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MESOPOTAMIA COMMISSION.

Sir George
STATEMENT BY MAJOR-GENERAL GORRINGE, C.B.

folio 48

Printer

Major-General Gorringe

MESOPOTAMIA COMMISSION.

STATEMENT BY MAJOR-GENERAL GORRINGE, C.B.

At the outbreak of war in 1914 I was on leave in England, and was ordered back to India by the first ship, P. & O. ss. *Moulton*, to resume command of the Bombay Brigade.

In March, 1915, I was placed in command of the 33rd (Indian) Infantry Brigade, and ordered to Basra. On arrival at Basra, I was appointed to command the 12th Indian Division, which was being formed in Mesopotamia.

I commanded the 12th Indian Division while forming—during the Battle of Shaiba, during the operations which I carried out in April, May and June in Persian Arabistan, also during the operations up the Euphrates, which resulted in the capture of Nasiriyeh, and remained at latter place till the middle of September, 1915.

During General Townshend's operations on the Tigris in September, October and November, I was placed in charge of the Line of Communication Defence Troops, with headquarters at Amara. After the retirement of the force under Sir John Nixon from Ctesiphon to Kut, I was ordered to Basra to arrange for the onward despatch from Basra of reinforcements.

At the end of December I was ordered to take command of the operations on the Euphrates line.

At the end of January I was ordered to join the Tigris column, and took over the duties of Chief of Staff to the same on 29th January.

On the 11th March I was placed in command of the Tigris Corps, operating for relief of Kut Garrison.

I submit herewith my statement as to the Medical and Transport arrangements:—

A.—MEDICAL ARRANGEMENTS. 12TH DIVISION.

1. During operations up the Kurun River across the Kharkeh River to Bisaitin, (April May and June), and the operations up the Euphrates in June, July, 1915. I attach copy of my statement furnished to Sir William Vincent on 18th June last, and would invite attention to the concluding paragraph of my statement contained therein, to which I have nothing to add.

2. The medical arrangements were on the lines practised during the Medical Manœuvres carried out in 1914 at Poona—the modern forms of transport, such as motor vehicles, formed no part of the Medical Equipment in India, the land transport for which at that time consisted chiefly of A.T. carts, in which mattresses, sacks of hay, blankets, &c., were placed to make the carts more comfortable—ambulance tongas (two-wheeled ambulance carts with springs) are only more comfortable where good roads exist; in countries where no roads are available, the A.T. cart with a mattress is quite as suitable. Bad lying-down cases must be carried in either case by Dhoolie bearers.

3. As regards river transport, the *Medjidieh* made an excellent ship for the evacuation of sick and wounded in the absence of a hospital ship or barges; the other steamers, *Bloose Lynch*, *Malawir*, &c., though not so good for lying-down cases, were, under the circumstances, suitable, and adequate for our requirements.

It must be remembered that modern conditions did not exist in Mesopotamia in the Spring of 1915, any more than they did on the frontier, for operations in which the Indian Army had been organised.

4. During the operations up the Tigris during February, March and April, I have nothing to add to my official report already furnished to the Army Commander Indian Expeditionary Force D in May and June last; the medical arrangements worked well and the accommodation, tents, &c., were adequate.

5. During May and June the troops suffered very greatly from lack of adequate tentage, matting, &c.; my demands for tentage, &c., for hospital accommodation at Sheikh Saad, and matting, &c., for the tents and for the troops in trenches were not complied with.

Hospital accommodation at the above Sheikh Saad was, during May, June and July, quite inadequate to cope with the large number of sick, who were, as a rule, overcrowded in inadequate and unsuitable tents for hot weather in the field ambulances.

6. The medical officers and staff were, owing to reduced numberst brough sickness, inadequate to properly deal with the large number of sick—they did their very best; the chaplains assisted the medical officers in many cases, but they themselves had to go sick and their numbers were greatly reduced accordingly.

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Had my representations for the formation at Sheikh Saad of temporary hospitals and rest camps, been complied with, much sickness would have been prevented, as the young British soldiers and officers could have been given periodical periods of rest in comparative comfort and freedom from sun exposure. Similarly, had my request for the unloading of ships at Abu Roman as a temporary measure been complied with, the troops would have been saved much unnecessary labour and convoy duty at a time when they badly required every care which could be bestowed on them.

