all pursuers, and sailed gaily downstream until it met an untimely end on a rock. After an hour's hard work the lorry was hauled up on to the road. But it was quite dark when the column arrived at the bivouac. The latter part of the convoy, in fact, parked up about ten miles away, as the road was too difficult for travelling in the night.

At Qasr-i-Shirin, the first town passed after crossing the Persian border, there is a wonderful ruin of an aqueduct said to have been built by a wooer of Lady Shirin, daughter of a king of this place many thousand years ago. When the work was completed, the story goes, the gentleman died of sickness, and the broken-hearted Lady Shirin threw herself into the aqueduct and was drowned. Here we halted for a short while, and had a meal.

As we moved further into Persia, and climbed higher, a welcome change in temperature was felt.

Early on the morning of the 12th the ascent of the Tak-i-Girri Pass was commenced. The lorries were able to take us up as far as the archway of Alexander the Great, at which point we all got out and marched, while the empty motors just managed the remaining climb. At the top of the pass we were overjoyed to find springs of cool water and real oak trees. A steady

run from this point, through Karind, brought us to Chasmeh Safed, about five o'clock in the afternoon.

A few of the motors had suffered badly coming up the pass, some of the solid rubber tyres having been entirely worn away on the seven-mile climb. Two others developed engine trouble, and so it was decided to leave them there until repairs could be effected. The men stayed with them. The lorry which was carrying our extra grocery rations caught fire just before reaching camp, and was burnt out—a great blow to us, as it meant that there would be no tea, sugar, cheese, or milk after the next day.

On the 13th a long run over two or three ranges of mountains brought us to Kermanshah, where we bivouacked beside a small river, and spent the evening in washing operations. Here there was snow upon the mountain tops.

At mid-day the next day a halt was made at the Rock of Darius, near Bisitun. Here, high up on the mountain side, there is a giant image of Darius, King of the Medes and Persians, accepting tribute from several smaller kings. The rocks all around are covered by a mass of inscriptions. It was here that the key to the cuneiform writing was discovered.

At Bisitun we crossed a bridge which was being repaired by a horde of Persian workmen, under the supervision of two lonely Engineer officers, who were amusing themselves by shooting fish with a service rifle. Needless to say, we arranged an exchange for cigarettes, of which they were short. That evening our bivouac was at Kangawar.

The next day was a very strenuous one for us all. Innumerable streams and irrigation canals were crossed

in the plain as we approached the foot of the Asadabad Pass, and all the lorries had to be unloaded and pushed or pulled through these. Then followed the march up the Asadabad, over 8,000 feet high, the top of which was not reached until nightfall. A quick run down the following morning brought us to Hamadan at eleven o'clock, and here we bivouacked in an open field above the town, and rested from the hum of engines and the eternal dust. The lorries remained at Hamadan for a day, and then commenced the return journey to Mesopotamia, for which they had just sufficient petrol left.

Hamadan, the ancient Ecbatana, is situated at the foot of the Alwand Kuh. Here we remained six days, and practised route marching. Some of us spent a very interesting time visiting the ruins of the palace of King Darius, the tombs of Mordecai and Esther, and the bazaars. The days were pleasantly warm, but the nights were very cold. There was still snow on the mountain tops at that time.

Our column now came under the orders of the Dunsterforce. This force consisted of officers and N.C.O.'s selected to proceed as a British mission to the Caucasus. They were assembled at Baghdad in the latter part of 1917, and the advanced guard of the force, with General Dunsterville in command, entered Persia in January, 1918. For some time progress was slow, owing to roads being rendered impassable by snow. Hamadan was reached, but the state of the inhabitants was so wretched that time had to be spent in relief work. Posts were established all along the road, and work was commenced in training Persian levies. Kasvin was reached later, and General Dunsterville himself pushed

on alone to Enzeli, the Persian port on the South Caspian. He had a narrow escape from Bolshevists, who were there in force, but he was able to find out a lot about the general situation.

The Turks were occupying the Caucasus, and a German division was at Tiflis. An advance had already commenced on Baku, which was in the hands of the Bolshevists. General Bicherakov, a loyal Russian with a following of several thousand Cossacks, who had joined up with the British forces in Mesopotamia in 1917, was effecting a withdrawal from Persia, in order to go to the aid of the people of Baku.

This Russian force got away from Persia in May and June, 1918, in spite of trouble with one Kuchik Khan, a Persian chieftain, who molested the road from Menzil to Enzeli. The Dunsterforce then took over the whole road from Kasvin to the sea, and missions were sent to various ports on the Caspian Sea to ascertain the political situation.

In the early summer of 1918 a regiment of infantry—the 1st-4th Hampshires—and some Gurkhas, a Ford van company, and several armoured cars (known as the Duncars), had joined General Dunsterville to control the forward line of communication from Kasvin to the sea. While we were at Hamadan we heard of an attack by Kuchik Khan on the Hampshires in Resht.

The road from Menzil to the sea runs through a belt of forest on the South Caspian ; and Kuchik Khan, a Persian chieftain who lived in the district, had, with the help of German agents, waged successful raiding warfare against the Russians in 1915 and 1916. When the larger part of General Baratov's army retired from Persia after the revolution, he acquired large quantities

of arms and ammunition, and commenced sniping our convoys when they appeared in his district. Finally, he had invested and attacked the British garrison in Resht, but after a day's sharp fighting, in which the Gurkhas played a great part, he was driven off, and for the time ceased to trouble us. Two airmen added to his discomfort by bombing his villages very effectively.

On July 21st camel transport arrived for the Battalion, and also orders to march to Kasvin. The Royal Warwicks were to follow in a day or two. The following morning we set out on the first stage of our march, twenty-two miles, to a place beyond Akbulak. It was our first experience of camels. Some there were which went too fast, and others went too slow. A few "old soldiers" threw their loads half-way, and no patience of Job or wisdom of Solomon ever got them on again. The Persian camel drivers proved themselves absolutely incapable, and had it not been for our Quartermaster our transport would never have arrived at its destination. With the aid of a platoon and his own good whip, both camels and drivers were kept on the move. The road report which had been given to us proved to be quite unreliable, and there was difficulty about water. Not a sign of any liquid was seen along the whole way.

We arrived at our bivouac late in the evening, and straightway fell asleep, after off-loading the camels. The Quartermaster, however, visited a neighbouring village and arranged for food to be brought down the next morning. As we were to live on this march by local purchase, he was provided with an interpreter and some money-bags.

It was decided to resume the march on the evening of the next day. Early in the morning the whole village

paid us a visit, and brought with them live sheep, chupatties (native bread), and vegetables, and we were very soon enjoying the longed-for breakfast.

Marching by night, although not so easy as by day, was found less fatiguing, for there were always cool breezes blowing. Food in some districts was very scarce, and we had short rations, while in others there was a plentiful supply of one particular kind—sheep, or vegetables, or eggs. Water, however, was scarce along the whole route.

March succeeded march with deadly monotony, there being only one incident or excitement throughout. On this occasion, a Persian driver in charge of three camels carrying spare rifles attempted to escape with his load just as we arrived at our bivouac. But he was vigorously pursued, caught, and brought in triumph back to camp.

The country through which we marched was bare and desolate. The road was quite good in places, as it was a Russian toll-gate road. At intervals we came across derelict lorries and other signs of the retreat of Baratov's revolutionised soldiers. At dawn on the eleventh day after leaving Hamadan, we arrived at Sultanabad, a village just outside Kasvin, and heard that we were to rest for a day or two before continuing our journey in motors to the Caspian Sea.

Our numbers had decreased recently owing to the fact that a party of men who were unable to undertake the long march, had been left behind at Hamadan, to follow on when motors were available for transport. A further company and a half had to be left at Kasvin, as there were not sufficient Ford vans to take us all on together. ("D" Company were left at Kasvin.)

At Kasvin we heard serious news from Baku. The Turks had advanced rapidly along the trans-Caucasian railway, driving General Bicherakov back. In order not to be closed into the Apsheron Peninsula he had retreated northwards, with his base at Petrovsk; and Baku was thus left open to the enemy, being only defended by the local revolutionary army. The Bolshevik régime had come to an end on July 25th, and the Armenian Council which succeeded it had invited General Dunster-ville to send help. Colonel Stokes (Headquarters) and one or two others had gone over to see the place, but reported that the Turks were on the outskirts of the town, and might even be inside before British troops could arrive.

The first days of August, then, found us—two and a half companies—going full speed ahead for Enzeli. Menzil was reached late the first day, and here another company had to be dropped to be fetched later. The wear and tear was so heavy on the vans that nearly half the number had to be stripped here of tubes and tyres to carry the remainder through to the sea.

Menzil is a most abominable place. The mountains of the South Caspian shore catch all the winds from the north, and turn them up the Menzil gorge, which resembles a bottle neck. As a result an eternal hurricane blows there. Ford vans were overturned; men were blown over; the air was always full of flying stones and dirt; and the whole village swarmed with a large and vigorously offensive species of flea. It was curious to see all the trees growing at an angle of 45 degrees in the direction in which the wind was blowing.

After passing through the gorge we entered the country of Kuchik Khan, a veritable Paradise. Here

the road ran for miles through a most delightful forest. Oaks and elms, beech and poplar, willow and acacia grew in profusion. Gorgeous creepers hung from their branches and met overhead, so that we passed through a long tunnel of vegetation. The air was heavy with the scent of honeysuckle, poppies, wild roses, and many other blossoms ; while birds of wonderful hues flitted about in all directions.