Good medical arrangements are so largely dependent on transport facilities, that the failure of the responsible authorities to properly equip the force with adequate river and railway transport was the main cause for the medical arrangements at times falling short of what they should have been; similarly, the lack of experience of the administrative staff at Force Headquarters and on the line of communications was greatly conducive to the best use of what was provided and obtainable in the country not having been made.

B.—TRANSPORT ARRANGEMENTS.

7. On my arrival in Mesopotamia in March, 1915, it appeared to me that the campaign was one in which the characteristics of the Soudan campaign were to a great extent reproduced.

Both campaigns were, from natural causes, largely dependent on the rivers—which were the dominant strategical and tactical factors.

In both countries navigation for steamers, except of very light draught, is difficult during the half-year, when the river is low. Navigation in both countries is best during the hot season.

In both countries the construction of a railway to supplement river transport is essential to enable any large force to be properly maintained. No one was more cognisant of this than the late Lord Kitchener, under whom I served on his Staff as Staff Officer for Quartermaster General's duties in 1896-1898.

8. On the arrival of Sir John Nixon, I therefore represented my views on the organisation of the river transport, and I furnished him with my statement as to the organisation which I carried out under Lord Kitchener during 1896-1898 of the river transport (*vide* Statement B, attached).

This system mainly consisted of supplying each unit with sailing boats for use as second line transport and keeping the barges for transport of ammunition, supplies, &c., not on unit charge.

It was pointed out at the time by local authorities that owing to the flatness of the country bordering the rivers, the floods at the time the rivers are at their highest level would prevent the system I advocated being universally adopted.

During the operations which I carried out in June-July, 1915, up the Euphrates, I greatly felt the lack of organised river transport such as outlined in Statement B.

9. When called on in December, 1915, to organise the onward despatch from Basra of the 3rd and 7th Division, I recommended their proceeding by march route and being fitted out with second line boat transport: I bridged all the creeks, also the Euphrates twice, and Tigris once, in ten days, to admit of the march route being used by these Divisions, and thus free the steamers and barges for carrying to their fullest extent stores, supplies and ammunition.

The fullest use, however, was not made use of this road, and the carrying capacity of the steamers was reduced by using them for troops.

10. When called on to organise a Division for operations on the Euphrates in January, 1916, I seized all available boats on the Euphrates and secured the smaller "mehailas" at Basra and organised them successfully on the above lines.

11. When called on to take over duties of Chief of Staff to the Tigris column, I organised the boat transport for the second line of the 3rd and 7th Divisions and corps troops on similar lines as far as the limited number of mehailas there available would admit.

12. The result of the responsible authorities not developing the sailing boat transport is, in my opinion, one of the causes which led to the inadequate use made of the rivers during the operations in Mesopotamia. More sailing boats could have been built.

Sailing boats and crews could have been bought and enlisted respectively in the Persian Gulf and in India, and sailed up to Basra during the autumn and winter, 1915-1916, to augment that obtainable on the Shatt-el-Hai, Tigris and Euphrates.

13. The steamer transport similarly was not used to the best and fullest advantage in the following:

14. Insufficient barges for steamers existing in Mesopotamia were not provided: as a rule each steamer had her own barges. This is all very well in peace, but does not make the fullest use of steamers in war-time, at least 6 barges, per steamer should have been provided: this allows for 2 being loaded, 2 unloaded and 2 with each steamer at a time: it is a waste of steamer power to keep steamers waiting while barges are being loaded and unloaded: it is not practical in war-time to unload barges immediately on arrival at their destination—e.g., the supplies, &c., may be required at another place in two days' time. The result of the responsible authorities not taking steps to at once provide extra barges was that the existing steamers were not made the fullest use of and the troops were often called on to unload barges when they were badly in need of rest, &c., in order to free the steamers for the return journey.

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15. To increase the number of existing steamers by building on the Shatt-el-Arab new steamers of the type most suitable locally should have been one of the first cares of the responsible authorities in 1914-1915.

I gave my suggestions on this to the D.R.I.M. (Capt. Lumsden, R.N.) in the winter 1914-1915, and gave him the type found most suitable in the Soudan: I was, of course, unable to say then what type was most suitable on the Tigris, &c., but I urged the building of more steamers then and continually ever since.

16. The result of not building at once in the winter of 1914-1915, throughout 1915 the steamers required to properly equip the force as it increased in size has been far-reaching in its dire effects—to attempt to augment the fleet by taking by sea river steamers which were not built to stand the stress and strain of sea conditions was, in my opinion, a gross blunder—on arrival, these steamers were, as a rule, so badly strained that they were continually breaking down.