One night we spent at Imam Zadi, a little village situated in a clearing beside the river ; and the next day, after a quick run through the rice fields, we arrived at Enzeli in the afternoon. Two ships were waiting for us in the harbour, and the Duncars and Staff were already on board. Embarkation was speedily carried out, and without waiting for stragglers, we sailed for Baku. In less than three weeks we had travelled nearly four hundred and fifty miles by motor and had marched a distance of one hundred and forty odd miles, and we found it difficult to realise that within twenty-four hours we should be in civilisation once again, fighting for a white people.

The sea was unkind and the boats were very small, so that many of us were soaked during the night ; and, unfortunately, some kit was washed overboard. But with the morning our spirits revived, and everyone gazed keenly ahead to catch a first glimpse of Baku. About mid-day the higher points of the Apsheron Peninsula were sighted. It had been arranged that if all were well a Russian seaplane should come out and circle our boats three times ; and while we watched, a tiny speck appeared in the sky and gradually drew nearer, circling once, then twice, then three times. A cheer went up. We were in time !

## CHAPTER X

### BAKU

ALL eyes were focussed on the town of Baku as we steamed past the lighthouse of Nargene into the bay, and moored alongside one of the many piers of the harbour. Large crowds had collected to watch the arrival of the British troops, and an Armenian band was playing on the quay. Colonel Stokes was there to meet us, and he told us that the Turks had that morning entered the outskirts of the town, but had been driven back several miles by a grand counter-attack, which was launched immediately the British were sighted from the town.

Disembarkation commenced at once and proceeded rapidly, for we all felt cheery and confident, with the exception of one or two who were still suffering from the effects of the voyage. When we marched away to our billet—the Hotel Metropole—the streets were crowded with men and women, who cheered and waved to the “Anglisky soldat.”

The Hotel Metropole was not a very large building and most of the rooms were already occupied by civilians. Some of us slept on the roof, however, and the remainder in the corridors and one or two empty rooms. The Duncars were parked in a little square opposite. Headquarters took the Hotel Europe for a billet, distant about three hundred yards from us.

The first few nights at Baku were anxious ones for us all. It was only by a majority of about two dozen votes that the British troops were invited over; and the Bolsheviks, who were always entirely against our intervention, were still in the town, trying to raise trouble against us. It was known that they were holding meetings at the time urging the populace to commence a riot and drive us into the sea. So preparations were made accordingly. Doors and windows were barricaded. Lewis guns were placed to command entrances and passages, special sentries were posted, and everybody slept with "loins girded up," ready for action.

The first night passed quietly, and in the morning, while the C.O. attended a conference at headquarters, the Quartermaster went out to the market to buy meat and bread, tea and sugar. Meanwhile, some of us had a look at the town itself.

Baku had undoubtedly been a very fine town in peacetime—the home of the oil magnates, and one of the most luxurious places in Russia. But now on every hand the ravages of fire and riot were to be seen. Here a magnificent building had been burned by the Armenians during the Tartar massacre of 1917; there a rich man's house had been looted and destroyed during the Revolution; large numbers of fine houses and public buildings had been thoroughly looted, and then turned into offices for the Revolutionary Government. The Town Hall, the Tartar Boys' and Girls' Schools, and the Alexander Nevsky Cathedral were the only buildings which appeared to have escaped.

Baku town is situated on the shores of a semi-circular bay facing south. The land rises behind the town as it were to the rim of a saucer, the rim being a high ridge

which surrounds the town on all but the east side. The harbour is a fine one, capable of holding many ships, and is well provided with jetties and piers. The railway enters the town on the east side from the junction of Baladjari, which is about five miles north of the town. Here the line branches northwards to Petrovsk and Rostov, and southwards to Tiflis and Batoum.

On the east side of the town are situated most of the oil refineries and storage tanks. The oilfields are further inland, but there is one oilfield on the south-west side of the town, called Bibi-Eibat, which is right on the sea-shore. The town is well provided with telephones and electric light, and when we first arrived was getting its water supply through a pipe line from a source several miles from the place.

The streets of the town were thronged with crowds of Armenians, Cossacks, Tartars, and Russians. All the menfolk resembled walking arsenals, being copiously bedecked with pistols, daggers, bayonets, and bandoliers of highly polished ammunition. They collected in groups to discuss the arrival of the British troops, and to gaze with interest on the sentries at the doors, or those of us who had ventured into the streets. Great excitement was manifested when guard-mounting parade was held, and all traffic was suspended in the vicinity of the billet, so great was the concourse.

The Quartermaster returned from the market with bread and meat, tea and sugar. But our first impressions of Russian food were not good—nor did we subsequently have any reason to alter our opinion of black bread, a vile mixture of flour, dirt, husks and straw, mixed with sour dough. Shortly after supplies of flour were sent from Persia to be baked in Baku, but

the bread remained the same, and eventually caused a lot of sickness. Live sheep were also sent over from Enzeli at intervals, but there was a difficulty in keeping them in the town, and we were often dependent on the local army's supply of oxen. There was plenty of rice, tea and sugar to be obtained locally, but milk, porridge, jam and butter were unknown quantities. Cheese was obtainable, but the price was exorbitant. Caviare, however, was cheap, and it was decided to make an issue of it to the troops. The men had never seen it before, and did not like it. In appearance it was not unlike blackberry jam, and they decided that the "blackberry jam was fishy and hardly fit to be eaten." So this issue had to be discontinued.

On August 8th the Company which had been left behind at Menzil arrived ; but it was quite impossible to send troops out to the line, owing to the uncertain state of the feeling in the town. Our numbers were now raised to nearly 300.

The Bolshevists made every conceivable effort to get the local inhabitants to "throw us into the sea." Twice we had definite intimation that they were going to attack our billet, and troops stood to arms all night. One night they actually arrested two sergeants of the armoured car detachment for some alleged offence, and for the moment there was an uproar. But Colonel Stokes and the Armenian Council settled the matter with the Bolshevists and the sergeants were released.

Finally, a great meeting of townspeople was held on August 12th, and the Bolshevists put a motion forward that "the British should be thrown into the sea." The majority against the motion was large, and the Bolshevists wisely prepared to leave the town, with all their

arms and ammunition. The Caspian fleet—an independent party—trained their guns on them, however, as they attempted to leave the harbour, and they were forced to hand over all their stores of war before sailing for Astrakan.

We now took over the Tartar Boys' and Girls' Schools for an Infantry Billet, Hospital, and Supply Depot, and preparations were made to begin work in the line. On the 13th the Company and a half which had been left at Kasvin arrived, bringing our numbers up to 500. Officers made a tour of the line, and we began to feel that our work had commenced.

The general position was as follows :

The Turks, after being driven out of the town on the 6th had retired to a position distant—at its nearest point to the town—about five miles. Very little was seen or heard of them during the following ten days, and they appeared to be waiting for expected reinforcements. The general idea of the British Staff was to reinforce the Baku line by taking over most of the danger points and organising a reserve of the local army. The armoured cars were sent out to watch the right flank, which was entirely in the air, while a party of ninety men and three officers took over the extreme left, the way by which the Turks entered the town the first time. Two other positions had been taken up by the 15th of August, consisting of two officers and eighty men at a point known as Wolf's Gap, together with a section of machine-guns ; and five officers and one hundred and forty men on the Dirty Volcano, an important but very exposed position in the centre of the line. The latter party was reinforced by a section of machine-guns and one armoured car of the Duncar Brigade.

Life in Baku in the early days of our stay was interesting, and sometimes amusing. One morning a Russian medical surgeon entered the hospital and asked if he might place his medical unit at our disposal. He explained that it consisted of two surgeons and fifteen nursing sisters; "all very anxious to serve the British." He was at the moment in charge of a part of the line near the junction of Baladjari, where he had a hospital train. But, he said, he was his own master, and could leave this place to serve us on any part of the front, at any time. He was very disappointed when told that it would be better for him to stay where he was and serve us there.

Many other offers of help were received from different people, including several from ladies who wished to do nursing in the hospital. There was rather a difficulty in getting interpreters. A few presented themselves with good credentials, but it was very difficult to find out what their records were or whether they were to be trusted or not. Our anxiety on this account was not allayed when we heard that the Turkish Commander-in-Chief, Murcel Pasha, was in the town disguised as a Tartar.

There were, so we heard, nearly 1000 uninterned Germans and Austrians living in Baku, and most of them were actively at work spying and spreading false reports. The local police were quite incapable, and the Government took no action. Many times there were rumours of signalling to the enemy, and the Baku Government had the audacity one night to send police to arrest someone said to be signalling from the roof of our own billet.

It is certain that there were some spies in the town in direct communication with the Turks by telephone. Every ship arriving with troops or food was shelled by

the Turks, although the formation of the harbour was such that the enemy could not, in the early days, see when ships entered or left. The Hotel Europe was also carefully registered, although it was in such a position that no observation could possibly be carried out by the enemy. On one occasion they shelled a quay at which, it was announced, the British Staff boat was going to be moored.

On other occasions rumours were spread that the British had cornered all the food in the town, and a howling mob arrived at our billet, and refused to leave until a member of the Social Revolutionary Government arrived and refuted the statement. It was openly believed in the town that the British soldier was having as many as six or seven good meals a day. When the inhabitants saw the flour arriving from Persia, they formed a queue at the British billet, as they had been told that the British were selling bread.

A few mules, with half-a-dozen Indian drivers, were brought over from Persia. Large crowds always collected to watch them whenever they appeared in the streets. The inhabitants of Baku had seen Indians before, but, according to our interpreter, they did not know what kind of an animal this could be which was neither a horse nor a donkey. They had only seen camels and horses in the streets before.