Moreover, each of the varied types of steamers required different spare parts—many were extravagant in fuel consumption, &c., &c.

Different steamers required different sizes of barges, &c., &c.

17. The Staff and personnel provided for the steamers lacked experience, and many casualties occurred among the steamers owing to inexperienced white officials being posted as R.I.M. officers to command these boats, whereas the system of having native Reises or Tindals accustomed to river traffic with European engineers in charge of the boats (as was the system on the Nile and is, I am informed, the system on most rivers in India and Burma) would have been infinitely preferable.

18. I have made three journeys down the Tigris, viz., in October, 1915, in "T. 3," where the captain was an Indian Marine Master Gunner who had been for *one month on the Tigris*; in this voyage, from Kut to Amara, both barges of the steamer were badly damaged owing to the incompetence of the R.I.M. captain. In July, 1916, I had a similar experience between Amara and Kurna: the captain then having just come, he told me, from Arkangel, where he had been mine-sweeping, and he had no previous river experience, so he informed me.

The only journey down without a breakdown was in December, 1915, when I had a native captain.

19. The steamers which we took over in 1914 had been working on the Tigris for many years, their personnel were experienced, and these steamers kept running well, though they were severely tried, as insufficient time was allowed in 1915 for periodical overhauls: when, however, this system was extended to the new steamers sent from overseas, with, as a rule, an inexperienced staff and steamers themselves badly strained by their sea passage, breakdowns were inevitable, and were the rule rather than the exception.

20. It has been urged that appliances did not exist to build barges and steamers on the Shatt-el-Arab—they did not exist on the Nile above Halfa, and yet the three steamers *Tatha*, *Zuffr* and *Nari* were built rapidly in 1896, after bringing the sections by 3-ft. 6-in. gauge railway all the way to Kosheh. Similarly, the *Sultan*, *Melik* and *Sheikh* were built at Abadia, above Berber, in 1898, between May and August, without any appliances. A parent ship could easily have been fitted out to take personnel and shops, and the same used as the nucleus of a floating workshop.

21. On my recommendation in 1915 (October) a running repair shop was started at Amara—where the fleet of steamers was augmented in the spring of 1916; this shop should have been considerably enlarged to deal with the breakdowns which were inevitable: often there were as many as 10 steamers lying up awaiting their turn at the shops at Basra and Amara.

22. In my opinion the R.I.M. had insufficient experience in river transport to successfully run the steamers and more use should have been made of experienced staff from the Indian river steamship lines, as they had the necessary experience in peace: the failure of the responsible authorities to mobilise these resources of river experienced officials was, in my opinion, a fatal omission.

23. The construction of railways from Basra to Nasiriyeh and from Kurna to Amara, in the first instance, were the natural and proper methods of consolidating our occupation of the country as we expelled the Turks therefrom: India has vast resources in its railways and these resources should have been similarly mobilised by the responsible authorities: the improvement of our communications by railway construction was essential: the Turks, it was well known, were straining hard and making great efforts to push on the construction of their railway from Constantinople to Baghdad, and yet the responsible authorities under much easier conditions did not make use of the same to render the Mesopotamian Expedition similar essential facilities.

I have been informed that the Agent of the G.I.P. (Major Hepper, R.E.) himself urged on the Indian authorities the necessity of laying a railway up the Tigris, and offered, in 1915, to take the construction of the same in hand.

I have had practical experience in railway construction in the Soudan in 1897, and with the vast resources available in India there is, in my opinion, no unsurmountable difficulty in railway construction either to Nasiriyeh or to Amara, and thence onward at the minimum rate of 1 mile per diem.

G. F. GORRINGE,

Major-General.

STATEMENT A.

18th June, 1916.

118/47. A.M.S.

DEAR SIR WILLIAM,

In reply to your letter of 2nd ult., I forward herewith a statement of facts as regards the medical personnel with my force during the operations carried out by me in April, May and June in the vicinity of Ahwaz, and during June, July and August on the Euphrates.

The only demands made by me for medical equipment which were not complied with were repeated requests for a Stationary Hospital, or equipment from a Stationary Hospital, to augment the accommodation in my Field Ambulances at Nasiriyeh—the wounded from the fighting prior to our occupation of Nasiriyeh were all very rapidly evacuated, but after they had been taken down, the water in the Hamar Lake fell rapidly, and only small boats could get through.