Enormous crowds also collected to watch the daily guard-mounting outside the billet. The people had a genuine admiration for the smart turn-out of Thomas Atkins, and they seemed to regret the fall of their Old Army. The condition of the local army when we first arrived was appalling. Badly clothed and badly fed, it was a miserable rabble. Discipline and the elements

of drill were entirely unknown. Yet there were many ex-Russian regular officers and men in the town who would not help to defend the town, because of their hatred of the Armenians, who were in power.

Local troops proceeding to and from the line passed our billet every day, and the guard always turned out sharply to all armed parties. This ceremony was considered to be a great joke at first by the parties straggling by, but after the first week or so they commenced to pass "in fours" and at "the slope." Finally, in September, they were even returning the compliment with an "eyes right" or "left," as the case might be. One evening a very large procession of them passed the billet during "guard-mounting" parade, carrying large red banners, and headed by a mounted band. They approached in dead silence, and for the moment it appeared as though there was going to be trouble. But suddenly the band struck up "La Marseillaise," and the whole crowd passed by looking very pleased with themselves.

From the very first day of our arrival, it had been impressed upon the Baku Government that we only gave them help on the condition that they made an effort to help themselves. But they showed a singular pig-headedness in most things, and some of the conferences which our Staff had with them must have been discouraging. The people of Baku were fatally optimistic. They refused to believe that there were as many Turks coming against them as we said there were, and, further, they would not prepare against a larger force of the enemy than that opposed to them in the beginning—a matter of two thousand or so. There was continual quarrelling between different elements in the town; even

in such a time of necessity they would not do away with party feeling. The Armenians did not "put their backs" into the defence, although they knew that if the Turks once entered the town they would all be massacred, even as they had massacred the Tartars.

There were large quantities of arms and ammunition in the town, mostly in the shape of private property, and there were also a number of guns in various states of repair, in the arsenal. They made no effort, however, to show their full strength in the line. Barbed wire was also very common, but it was a long time before we could get them to put even a little up in front of their line. There was a large stock of grenades and explosives, but very few of the local troops knew how to use them.

The attitude of the people of Baku towards the possible disaster looming over them was remarkable. They really only showed a mild interest in their own and in our efforts to save the town. Right to the very last, life in Baku was as usual, the place being full of gaiety, and the boulevards crowded in the evenings with thousands of young men who should have been out in the line fighting for their very existence.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE BATTLE OF THE DIRTY VOLCANO

BAKU is situated on the southern shore of the peninsula of Apsheron. On the south-west side of the town there is a very steep ridge of rock, just above the oilfield of Bibi-Eibat, on which are situated the Armenian and Tartar cemeteries. Further to the west, there is another ridge, which rises from the sea on the south, and runs due north through Wolf's Gap for a distance of seven or eight miles, turning to the east, when it reaches Baladjari station, and gradually decreasing in height until it ends in a salt lake on the north-east side of the town.

The military situation when we arrived at Baku was a curious one. On the morning of the day of our arrival, the Turks, who had penetrated the oilfields and the cemeteries, were driven back over the next ridge. The local army then established themselves on this ridge, while the Turks retired still further, over the railway, and into a ridge of high hills, whence they could get excellent observation. From Baladjari station the line ran due south to the sea. About two miles north of Baladjari station there was an isolated position known as the Dirty Volcano (Griasni Vulcan), consisting of a series of picquets on the forward slopes of the hill, and to the north-east of this again a similar position on Stafford Hill (Binagadi). Further to the east the line ran north of Dygya round to Romani, ending " in the

air." The Turks were in possession of Mastagi, the garden city of the Apsheron Peninsula, whence Baku was supplied with eggs and vegetables. The enemy had even penetrated as far as Bina.

After the Turkish failure to get into the town from the south-west, it was believed that they would try from the north-east, although the oilfields in that direction made a very serious obstacle. The little movement of the enemy which was visible seemed to be mainly in that direction ; but it was quite certain that he would make no further move until his reinforcements arrived from Tiflis. These, the local papers said, were to consist of two divisions of infantry and many guns.

By the 15th of August three positions had been taken up by the North Staffords. The one on the left was important, as it was quite likely that the Turks would try to gain access to the town by their former route. Three miles or so to the north Wolf's Gap was occupied. Besides being the nearest point in the defensive line to the town, there was here a pavé road from Baku which ran down the side of the ridge to the railway station of Volchi Vorota, in the valley below. This was the only road by which guns and transport could be brought up the ridge. The Dirty Volcano was the third position, and this was very important, as it was a salient in the line, and afforded us good observation of the Turkish movements. The right flank, in the direction of Bina, was patrolled by our armoured cars.

These positions were all taken over from the local army, who had other troops filling the gaps in between these important points. While these points were held by the British, the Baku forces were to find the general reserve for the line. This they preferred to having

British troops in reserve, as they were firmly convinced that in the event of their giving way in front of the Turks (a certainty, in fact), we should not hesitate to fire on them and drive them back.

Major J. W. Ley, D.S.O., who commanded the British troops in the line, and several officers of the Dunsterforce, spent many strenuous days before the Turkish offensive commenced endeavouring to get the local troops to do something. Their idea was to scrape a shallow hole in the ground and lie in it until the Turk attacked. Sanitation was quite unknown to them. They refused to believe that barbed wire was of any use to them, and, in short, they were not anxious to do any work.

The line was fairly well connected up by telephone to headquarters in the town. But in most cases the telephone or the telephone wire was the private property of some individual in the line who took it into town with him when he went on leave, leaving the line entirely out of communication with anybody. Similarly, machine-guns and ammunition were brought in out of the line.

There was no discipline amongst these men, and frequently whole units spent a day in the town, so that there were only 20 men left on a three-mile front. Why the Turk never took one of these opportunities to walk into the town one cannot tell. Probably he thought it was a trap of some kind. At night time, too, the local army was very slack. Very few patrols ever went out, and it was possible to walk for miles along the line without being challenged by a sentry. When remonstrated with the Baku staff always promised to issue orders and see about it, but nothing was ever done.

In the meantime, an effort was planned to commence a small offensive on the right flank, with a view to

establishing the enemy's strength and intentions. Two or three battalions of the Armenians, supported by the Duncars, advanced and attacked the enemy outposts. But when serious opposition was encountered, together with fire from skilfully hidden machine-guns, the local troops broke and fled from the field, leaving the armoured cars to face the music alone. With great difficulty and loss of life they extricated themselves from this critical position. Popular feeling was in favour of a further effort in this direction, with the objective of Mastagi, and a "grand attack" (advertised in the papers beforehand) was organised to take place on the 17th of August. The day before a small party of reinforcements arrived from Persia, and a fourth column of the North Staffords, consisting of three officers and one hundred men, was sent out to Dygya, to co-operate with the local army.

The "grand attack" was to commence at 7 a.m., with the British troops in the second line. It commenced at six o'clock, as a matter of fact, but most of the troops were in position. While the attack was developing the officer in charge of the British troops received orders which were countermanded regularly every few minutes, including vague directions to capture various villages several miles away from the scene of the action and establish himself on the enemy's lines of communication. Finally, a Turkish counter-attack developed, and within a few minutes the British contingent found itself quite unsupported. From this dangerous position they were, however, skilfully extricated with small losses, and established a line in front of the village of Dygya. Of the three or four battalions of the local army which went into action in the morning,

about a hundred rejoined the British contingent, the remainder having returned to the town, including the officer in command on that front.

Our Commanding Officer and others whose work lay in the front lines spent a most strenuous time during the early days. There were no ponies available for moving from one part of the line to another, and these officers often walked over twenty miles a day on their rounds.

The British troops were having no light time either. The Turks had cut the pipe-line from the water supply, and the town was now dependent on local wells and pumps. There was in consequence a difficulty in obtaining water, and the men were beginning to suffer from various causes. By day any movement was heavily shelled by the Turks, so that all work had to be done by night, thus depriving men of necessary sleep. The ground was excessively hard for trench digging, and Russian picks and shovels are difficult to handle. The days were hot, but the nights were excessively cold, and the one blanket per man brought from Mesopotamia was quite inadequate. Two or three times a week, when strong winds blew, dust storms made rest impossible, and, owing to the insanitary conditions of the line held by the local troops, swarms of flies made rest equally impossible on calm days. They also contributed largely to the disease and sickness, from which the Baku army was suffering heavily.

Every day the Russian seaplanes and aeroplanes went up and reconnoitred the Turkish positions ; but it was not until two of our own planes arrived from Persia that information of any value was obtained. The Turks had now received reinforcements bringing their numbers up

to four or five thousand, but were apparently still waiting for a second division. Their failure to attack at once and make an end of us was attributed to the fact that they over-estimated the strength of the British forces, and were always afraid of an imaginary trap.

The strength of the Baku army has always been a subject of discussion. Whatever they said they had, or whatever they thought they had, the fact remains that they never showed more than 4000 men along their whole seventeen miles of front.

The officers of the Dunsterforce endeavoured to get a little organisation into the local forces, but the results were not encouraging. Working parties of civilians were sent up to the line at night to dig trenches, and put up barbed wire entanglements. But as these parties smoked and talked loudly the whole time, they were probably of more value to the enemy's patrols than they were to us. The machine-guns were sited for the troops, as very few of them knew anything about the theory of fire. The Inspector of Artillery resented interference with the guns and gunners, but, in spite of this, an officer and sergeant of the Dunsterforce unearthed two 6 in. howitzers, and commenced registration on the enemy positions. All went well until the enemy replied, when the gun team promptly fled to the town. The inspector was furious, as no firing was allowed until his verbal or written permission had been given. He gave way to pressure, however, and several other officers joined local batteries. Many guns were discovered, and sent up into the line, and sectors were organised, at any rate on paper.