Military reasons necessitated the troops required for operations on the Tigris being given precedence over evacuation of sick, &c., but my demands for a Stationary Hospital, or equipment in lieu, so as to enable me to make the men in Hospital reasonably comfortable, were categorically refused, and I had to make such make shifts as possible with local materials.

Towards the end of September some extra equipment for the Field Ambulances was, however, sent up.

I left Nasiriyeh about the middle of September.

With many apologies for my delay in sending you this information, I must plead guilty to having put the papers aside during pressure of work, and I have answered so many queries by "wandering experts" who have been up here lately that I forgot I had not replied to your letter.

I saw nothing of the operations carried out by General Townshend up the Tigris, and so can only speak from hearsay, which is not evidence, and therefore is best left alone.

Yours very truly,

G. F. GORRINGE.

The 6th (Poona) Division arrived in Mesopotamia during November and December, 1914, with the full complement of Field Ambulances, Clearing, Stationary and General Hospitals, allotted to it by Regulations.

With the 12th Indian Division, which arrived in Mesopotamia during March and April, 1915, only one combined Field Ambulance was sent from India. The two British and three Indian Field Ambulances which arrived with the 6th Division were split up, and reformed into four combined Field Ambulances of two British and three Indian Sections each, and it appeared that normally two combined Field Ambulances were intended to suffice for each Division; the Field Ambulance (106th), which arrived last, being attached to either Division as occasion required. No addition, at any rate, for some time, was made to the Clearing, Stationary and General Hospitals which had arrived for the 6th Division.

Very soon after the Expedition had arrived in Mesopotamia, difficulty was experienced in obtaining medical personnel to replace casualties, and I understand that the A.D.M.S. at that time was informed from India that there would be great difficulty in meeting any demands for I.M.S. Officers or Sub-Assistant Surgeons.

Till April or May, 1915—that is, the onset of the hot weather and the arrival of the 12th Division—I understand the medical arrangements were adequate. As the hot weather advanced, and numbers went sick from this cause, the strain on the accommodation at the Base was felt, and owing to there being insufficient accommodation, numbers were sent to India who would otherwise not have been sent. On the other hand, until Amara was taken in June, 1915, Basra was the only place available for retaining sick, and it is by no means a suitable spot for treating sick for any length of time in the hot weather months.

For the operations at Ahwaz, Field Ambulances only could be spared, and owing to there only being one Clearing Hospital available for operations on both the Ahwaz Line and the Tigris Line, the two Sections of the Clearing Hospital sent up to Ahwaz were withdrawn in a very short time. If it had been available, a Stationary Hospital there would have been of great use, as the Field Ambulances had to retain sick for a very long time.

For the operations on the Euphrates, and at Nasiriyeh, only one Field Ambulance was at first available, as the other Field Ambulance of the 12th Division had to be left at Ahwaz and the Field Ambulance which was attachable to either Division went by road with the 12th Brigade to Amara. Later, this Ambulance was sent by river from Amara, but two Sections were unable to arrive at Nasiriyeh in time for active operations, as the boat on which they were went aground in the Hamar Lake, and remained there for 10 days.

So that at the time of actual operations at Nasiriyeh, June and July, 1915, the Medical Units available were No. 3 Field Ambulance, Half No. 106 C.F.A., and one British Section of No. 1 Field Ambulance sent from the 6th Division. These dealt with over 900 casualties, and all the wounded were evacuated from Nasiriyeh in less than 48 hours after the action which ended with the capture of Nasiriyeh. The Medical personnel were very hard worked for a short time, and the presence of a Clearing Hospital would have made matters easier for the personnel, but the wounded did not suffer in any way. When active operations were over, at Nasiriyeh, a request was made for a Stationary Hospital to be sent there, but one could not be spared, and the Field Ambulance acted in that capacity ever since, some additional equipment being supplied from Basra, to render it better able to act as a Stationary Hospital.

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For use of D.A.

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During the hot weather of 1915, a number of Medical Officers and subordinates and other Medical personnel were invalidated to India, and as none were available to relieve them, those left had to do additional work, but the sick and general Medical arrangements did not suffer.

To sum up, though after the arrival of the 12th Division, the number of Medical Units was insufficient, yet the sick and wounded did not, in my opinion, suffer *during the operations at Ahwaz and on the Euphrates Line*, as the casualties were not excessive, and the weather was not inclement, though very hot.

STATEMENT B.

For use of D.A. and Q.M.G.

Notes by Major-General Gorringe, received 14th April, 1915.

In 1898 the system of providing 1st and 2nd Line Transport and Supply and Ammunition Column was as follows. :—

Each unit, *i.e.*, battalion, regiment of cavalry and Brigade of Artillery, was allotted a large sailing boat, which corresponds to the local "Mehailahs" capacity, about 20 tons.

Each Brigade Staff similarly had a smaller boat. Hospital units, bakeries, &c., were also allotted boats.

In the barges, ammunition reserve supplies (supply park) were loaded.

The animal transport consisted of :—

Pack mules for ammunition, *first echelon only*.

Camels for first line and one day's supplies, also 2nd echelon of ammunition. A small convoy of camels forming part of the supply park.

The procedure was as follows :—

Each unit drew a definite number of day's supply to last over the probable duration of the operation. This was loaded into the boat allotted to it, and the Quarter-Master Sergeant with a small guard and party to assist the crew in towing, &c., were detailed.

Extra blankets, officers' mess stores and 1st Line kit which could not be carried on the pack mules allotted to the unit were carried in the regimental or brigade headquarter boat. Each boat was numbered in large letters, which could be easily read at some distance, on both sides, and flew the distinguishing flag :—

Red	..	..	..	..	..	..	for Infantry.
Green	..	..	..	..	..	..	„ Cavalry.
Blue	..	..	..	..	..	..	„ Artillery.
Yellow	..	..	..	..	..	..	„ Supplies.
Red Cross	..	..	..	..	..	..	„ Hospital.
Red and Blue	..	..	..	..	..	..	„ Ammunition.

Each Brigade detailed an officer in charge of the Brigade boats.

When the force moved off it had with it :—

One day on man and horse.

One day on pack animals.

days in regimental charge in boats.

days in pack supply convoy.

No hay was carried on pack animals. Only grain (barley and bran). A small amount of tibbin (boosa) was carried in boat supply convoy.

When the force halted the boats were ordered up to the nearest point where supplies, &c., could be unloaded opposite to the unit to which it had been detailed, and one or two days' supplies, as the case may be.

When the force moved on all men, &c., temporarily unfit were placed on the regimental boat. The boat convoy was marshalled in the order of march of the force.

Steamers not detailed for fighting as gunboats were told off to tow along these boats which it was anticipated would be required first, and then go back and clear up and help on those which lagged behind.

Sailors and the Reis in charge were all engaged as such, and were subject to Military Law and punishments. The Reis was made directly responsible for the sailors—the regimental guard for the Reis; if a sailor deserted the Reis was tried, punished and fined, and the same entered in his last pay certificate. If the Reis deserted the soldier on duty was tried and heavily punished by C.M.

This procedure was adopted to prevent a recurrence of the desertions which took place in 1882-83, and was found most successful.

Chapter 2
Swell

Major General Sir George Gorringe K.C.B. sworn and examined

2679 Chairman Sir George, we will take ^{the statement} your ^{evidence} ~~your~~ evidence that you have sent to us as your ~~examination~~ ^{in chief} and we will put some questions to you

~~Insert Paper B marked 8~~ ^{upon it} ~~the statement was handed in and is as follows~~ ^{insert Paper marked B}

2680 Chairman We should like to get quite clearly in our ^{minds} ~~heads~~ the various posts which you have been occupied ^{in succession} in the 'Mesopotamia' before you came home.

Basra

2681 A Perhaps I may just enumerate them. In March 1915 you were ^{put in command} ~~appointed to~~ of the Bombay Brigade ^{on arrival at Basra} ~~at Basra~~ ^{and appointed to} ~~the~~ 12th Indian Division ^{in May 1912} ~~in May 1912~~ when I took over that Brigade.