On the 19th of August, the first party of the 9th Royal Warwicks arrived, consisting of three officers and 100

men. They proceeded to Dygya, and joined the detachment already there.

The Dirty Volcano position was in the sector of the 4th Armenian Brigade, whose headquarters were in a train just outside Baladjari station. The local armoured train, a particularly inoffensive one, was attached to this front, and there was also the local hospital train, of which our medical officer previously mentioned was in charge. The position held by the North Staffords consisted of six picquets, three on the forward slopes of the Volcano itself, and three on the sloping ground to the south of it. These picquets were from one to two or three hundred yards apart.

The railway station was held by an Armenian battalion which was also responsible for the gap between it and the left-hand Volcano picquet. A second Armenian battalion was in the station in reserve to the Volcano position. To the north-east there was another gap until Stafford Hill was reached. This was held by an Armenian battalion under an officer of the Dunsterforce. To the east again of Stafford Hill there were local troops, and then the North Stafford detachment on the left of Dygya and the Royal Warwick detachment in front were supported again by local troops on the right.

Our Commanding Officer visited the commandant of the 4th Armenian Brigade quite early to arrange for mutual co-operation. He admitted during the conversation that he had not visited his line and that he did not know the units or total numbers under his command. He stated that his reserve was in a place where we knew there were no troops at all; and when told, he calmly invited us to lunch, and said that it didn't matter, as the staff in the town were responsible for reserves. He was

quite interested to know that we had over a hundred men on the Volcano position—according to his map his own men were still holding it! He assured us that he would send up every available reinforcement, plus the armoured train, in the event of an attack.

On the 21st, the headquarters of the Royal Warwicks and a company arrived and proceeded to the right of the line, while on the 24th the 39th Brigade Headquarters arrived, and took over the whole of the front. On that day also, General Dunsterville landed from the s.s. *Kruger*, which had arrived from Enzeli, and paid a visit to various parts of the line. The strength of the British force in Baku now reached a maximum of about a thousand all ranks.

On the morning of the 26th of August, at 10.15 o'clock, the Turkish Commander-in-Chief launched his first attack, the objective being the Volcano, Stafford Hill, and the railway station of Baladjari. A furious bombardment was opened on the three picquets actually on the Volcano, which soon were lost to view in the dense clouds of bursting shells. A message was sent from the Volcano to the town announcing the attack, and a barrage was called for from the batteries supporting the position. Immediately after all the wires were broken by artillery fire, and the position became dependent on verbal communication. Two batteries refused to fire, the one because the Inspector of Artillery would not give permission, and the other because the leader had gone into town on business! The 6 in. howitzers fired until the teams ran away, and another battery of howitzers in Binagadi was kept in check by the Turks.

The troops in the position put up a fine fight, in spite

of odds. The first attack delivered by the Turks shortly after 10.15 was held up by the combined fire of the Duncar machine-guns, infantry Lewis guns, and rifles. It became apparent that reinforcements would be required, and an officer was sent to bring up the Armenian reserve from the station. But when they left the shelter of the buildings and came under shell-fire in the open, they refused to go on, and returned to the station, to stay there and watch the gallant garrison of the position perishing before them.

Two or three subsequent attacks were driven off, and heavy losses were inflicted on the enemy, who had to bring up more men and more guns, and, in addition, a large body of cavalry.

After holding out for over three and a half hours, the position was taken in the Turks' final assault, British officers and men fighting to the bitter end. The handful of survivors and the armoured car covered the retirement across the open ground towards the railway station of those of the wounded who could walk.

The Turks immediately turned their attention to Stafford Hill, which was held by the Armenian battalion. Here the Dunsterforce officer kept a firm line, with the aid of his automatic pistol until he was wounded in the leg. The Armenians then broke and scattered. But just at this moment the North Stafford detachment, which had moved from the left of Dygya, arrived and counter-attacked, driving the Turks from the hill and inflicting heavy losses on them.

When news of the attack reached the town, hurried preparations were made to send up reinforcements in lorries. About 11 o'clock, two officers and eighty men of the Worcesters, who had arrived by boat from Enzeli,

were disembarked and sent straight up to Baladjari, while another party of Royal Warwicks and North Staffords, consisting of cooks, orderlies, batmen and sick men, was rushed up to the front.

A counter-attack was launched against the Dirty Volcano position about 2 p.m., and some high ground between Stafford Hill and Baladjari Railway station was recaptured. This position was known as Warwick Castle. Further progress was impossible owing to lack of artillery support and the open nature of the ground. The line was consolidated after dusk had fallen, and the Turks showed no signs of attempting any further offensive at the moment.

The 8th Battery Royal Field Artillery arrived in the line at sunset, and placed some good salvos on the Turkish lines. This battery had completed the six hundred mile march across Persia from Mesopotamia, a fine achievement. The Inspector of Artillery also gave permission for fire to be opened at the enemy, and the local gunners spent the night firing at anything and everything.

That night there was trouble with the Armenian battalions; the Dunsterforce officers at Baladjari reporting that a large number of men refused to go into the line.

The action of the Dirty Volcano was a great blow to the Turk. Apart from the heavy losses inflicted upon him, his design to capture the railway station had been defeated. Had he succeeded in breaking through, nothing could have prevented him entering Baku that very night. Our losses were heavy, Capt. B. H. Sparrow, M.C. (in command), Lieut. G. R. H. Clark and Lieut. W. O. Russell were killed, while Lieuts. R. Russell,

J. L. Craig, T. D. Grant, A. Macbeath, and Capt. A. J. Ireland, M.C., R.A.M.C., were wounded, and over one hundred men were killed, missing or wounded. The Duncar machine-gun teams also sustained heavy casualties.

The great gallantry and heroism of the troops who fought to the end on the Volcano brought forth the warm praise of the Commander-in-Chief in his dispatches, and a great tribute to their bravery was made later on by the Turkish General himself.

On November 23rd, 1918, the Brigade-Major of the 39th Infantry Brigade visited General Murcel Pasha at Baladjari, and during the conversation the Turkish Commander-in-Chief volunteered the following statement: "The British troops holding the Mud Volcano against our attack on August 26th last put up a magnificent resistance. They fought until there were only five severely wounded left alive. One of these was an officer, and he died shortly afterwards. The British troops continued to fight after the position had fallen, and when overpowered and disarmed, fought with their fists against armed men. I attacked with one battalion of 500 men and, owing to the stubborn resistance encountered, my casualties were very severe and I had to bring up more guns. Your men put up a very fine fight."

## CHAPTER XII

### THE EVACUATION

THE loss of the Dirty Volcano had the effect of speeding up the organisers of the local army, but crowds of fit and able-bodied men were still to be seen lounging about the town, doing nothing to help their Government or themselves. Now and again patrols scoured the streets and effected a round up. But within a few days these men appeared again, having deserted from the line.

About this time some Cossack troops from General Bicherakov at Petrovsk commenced to arrive; but the Turks were also reported to be receiving large reinforcements. Their offensive against Petrovsk was progressing, and they were also demonstrating against our lines of communication in Persia, so that it appeared at one time as though we should be cut off entirely from Mesopotamia. Turkish forces operating from Tabriz penetrated to Astara, on the western shore of the Caspian Sea, a port between Baku and Enzeli; while other forces advanced on Zingan and Bijar, threatening Kasvin and Hamadan. The 4th Battalion of the Brigade, the 7th Gloucester Regiment, was diverted to these fronts in Persia, together with part of the Hampshire Regiment, and the Gurkhas.

Other ports on the Caspian also claimed our attention. A section of the armoured cars and a mission were sent to Petrovsk to assist Bicherakov, while another mission of Dunsterforce officers and a company of the Hampshire

Regiment went to Krasnovodsk, a valuable sea base on the east Caspian. A mission also went to Lenkoran, to the north of Astara.

In the meantime, the military situation at Baku was not hopeful. It became evident that the Turk was going to continue his offensive movement to drive the whole Baku force back on to the ridge round the town, and thus deprive us of the high ground whence we had observed his movements. He would then be able to mass for the final assault with a better chance of delivering it as a surprise.

On August 27th a Russian battalion—No. 5 of the Baku Army—was sent up to hold a portion of the line between Baladjari village and Warwick Castle. This battalion was quite the best we had seen. It was composed largely of ex-Russian soldiers, under an ex-lieutenant of the Old Armies, and had a good standard of discipline.

At dawn on August 31st the enemy launched his next attack against Stafford Hill ; where Lieut. Elder was in command, and this position, after a gallant resistance of several hours, fell to the Turks, with the loss of one officer, Lieut. R. L. Petty, and twenty to thirty men of the North Staffords. The artillery support was much better this time, and excellent shooting was done by the 8th Battery R.F.A., whose gunners also worked a battery of Russian howitzers.

Warwick Castle was next attacked, and this position also fell to superior numbers, after bitter fighting.

The Turks, who attacked in masses with trumpets blowing, suffered heavy losses, especially from short range machine-gun fire of the Duncar sections established in the derricks of the oilfield there.

Late in the day the Turks also attacked Dygya, but were driven off by the Royal Warwicks and a Russian battalion, which remained steady.

The Turks continued their offensive during the night, and the position became so serious that a withdrawal from the direction of Dygya was ordered. At the same time, the North Stafford detachment at Wolf's Gap was moved over to the east of Baladjari.

Immediately after dawn on September 1st the Royal Warwickshire Regiment was heavily attacked from the front and from both flanks. They retired steadily, fighting a magnificent rearguard action to the line of the railway, and there made a final stand. Turkish cavalry charged as they were crossing the Salt Lake, inflicting heavy losses, and taking some prisoners. The Turks pressed on further eastward in an attempt to get into the town through the oilfields ; but here they met with serious opposition from armoured cars and snipers in the oil derricks, and this obstacle effectively stopped their offensive movement.

The hope of saving Baku from the Turks now appeared to be shattered. The British losses had been heavy, and it did not appear justifiable to risk any further blows from the Turk. Under these conditions the British Staff approached the Baku Government with a view to a withdrawal of the British troops. It was pointed out that we had come over to help in the defence, and not to undertake the whole burden of it ourselves ; and that the expected assistance from the local troops had been quite useless.

The Baku Government refused, however, to allow anybody to leave, and threatened armed force to prevent any attempt to evacuate the town. The people of

Tiflis had sent a wireless message to the people of Baku urging them to make terms, and this was now suggested as a compromise. The Baku Government agreed, and selected delegates to go out to the Turks, and see what terms could be got. The delegates, we heard, became nervous when they got to the line, and returned to the town, suggesting that the neutral consuls in the town should go in their stead.

It was when the neutral deputies asked what terms they were to make that the Baku Government disclosed such an attitude towards their British Allies that the consuls could not but refuse to be a party to any such work. The Government thereupon announced that it was their intention to fight to the finish.

The Turks were very quiet during the next ten days, except for casual bombardments of the town and of the Hotel Europe. All the British wounded and sick were evacuated by ship to Enzeli, where a temporary hospital was organised. Our losses in sick and battle casualties had been heavy, but they were partially made good by the arrival of Headquarters and two Companies of the 9th Worcester Regiment. This unit relieved the North Staffords in Baladjari, who took up another position on the ridge to the south. A mobile column was also formed in the town, consisting of about 80 men, as a small reserve.

About the 9th and 10th of September our aeroplanes reported that all movements in the Turkish lines appeared to be in the direction of the ridge on the west of the Baku-Tiflis railway, where large bodies of men were already gathered.

On Thursday afternoon, the 12th of September, the one and only deserter from the Turks gave himself up to the 9th Royal Warwicks.

This man was an officer, and an Arab by race. He stated that his brother officers had always looked down upon and ill-treated him on account of his race, and that was his reason for deserting. He gave the strength of the force opposed to us as about 10,000, consisting mainly of Turkish regular troops, which had been on Gallipoli right through the war. There were also a large number of Caucasian irregulars and followers. They were, he said, surprised to find themselves opposed by British troops in all the positions which they had attacked, and their losses had been heavy, especially in the action of Dirty Volcano. The prisoners taken on the Salt Lake on September 1st had been sent to Elizabetopol. General Murcel Pasha had issued an order of the day to his troops stating that he was going to attack and capture the town of Baku in one day, giving them promises of great loot and good times if they were successful. This attack he thought would be made on the 14th, the objective being Wolf's Gap, while holding attacks were made all round.

The morale of the Turks, he said, was very good, and they were burning to get at the Armenians, who had invited the British over to make this stubborn resistance.

The North Stafford detachment was sent back to Wolf's Gap, and the reserve in the town took up a position near the right of the left sector of the line, on the night of the 13th. The Armenians, beginning to realise the seriousness of the situation, reinforced their line all along the ridge on the west of the town.

At 2 a.m. on the 14th the alarm was first given. Some Turkish patrols engaged some British patrols in front of Wolf's Gap.

About 4 a.m. a fierce bombing fight commenced about a mile north of the Wolf's Gap, and several Turkish batteries opened fire.

This continued until dawn, when the Baku army headquarters announced that the Armenians in this spot had repelled a Turkish attack. At this time, the small reserve near the left was withdrawn to the town.

A sea fog obscured the whole line until half an hour after sunrise, when it suddenly lifted and revealed the whole Turkish army (infantry and cavalry) crossing the railway valley, and advancing in mass to attack the ridge west of the town. At the same moment every available gun on both sides opened fire, and the final struggle for Baku commenced.

The local battalions to the north and south of Wolf's Gap broke and retired before the Turkish assault was delivered, taking up a new position half-way back to the town.

The small party of the North Staffords, under Capt. Turkington, bore the whole brunt of the attack, and fell back suffering very heavy casualties, as they were surrounded on three sides. 2nd Lieut. H. F. Gammie was killed.

Within a few minutes the Turkish guns had broken up the Armenian troops in their new position, and the whole army on the west of the town retired to the shelter of the outskirts of Baku. The Turks followed up rapidly, and by 9 o'clock had penetrated the cemeteries and were firing down into the town.

From this position, however, they were immediately driven by a determined counter-attack of the small reserve column, under the Commanding Officer, Major J. W. Ley, D.S.O., who held the line against every



LIEUT-COL. J. W. LEY, D.S.O.

Commanding 7th Bn. N. Staff. R. 1916-1917 at KUT and BAGHDAD,  
and at BAKU 1918. Died in PERSIA, 1918.



attack throughout the day, thus safeguarding the line of retreat of the troops on the north side of the town.

The detachment of British troops on the extreme left under Capt. Bollington, M.C., D.C.M., was very nearly cut off, but fought its way through the oilfield of Bibi Eibat, and joined the party in the cemeteries. During the morning the action became general on the whole front, and heavy attacks were made on the Brigade at Baladjari. Losses were so heavy that a retirement was compulsory, and the Worcesters and Royal Warwicks were skilfully extricated from their positions on the railway.

The Turks now made a determined effort to cut these troops off from the town, and made a massed attack on the North Staffords, who were guarding the left flank with 45 men under two officers, Major Beresford Havelock and Lieut E. M. Spink, who were killed almost at once, gallantly directing their men to the last.

Most of the men became casualties, fighting to the last, the position being saved in the nick of time by a fine counter-attack of a company of the Royal Warwicks.

During the afternoon the line had to be withdrawn still further, under the directions of the Officer Commanding the Brigade and his Staff. Dunsterforce officers urged their men to withstand further attacks, and fought their batteries until they had to blow them up. Our own gunners of the 8th Battery were continually in action for the sixteen hours of the battle, fighting their own guns and any other batteries that came along.

The Baku Staff announced that a "grand counter-attack" would take place. Swarms of men in civilian clothing came up, with rifles and bandoliers, and helped

to repel a few more Turkish attacks, made just before sunset.

The Turks, having gained the ground overlooking the town and harbour, brought guns up and commenced a general bombardment which added to the confusion. Large numbers of troops were driven up to the line from the town, whither they had fled in the morning, by Cossacks, who used their automatic pistols and their sabres freely.

The "grand counter-attack" did not take place, and as evening fell the situation appeared hopeless. The Turk was fought to a standstill, and a reserve of one good British battalion thrown in at that time would have broken him up. But there was no such reserve, and no organisation to deal with one. The Baku staff only sent up large parties of men and boys hastily gathered at the last moment, with rifles and a few rounds in their hands. Their fatal optimism had proved their undoing.

At 6.30 p.m. a message was sent to the North Staffords in the cemeteries to hang on at all costs until the Brigade had withdrawn from the line. The sick and wounded from the town hospital were safely loaded on a ship during the afternoon, which sailed about 5 p.m. Some of our wounded had been taken to Russian hospitals in the town and most of these were also collected and sent away; but unfortunately a few were overlooked. The hospital unit, which was situated just below the cemeteries, rendered splendid aid throughout the day, the Russian nursing sisters themselves proceeding up into the firing line to fetch serious cases. We saw no less than three of these gallant women borne away, severely wounded by shrapnel.

Darkness fell, and the firing died away, to be succeeded

by a short silence, during which the Turks crawled forward and commenced hand-to-hand bombing in the cemeteries. Pandemonium broke loose, and every man of the Baku army shouted and fired into the night as hard as he could.

Just then, at 8.30 p.m., the order was given for the North Staffords to withdraw from the line, which they did almost unnoticed. The Brigade was embarked on two boats which had been prepared for the Dunsterforce. By 11 p.m., all were safely on board. The guns of the 8th Battery were taken on board, but the horses were shot. The mules were turned loose into the streets, but all the saddlery was salvaged. The armoured cars were run into the sea, and the machine guns taken on board, while the engines of the Ford vans were smashed up and burned.

A deputation was sent down to the quay by the Baku Government when they heard of the withdrawal, which ordered General Dunsterville to send his men back to the line at once, or be sunk by the guns of the fleet.

General Dunsterville, replying in Russian, summarised the operations in a few terse sentences, and referred to the broken promises and prevarication with which he had met, finally refusing to waste another British life on such a people. Thereupon the deputation gave orders for the fleet to sink us.

But the means of communication between town and fleet—the wireless station—had been destroyed early in the day, and the messenger had to go off in a small boat. By the time the fleet received the order, the s.s.'s *Kursk* and *Kruger* were just leaving the harbour, and although the fleet opened fire, their shots fell wide in the darkness.

Thus the 7th North Staffords completed the third evacuation—Suvla Bay, Cape Helles, and Baku.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE RETURN TO BAKU.

WE arrived at Enzeli at six o'clock in the evening of the 15th of September, and received a welcome as though we had returned from the dead ; for, after the Armenian refusal on September 1st to allow us to evacuate Baku we had been given up as lost and written off the strength of the Force. In the meantime, owing to Turkish advances on Zingan and across the hills towards Enzeli, the evacuation of Kasvin and the lines of communication had been prepared, so that the Force could retire to Hamadan. The return of the troops from Baku caused this plan to be cancelled, and rapid preparations were made to withstand the Turkish advance.