2682 I had the Bombay Brigade was created ^{where} ~~in India~~ ^{first}

2683 A At Bombay you were placed ^{in command} of the 33rd (Indian) ^{infantry} ~~brigade~~ ^{and ordered to} Basra.

2684 Q Then you were given an Indian Divisional Command ^{on arrival at Basra}

2685 Q What was that composed of
A That was composed of the 33rd, 30th and the 12th Brigade. The 12th Brigade was already in Mesopotamia when I arrived. The 33rd ~~was~~ ^{did} not arrive until ^{shortly} after I did and the 30th Brigade also was

2686 Q ~~and I assume that your division was fully equipped so far as medical ambulances and transport were concerned~~

A No. My Division had no transport of its own allotted to it. The only transport in the country when we arrived was that which

had come out with the 6th Division and that
~~it~~ was gradually being completed when we
 arrived

2686 Q You took command of the ^{Second} ~~2nd~~ Division ^{which was}
 sent out after the 1st Division
 A Yes - the 12th Division

2687 Q Who was in command at the time you came.
 A ~~Sir Edmund Barton~~, General Sir Arthur Barrett.
 The 11th Division was short of equipment. It was
 never completed. It was being formed at Basra.
 The brigades arrived there. The brigades
 themselves as far as the battalions were concerned
 were complete, but our field ambulances and
 our transport were taken from the existing
 units in Mesopotamia ^{where} we started ^{on our}
 first march away from Basra up the ^{Kharkech} river.
 The Division never ^{got} kept together as a complete
 Division the whole time that I was out there.
 The field ambulances and transport were utilised
 as they were most required, as the two divisions
 were never operating at the same time

2688 Q How you went up what river?
 A We went up the Karun river and then
 the Kharkech river

2689 Q Which runs into the Karun?
 A They do not run into one another; there
 is a ^{distance of} about 20 miles across

2690 Q Then you fought the battle of Shaiba, where
 is that

A Shaiba is at Basra. I was not commanding

2691 Q Then you went up the Karun river and you
 fought a battle there and defeated the Turks
 who previously had a slight success

A Yes; the Turks never stood; they always

return returned in front of us. I had an action there with the Arabs. There were very powerful Arab tribes at a place called Khafagiah where we inflicted a good deal of punishment on them

24
2692

Q Lord Hugh Cecil whereabouts is that
A Khafagiah is as near as possible 30 miles from Alwas in a westerly direction

2693

Q Out into the desert as it were
A ~~It is rather on the edge of the Khartek~~ ~~marsh~~ Shall I point it out

2694

Q If you please It is not marked on my map

The witness pointed it out on the map
A It is on the edge of the marsh

2695

Q Just below the mountains
A Just below the mountains. The mountains run parallel with the river there. We marched across there

2696

Q The C. American When you were in command of the troops which were transferred to the other side - the Euphrates side - and went up to Nasiriyah

A Yes. They were my own division. I brought some troops down from there and others followed me round

2697

Q How did you get to Nasiriyah; did you go by water

A Yes; we came back to Basra and then went up the Euphrates across ^{Hammar} ~~Atfata~~ Lake and cut our way through the dam that had been made there and into the Euphrates from the Lake

2698

Q Did you go by Kurma or straight from Basra as it were

A Yes

Q You go past Kurna. ~~The river~~

2699

Q You go up to the Shatt until you come to Kurna and then turn as it were to the left

A Yes, the ~~other channel is the so called~~ new channel ~~It~~ is not navigable for steamers except in very high floods

2700

Q What is the new channel

A It is marked on some maps "New ^{Euphrates} ~~proposed~~ Channel". It is a river that has broken away from its course and flooded the country and formed a broad shallow channel which sailing boats only can get over and very light ^{draft} draft steamers

2701

Q What ~~sort of draft~~ draft

A About 2 feet 6. A deep water channel goes along at the mouth of the Hammar Lake

2702

Q ~~Does the water run from the Tigris to the Euphrates or vice versa~~

A It runs from the Hammar Lake ~~towards~~ Mecca and then down and when it gets to Kurna it gets into what is called the Shatt el ~~the~~ Arab.

2703

Q You were successful there; you drove the Turks out and ~~you~~ we occupied Nasiriyah and we do still I understand

A Yes

2704

Q The word Turk is used here all about you have seen a great deal of fighting in Mesopotamia I suppose that the further north you went ~~the~~ the larger proportion there were of actual Turks to Arabs in the force against you

A Well in the first part of the operations

up at Khafazink and on that side, the Turks
 withdrew and never came into action with us
 at all. It was the Arabs that we were
 fighting there the Beni-Turafa large tribe and very
 important and they cut up our wounded locally
 in the operations that the General Robinson
 carried out in February. Part of my instructions
 were to punish that tribe. They were very
 powerful