The Royal Warwicks were sent to Krasnovodsk to strengthen the little garrison there and watch the Bolshevik activities in that direction. The North Staffords were left to defend the port of Enzeli, where the new British Caspian fleet was being prepared, and the Worcesters proceeded to Resht and Menzil.

There was plenty to do at Enzeli. In addition to watching the Turks, who were now within thirty miles of the town, large numbers of Armenian refugees had to be looked after. On the night of September 14th, a panic had caught these wretched creatures, who flocked to the quays and crowded any and every ship.

Several thousands of them sailed to Petrovsk, while others came to Enzeli. And so, in addition to the work of collecting supplies for the troops, food and accommodation had to be found for over six thousand civilians.

Luckily, Kuchik Khan had come to terms with the British, realising that commerce was better than war, and he sent his niece to Enzeli to work with the supply officer. Between them, they fed the multitude very successfully, on meat, bread, and rice, of which latter commodity there were copious quantities. Tea and sugar were also brought in from the surrounding country, while a certain amount of fish was caught locally.

Before departing to Baghdad, General Dunsterville assembled all the troops who had taken part in the defence of Baku, and delivered a spirited address on the past and present situations.

After the British ships had sailed on that memorable night, another ship, which had been loaded with guns and breech blocks from the Russian Arsenal, ran the gauntlet of the Baku fleet, and arrived safely at Enzeli, with its valuable cargo, the following day. Reports from agents who had arrived since Baku fell showed that a few British soldiers had unfortunately been left behind, but it was hoped that some of them had gone to Petrovsk with General Bicherakov's troops, who had left Baku the same night. The Turks had massacred some of the Armenians, and fired parts of the town and quays. General Dunsterville, in concluding, pointed out that this little "side show" had not been in vain, for we had kept the Central Powers out of some very valuable oil fields for over six weeks, and had caused the Turks to send a large force against us which might have been employed elsewhere. The gallant defence alone would always live in the history of the British race.

The next month at Enzeli was an anxious time for us all. The influenza epidemic arrived, and, in addition, cholera and smallpox broke out among the refugees.

The British troops had lost every stitch of clothing at Baku, except what they stood in, and they now had to face the climate without even their one blanket each. By degrees, some "rezais," or quilts, were bought from the local Persians, and at the beginning of November, some warm clothing commenced to arrive from Mesopotamia. The addition of honey to the rations was greatly appreciated at this time.

All the sick and wounded who could be moved were evacuated down the six hundred miles of road to Mesopotamia in motor and horse-drawn ambulances. At the same time, sailors and guns were coming up for the Royal Navy at Enzeli.

Two sergeants of the North Staffords who had been wounded at Baku on September 14th arrived at Enzeli on a ship of refugees, and two other men were sent down from Petrovsk by General Bicherakov.

Shortly afterwards, Petrovsk also fell to the Turks, and General Bicherakov and his troops arrived at Enzeli.

On September 30th another boat arrived from Baku with several exchanged prisoners of war, the exchange having been arranged by the Russians and Tartars. Their stories were very interesting. Two of them had been taken prisoners at Wolf's Gap on the morning of the 14th. They were taken to the Turkish Commander-in-Chief and his Staff, where they remained throughout the day watching the battle. They were given bread and water. On the following morning they also witnessed the surrender of the town by the heads of the Baku Government, who went out to the Turks with a flag of truce.

Three others had been overlooked by the ambulance,

and were left in a Russian hospital. When the Turks entered this place, they said, they killed some of the Armenians, but did not interfere with the British, who continued to receive proper medical attention until their wounds were healed. Those of the prisoners who were fit were given plenty of hard work to do for the Turks, digging gunpits and carrying shells. Several of them were interrogated by German Intelligence Officers, who volunteered the information that England had lost the War on the Western front. There was apparently a large German and Austrian Staff with the Turkish Army.

When the Armistice was signed by the Turks preparations were made to re-occupy Baku. The Royal Navy from Mesopotamia had been organising a fleet of transports for this purpose, and also arming some of the steamers on the Caspian, with a view to action against any hostile boats which might be met with. This fleet was quite ready by November 14th.

The whole of the 39th Brigade had been assembled at Enzeli, together with the Machine-Gun Company, and the 8th and 44th Batteries R.F.A. The Dunsterforce and the Duncar Brigade had returned to Mesopotamia through Persia.

This force embarked and sailed on the 16th of November. There were 17 transports and two or three gunboats. General Bicherakov's troops also sailed in a separate convoy.

The whole fleet assembled off Baku on the morning of the 17th, and sailed in "line ahead," led by the s.s. *Kruger*, which was flying the flags of Great Britain, France, America, and Russia.

The Battalion did not actually disembark until the 18th, but it rained heavily most of the 17th and 18th,

and the march to our allotted billet was accomplished through streets which were more like raging torrents than streets. The billet was in a school ; the accommodation was very limited and the building was insanitary, so we were not sorry to leave it after a short stay. One of the first duties was the disarmament of the inhabitants, and a considerable number of troops was used to support the police in carrying this out.

There was plenty of work for the British Staff in Baku.

The food problem was boldly tackled, and established on a satisfactory basis. Commerce was encouraged on the Caspian, which was kept clear of Bolshevist boats by our Navy ; and the Armenian refugees at Enzeli were returned to their homes. Work re-commenced in the oilfields, many of which had closed down on account of the revolution and the war, leaving their streams of oil to inundate the country, or run to waste into the sea. There was a pipe line from Baku to Batoum before the war, but this was now out of order, as so many people had tapped it along its course with a view to getting free fuel. The railway, however, was re-opened, and trains commenced running through Tiflis to Batoum and Poti, and northwards to Petrovsk.

South Russia and Caucasia are so dependent on oil fuel that it has been said that the Power which owned Baku has these districts at its mercy. This would appear to be true. The railway engines and steamships burn oil fuel only. It is used in every town for cooking and heating, and there is of course a great demand for it for consumption in internal combustion engines.

The terms of the Armistice with Turkey provided for the evacuation of the Caucasus, and its re-occupation by British troops. When the troops from Enzeli

arrived in Baku on November 17th a large Turkish force was still at Baladjari, while train-loads of troops from Petrovsk were still being run through on their way to Batoum.

The Turks did an immense amount of damage in Baku, and spent the six weeks of their occupation in sending away everything they could possibly loot, to Batoum, for shipment to Constantinople. Besides oil and stores, household furniture and clothing, hardware and carpets, grand pianos and motor cars, and horses and camels were sent away in many trains. A Commission known as the Allied Claims Commission was therefore established at Baku to consider the losses of private persons and to assess the damage, in order that a bill of indemnification might be added to the peace terms to be presented to the Turks.

The British troops had quite a busy time in the early days of the occupation in keeping law and order among the many peoples of the Caucasus. To prevent the Republics of Armenia and Georgia from fighting one another, a neutral zone had to be demarcated between these two countries, and policed by the British.

At first a great many of the Caucasian peoples were openly hostile to the British. This was partly due to their hatred of law and order—they are born fighters—and partly due to a fear of annexation to Great Britain. The following translation of an article which appeared in a Baku paper is interesting in this connection: "The war is over, and all danger to England is passed. Germany, it can be said, has already been plucked of her colonies in Africa. Entrance into Asia and other countries will be closed to her. She, with her unusually developed industries, will be left to stew in her own fat

within her own boundaries. After their victory the English have become possessed of the same spirit as after their victory over the Boers, and Lloyd George is doing nothing that would distinguish him from Joseph Chamberlain. And this is comprehensible. Lloyd George is a practical politician, availing himself of all means and pursuing a definite object. In peace time, this object was attained by means of the boldest and most radical reforms. Now the object is being attained by cultivation of the intoxication of victory and the acquisition of new territories. The Anglo-Saxons have taken Australia. A nation related to them owns the greater part of America. The occupation of the whole of Africa is nearly completed. Next in turn is the Near East, Asia Minor, and perhaps the Caucasus."

On 24th November "B" Company was ordered out to Baladjari Railway junction, five miles distant, to regulate the passage of Turkish troops, who were evacuating the country according to the terms of the Armistice. On 30th the whole Battalion was ordered to move to Baladjari the following day in anticipation of trouble with the Turks. It was somewhat ironical that a thanksgiving service to celebrate the conclusion of hostilities was held in our billet on the 1st December. The order to move was cancelled at the eleventh hour, but too late to enable the Battalion to attend the service.

The battlefields in the vicinity had meanwhile been searched, and on 3rd and 6th December we buried with military honours the bodies of Major Havelock and five men, and also the body of 2nd Lieut. Gammie. The whole Battalion was present at the ceremonies, and the chaplains of all denominations attended. The bodies

were afterwards buried again in the British cemetery just on the outskirts of Baku.

After most strenuous efforts on the part of the Quartermaster and his staff our new billet, the Winter Club, was reported ready for occupation, and we moved in on 7th December. The billet was a vast improvement of our school, and, although it had been completely looted and stripped by the Bolsheviks, it boasted some fine and spacious rooms such as a theatre, ball-room, dining-room, library and card-room, which were eminently suitable for billeting purposes; the kitchen was also very well equipped with oil-burning ranges. The card-room was allotted to the Sergeants' Mess; it was reputed in former days to have been the scene of the highest play of anywhere in the world. We were lucky to be able to secure for the Sergeants' Mess a full-sized English billiard table—the only one of its kind in Baku—which was kindly lent by the English Club. Constant improvements to the building were carried out, and by the middle of January we were really comfortably housed.

The programme of Christmas festivities was ruined by a strike engineered by the Bolshevik element, as the military precautions necessitated practically every man of the Battalion being scattered in guards and detachments all over the town. These strikes and alarms recurred once or more every month. On 28th December "B" Company rejoined Headquarters from Baladjari.

In the early days of January the title of the Force was changed with bewildering frequency. Within a few days we passed from North Persian Force to British Force, then to Salonica Force, and finally to Army of the Black Sea. Prices ruled very high in Baku, and until a

branch of the Expeditionary Force Canteen was opened the cheapest article to be bought in a café was a glass of milk, which cost 8 roubles. The price of the cigarettes so beloved by the British soldier was prohibitive, and the only cigarettes obtainable were Russian cigarettes. On 23rd January our first official leave party of 2 officers and 10 men, most of whom had not seen England for 10 years, went home. About this time more troops from the army of the Black Sea were sent to Baku, enabling officers and men to be released for leave and demobilisation. On 29th January, Lieut.-Gen. Sir George Milne, Commander-in-Chief of the Army of the Black Sea, inspected the Battalion in their billet.

On 7th February we lost a horse named Harry, who had to be destroyed after having been badly burnt on the voyage from Enzeli. This horse joined the Battalion in January, 1916, in Egypt, originally as Commanding Officer's horse, and subsequently as the Quartermaster's horse. He had accompanied the Battalion in all its engagements and travels. On the 12th February our first demobilisation party left, and was followed by other parties at fairly frequent intervals. Early in April the Battalion moved out to Zabrat, in the middle of the Balakhani oil fields, about 11 miles from Baku, and was billeted in the machinery works of Messrs. Mautacheff. Our new quarters were not so handsome as the Winter Club, but all ranks were glad to be out in the country and away from the dust and smells of Baku. We had our own football ground, and arrangements were made for the men to go into Baku on week-end leave. On 17th April the first official copy of Demobilisation Regulations was received; 475 men having already been demobilised! Their journey home was an





interesting one ; the stages being by rail from Baku to Batoum, thence by sea to Constantinople, down the Bosphorus and past Gallipoli, with its undying memories, to Salonika through Greece by rail and motor lorry and across the Strait of Taranto, and then by rail through Italy and France. Later on troops went by sea from Constantinople to Taranto.

On 1st May the Battalion was ordered to Petrovsk for active operations, but the move was cancelled at the last minute. During our stay in Balakhani we had two very enjoyable visits by the 27th Division Concert Party. On 20th May orders for disbandment were received. Half the officers and all the men were to be transferred to the 7th Battalion Royal Berkshire Regiment at Tiflis, the remaining officers being distributed amongst other battalions of the 39th Infantry Brigade. On 13th June, 1919, the Commanding Officer bade farewell to all ranks, and on 14th June the 7th (Service) Battalion The Prince of Wales's (North Staffordshire Regiment) ceased officially to exist.

## APPENDIX I

### Victoria Cross.

Major and Temp. Lieut.-Col. E. E. D. HENDERSON,  
whilst in Temporary Command of the 9th Bn. R.  
Warwick Regt. on the Hai River, January 25th,  
1917.

### Commander St. Michael & St. George.

Temp. Lieut.-Col. T. A. ANDRUS, Commanding 7th Bn.  
N. Stafford Regt. 2/2/16.

### Distinguished Service Order.

Major (Temp. Lieut.-Col.) J. W. LEY, Commanding  
7th N. Stafford Regt. 25/8/17.

### Order of the British Empire.

Major (Temp. Lieut.-Col.) G. E. LEMAN, Commanding  
7th N. Stafford Regt.  
Major A. E. BANKHEAD-BROWNE. 11/12/19.

### Military Cross.

Capt. and Adjt. J. Y. ROBINSON. 28-1-16  
Capt. R. G. THOMSON (Shropshire Light Infantry).  
2/5/16.  
Sec. Lieut. R. MCDOWELL. Order of the day, No. 51.  
Mesopotamian Exp. Force, 8/2/17.  
Capt. and Quartermaster F. BAKER }  
Sec. Lieut. J. BOLLINGTON, D.C.M. } 25/8/17.  
Capt. A. J. IRELAND, R.A.M.C. }  
Capt. B. H. SPARROW (Shropshire Light Infantry).  
7/2/18.  
Lieut. J. L. CRAIG }  
Sec. Lieut. E. M. ELDER } Order of the day, No. 121,  
(Black Watch) } 9/10/18.  
Capt. and Adjt. L. R. MISSEN. 1/1/19.

**Distinguished Conduct Medal.**

- |                               |   |  |
|-------------------------------|---|--|
| R.S.M. G. PARKER              | } | Dardanelles 28-1-16                                  |
| Sergt. J. BOLLINGTON          |   |  |
| Sergt. J. MADDOCK             |   |  |
| No. 11859 Pte. LAWTON         |   |  |
| No. 6804 Corpl. J. ALEXANDER  | } | Bombing operations at<br>Beit-Aiesa, April,<br>1916. |
| No. 14529 Pte. G. PHILLIPS    |   |  |
| No. 12815 Pte. MAYER          |   |  |
| No. 6496 C.S.M. W. J. O'BRIEN | } | 29/8/17.   |
| No. 8350 C.S.M. F. ROBINSON   |   |  |
| No. 13732 Sergt. G. THOMAS    |   |  |
| No. 8586 Pte. A. PRICE        |   |  |
| No. 19370 Pte. F. NUTTALL     |   |  |
| No. 15545 Pte. T. BRYAN.      |   | Order of the day, No. 96,<br>19/12/17.               |
| No. 10595 Pte. A. KELLY       | } | Order of the day, No. 121,<br>9/10/18.               |
| No. 14010 Cpl. T. PARKES      |   |  |
| No. 10078 C.S.M. J. T. HULME. |   | 26/8/18.   |

**Military Medal.**

- |                                       |   |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| No. 14018 Pte. J. T. McDONALD.        |   | Order of the day,<br>No. 96, 19/12/17.        |
| No. 203688 Lce.-Corpl E C. PASCOE.    |   | Order of the day,<br>No. 123, 18/11/18.       |
| No. 48693 Corpl. F. H. CLARKE         | } | Order of the<br>day, No.<br>123,<br>24/12/18. |
| No. 11293 Pte. J. DEAKIN              |   |   |
| No. 18345 Lce.-Corpl. E. GARBUTT      |   |   |
| No. 16563 Pte. F. WOOD                |   |   |
| No. 16958 Pte. W. J. WOODWARD, D.C.M. |   |   |
| No. 10645 Pte. W. PUGH                |   |   |
| No. 8460 Pte. E. SHAW                 |   |   |
| No. 39345 Pte. H. VALENTINE           |   |   |
| No. 14198 Pte. J. H. WOODVINE         |   |   |

**Meritorious Service Medal.**

No. 6402 C.S.M. T. DRAKE	} Order of the day, No. 72, 29/4/17.
No. 10041 Sergt. T. C. HOLLINSHEAD	
No. 10325 Corpl. H. DEAN	
No. 6941 C.Q.M.S. J. PATTISON	} Order of the day, No. 114, 4/8/18.
No. 18673 Pte. H. E. ROGERS	
R.Q.M. Sergt. E. FLORENCE	} 9/6/19.
C.Q.M. Sergt. W. ASPLEY	

**Mentioned in Dispatches.**

Major B. A. J. HAVELOCK, G.S.O. III. Sheikh Saad, 1916-1917		
Lieut.-Col. T. A. ANDRUS, C.M.G.	28/1/16	
Lieut. and Quartermaster F. BAKER	26/1/16	
Lieut.-Col. F. H. WALKER (killed in action)	} 10/4/16.	
Capt. J. BOLLINGTON		
Sec.-Lieut. R. JESSON		
No. 7752 R.S.M. G. PARKER		
No. 8534 C.S.M. FALLOWS		
No. 17661 Lce.-Corpl. WARD (killed in action)		
No. 11859 Pte. LAWTON	} 10/4/16.	
Lieut.-Col. T. A. ANDRUS, C.M.G.,		12/10/16.
No. 7619 Sergt. C. BOARDMAN	} 15/8/17.	
No. 10294 Pte. W. ROWLEY		
No. 8431 Pte. R. EVANS		
No. 15453 Pte. B. WALSH		
No. 8632 Sergt. J. PATRICK		
Brig.-Gen. T. A. ANDRUS, C.M.G.,	15/8/17.	
Major J. W. LEY, D.S.O.	} 15/8/17.	
Capt. H. M. ROBINSON		
Sec. Lieut. B. E. ATKINS		} Killed in action
Sec. Lieut. R. F. H. BRADLEY		
Sec. Lieut. H. E. ROSE		

- Capt. and Adj. A. PUNCHARD (killed in action)
- No. 11385 Pte. J. CLOWES
- No. 11293 Pte. J. DEAKIN
- No. 11295 Pte. J. DUNN
- No. 9383 Sergt. T. LEIGH
- No. 10099 Sergt. T. PRYOR
- No. 8456 Sergt. J. PEGG
- Lieut.-Col. G. E. LEMAN } 27/8/18.
- Capt. F. V. PRIESTLEY } 27/8/18.
- Capt. and Quartermaster F. BAKER 23/8/18
- Major J. W. LEY, D.S.O. (since deceased)
- Lieut. R. A. P. HARE (Yorks Regt.)
- Lieut. H. E. ROSE
- No. 39607 C.S.M. HOLMES (killed in action) } 18/2/19.
- No. 16464 Sergt. U. WORTHINGTON
- No. 32536 Sergt. A. C. GRANT
- No. 7664 Lce.-Corpl. McDONOUGH
- Capt. & Quartermaster F. BAKER, M.C. } 9/6/19.
- No. 8456 Sergt. J. PEGG

### Promotions.

- Temp. Lieut.-Col. T. A. ANDRUS, C.M.G., to be Temp. Brigadier-General to command 39th Infantry Brigade 11/7/16.
- Major (Temp. Lieut.Col.) T. A. ANDRUS, C.M.G., to be Brevet Lieut.-Col. (Gazette of India 3/6/16).

### Royal Humane Society Bronze Medal.

- No. 14198 Pte. J. H. WOODVINE awarded R.H.S. Bronze Medal with Certificate for gallantry in saving life on the occasion of the torpedoing of H.M.T. *Ivernia* by enemy action 15/4/18.

132 7TH (SER.) BN. PRINCE OF WALES'S

FOREIGN ORDERS

Second Class Order of St. Anne of Russia  
(with Swords).

Brig.-Gen. T. A. ANDRUS, C.M.G. 15/5/17.

Third Class Order of St. Stanislas  
of Russia  
(with Swords).

Temp. Lieut.-Col. G. E. LEMAN. 15/5/17.

Serbian Gold Medal.

No. 14529 Pte. PHILLIPS }  
No. 12815 Pte. MAYER } 15/5/17.

Rumanian Croix de Virtute Militara  
(for bravery).

No. 10226 C.S.M. J. RILEY. G.R. Order 1462 of 31/10/18

Awarded Higher Rate of Pay.

Capt. and Quartermaster F. BAKER, M.C. 23/8/18

Except when otherwise stated the date given is the date of the  
"London Gazette."

## APPENDIX II.

## CASUALTIES—GALLIOLI.

<i>Date.</i>	<i>Killed.</i>	<i>Died of Wounds.</i>	<i>Wounded.</i>	<i>Wounded and Missing.</i>	<i>Missing.</i>
1915. 16-23 July.	14 O.R.	Capt. C. G. Graill 5 O.R.	Maj. W. A. S. Edwards Capt. E. E. D. Henderson Lt. G. D. Wheway 39 O.R.		
5-11 Aug.	Capt. H. P. L. Heyworth (Adjutant) 36 O.R.	12 O.R.	Lt.-Col. T. A. Andrus Capt. W. C. Ratcliffe Lt. J. Y. Robinson Lt. H. M. Robinson Lt. A. Menzies 2/Lt. T. H. Averill 2/Lt. R. A. Hope 2/Lt. R. Jesson 2/Lt. C. G. Arbutnot 2/Lt. D. C. D. Cotes 196 O.R.	11 O.R.	11 O.R.
21-23 Aug.	8 O.R.	5 O.R.	18 O.R.		
1916. 5-8 Jan.	Lt.-Col. F. H. Walker 42 O.R.	2 O.R.	Capt. B. E. Nicolls 2/Lt. E. Smyth 2/Lt. B. E. Atkins 104 O.R.	4 O.R.	
Total losses July, 1915, to Jan., 1916, on Gallipoli.	2 Officers 111 O.R.	1 Officer 52 O.R.	17 Officers 377 O.R.	15 O.R.	11 O.R.

Also died of disease, 35 O.R.

N.B.—The total losses include additional losses, on dates other than those given in the left-hand column, which were generally incurred in trench warfare.

O.R. denotes other ranks.

MESOPOTAMIA.

<i>Date.</i>	<i>Killed.</i>	<i>Died of Wounds.</i>	<i>Wounded.</i>	<i>Wounded and Missing.</i>	<i>Missing.</i>
<p><i>Relief of Kut.</i> 5th April to 24th May.</p>	<p>Capt. R. L. Armes Capt. A. C. Dingley Capt. E. A. Hart Lt. J. C. Duguid</p> <p>77 O.R.</p>	<p>Maj. W. A. S. Edwards Capt. J. Y. Robinson M.C. (Adjutant) 2/Lt. N. Cargin</p> <p>38 O.R.</p>	<p>Lt.-Col. G. E. Leman 2/Lt. B. E. Atkins 2/Lt. J. A. Marks 2/Lt. H. Ogier 2/Lt. G. C. English 2/Lt. J. A. Unwin 2/Lt. R. Burton 2/Lt. C. H. Turkington 2/Lt. W. L. Cowley 2/Lt. H. D. G. Holt 2/Lt. P. F. C. Pendock 2/Lt. R. G. Thomson, M.C. 2/Lt. I. P. Sill 2/Lt. R. F. Gridley 2/Lt. Lewis 2/Lt. B. H. Sparrow 2/Lt. J. E. Clark 2/Lt. C. C. B. Ward 347 O.R.</p>	<p>7 O.R.</p>	
<p>On the Hai River. Dec., 1916.</p>	<p>2/Lt. N. Nalsmith 28 O.R.</p>	<p>Lt. C. C. B. Ward 19 O.R.</p>	<p>Lt.-Col. J. W. Ley Capt. E. G. Shepherd Capt. H. M. Robinson 2/Lt. G. Parker 2/Lt. H. Ogier 2/Lt. T. E. Murphy 90 O.R.</p>	<p>2/Lt. N. Dearden 1 O.R.</p>	

MESOPOTAMIA—continued.

<i>Date.</i>	<i>Killed.</i>	<i>Died of Wounds.</i>	<i>Wounded.</i>	<i>Wounded and Missing.</i>	<i>Missing.</i>
Jan. 25th, 1917.	2/Lt. J. R. Samuel 2/Lt. R. F. H. Bradley 2/Lt. L. M. Thompson 2/Lt. N. Green 111 O.R.	2/Lt. J. Hird 25 O.R.	Lt.-Col. Fleming (Som. L. I. attached) Capt. B. E. Nicolls 2/Lt. J. L. Fenton 2/Lt. R. McDowell, M.C. 2/Lt. Lester 139 O.R.		13 O.R.
Feb. 25th, 1917.	2/Lt. B. E. Atkins 2/Lt. R. McDowell, M.C. 2/Lt. J. C. Marks 2/Lt. Myers 32 O.R.	13 O.R.	Maj. W. C. Ratcliffe 2/Lt. H. E. Rose 87 O.R.		12 O.R.
Baghdad and the Marl Plain,	Capt. A. Punchard (Adjutant) 2/Lt. Goode 11 O.R.	5 O.R.	2/Lt. Goode* 2/Lt. G. Salt* 2/Lt. S. W. Smyth 60 O.R.		
Total casualties in Mesopotamia,	15 Officers 259 O.R.	6 Officers 100 O.R.	34 Officers 733 O.R.	1 Officer 8 O.R.	25 O.R.

Also : Died of disease, 95 O.R. Prisoners of war, 2 O.R. Torpedoed at sea, 8 O.R.  
\*Denotes twice wounded.

## THE CAUCASUS.

<i>Date.</i>	<i>Killed.</i>	<i>Died of Wounds.</i>	<i>Wounded.</i>	<i>Wounded and Missing.</i>	<i>Missing.</i>
Aug. 26th, 1918.	Capt. B. H. Sparrow, M.C. (Shropshire L.I. att.) Lt. W. O. Russell (Roy. Fusiliers att.) Lt. G. R. H. Clark (Roy. Fusiliers att.) 45 O.R. 1 Follower	2 O.R.	Lt. R. Russell Lt. J. L. Craig, M.C. Lt. T. D. Grant (Scot. Rifles att.) 2/Lt. A. Macbeath (R. & S. Highlanders att.) Capt. A. J. Ireland M.C., R.A.M.C. (Medical Officer) 34 O.R.		
Aug. 31st.	2/Lt. R. L. Petty (W. Yorks. att.)	Lt. R. Russell	13 O.R.		2 O.R.
Sept. 14th.	Maj. B. A. J. Havelock Lt. E. M. Spink 2/Lt. H. F. Gammie (Cameron Highlanders attached) 6 O.R.			30 O.R.	

Also : Died of effects of Military Service, Maj. (A./Lt.-Col.) J. W. Ley, D.S.O. Died of disease, Lt. H. A. Grant ; (S. Staffs. attached) 19 O.R.

<i>Total</i>	<i>Killed.</i>	<i>Died of Wounds</i>	<i>Wounded.</i>	<i>Missing.</i>	<i>Wounded and Missing.</i>	<i>Died.</i>
<b>Casualties in Caucasus.</b>	7 Officers 51 O.R. 1 Follower	1 Officer 8 O.R.	5 Officers 77 O.R.	2 O.R.	1 O.R.	2 Officers 19 O.R.

## RECAPITULATION—ALL THEATRES.

	<i>Killed.</i>		<i>Died of Wounds.</i>		<i>Wounded.</i>		<i>Wounded and Missing.</i>		<i>Missing.</i>		<i>Died of Disease.</i>		<i>Prisoners.</i>	
	Offs.	O.R.	Offs.	O.R.	Offs.	O.R.	Offs.	O.R.	Offs.	O.R.	Offs.	O.R.	Offs.	O.R.
Gallipoli ..	2	111	1	52	17	377	—	15	—	11	—	35	—	—
Mesopotamia	15	259	6	100	34	733	1	8	—	25	—	95	—	2
Caucasus ..	7	51 I follower	1	8	5	77	—	1	—	2	2	19 I follower	—	—
<b>Total</b> ..	24	421 I follower	8	160	56	1187	1	24	—	38	2	149 I follower	—	2

**Total Officers' casualties, 91. Other ranks, casualties, 1981. Followers' casualties, 2.**

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