35
 2705

2 Would you say that the Turks are the regular
 army ^{and} the Arabs the irregular army.
 + Yes that is it. There are a certain number
 of Arabs in the Turkish Army ~~who were~~
 taken into permanent pay ^{and} ^{who} have been
 enlisted into the Turkish Army. For instance
 in the latter part of the operations the 35th
 Division was very largely composed of Arabs
 but as a rule the Turks were regulars
 and the Arabs irregulars

2706

2 Then I suppose as the war went on
 and the nearer you got to Baghdad there
 was an improvement in the quality of the
 troops against you
 + ~~that~~ The two ^{2nd} Turkish Divisions that first
 opposed us were nothing like so well equipped
 or as good as those that came afterwards
 into Mesopotamia and which took part
 in the fight at Chesphou and in subsequent
 fights. Among those troops that came down
 was the 2nd Division called ~~the~~ "Von der
 Soltz own". They were trained by Von der
 Soltz ^{they} were very well equipped as regards ^{artillery} ^{artillery} ^{of the}
 and were well trained troops. The ^{Turks}
 that we had against us in the first
 in

instance was beneath contempt ~~and~~ As far as fighting in trenches and so on is concerned they thought fought ^{bravely} ~~manfully~~, but their training was nothing like so good as the training of the troops which were afterwards opposed to me in the operations for the relief of Kut

2707 Q Were there German officers amongst the Cater troops

A In both cases there were a certain number but very few German officers

2708 Q And had they any artillery heavier than field artillery

A Yes. At Masriyah they had a 4 inch howitzer an old type howitzer with black powder. Subsequently in the operations for the relief of Kut they had certainly a 4 inch and a 5.7 I think ~~it is~~ a modern artillery howitzer which has an effective range of 8300 yards

2709 Q What had we against that

A We had 5 inch guns; we had 60 pounder guns; we had 5 inch howitzers; we had 4.5 inch howitzers and we had one 6 inch but an old pattern howitzer; not the ~~name~~ pattern which we are

2710 Q ~~were the other guns of~~ ~~most~~ modern type or old ~~they were all~~ ^{they were all} ~~a~~ they were not ^{all} of the best type but the ^{4.5} ~~4.5~~ ^{howitzer} ~~howitzer~~ ^{is} a good ^{gun} ~~that~~ and the 60 ^{pounder} ~~is~~ ^{is} a good ^{gun} ~~but~~ the 5 inch howitzer is not a good ^{gun} ~~howitzer~~

2711 Q Were they better equipped should you say as regards artillery of bigger calibre than field artillery then

A No not better equipped. They were much better

better equipped than they were at the first part of the war, ~~but~~ ^{with regard to} the howitzers they brought up towards the end, the 5.75 the new howitzer was better than anything we had at the time. That was the first time they had guns better than ours

26

2712

2 That was in the fighting for the relief of Kut

+ yes. ~~Still~~ After the relief of Kut had failed they brought the new howitzers down. They did not open fire

2713

2 Now having got the quality of the troops let us go on with the ~~high~~ posts which you held! When General Townsend was moving up the Tigris you were placed in charge of the line of communication with headquarters at ~~the~~ Amara. ~~Line of communication with advancing~~

^{a the} ~~of defence~~ troops. General ^{Davidson} ~~Patterson~~ was the Inspector General of the line of communication. I was in command ^{of} the line of communication with ~~of the~~ ~~advanced~~ ^{defence} troops detailed to protect the line of communication. I had nothing to do with the actual work on the line of communication

2714

2 Nothing to do with it
+ When I say nothing I mean very little. I helped to a certain extent but it was General ^{Davidson's} ~~Patterson's~~ job

2715 the Earl of Donoughmore Were you independent of each other or ~~or~~ was one ^{under} dependent ~~on~~ the other

+ We were to a certain extent you may say independent. I was not under his orders. I had my orders direct from Sir John Nixon. At the same time we ~~work~~ ~~one~~ worked ~~in~~ with one another

2716 Lord Hugh Cecil You were coordinate not
~~subordinate~~ subordinate
 + yes. He was senior to me but I did not
 work under his orders but directly under ^{Sir John} ~~General~~
 Nixon's orders

2717 ^{The} Chairman You were in command of the troops in
~~advance~~ ^{defence} the line of communication. ~~but had~~
 nothing to do I suppose with the actual management
 of the line of communication
 + No. I only assisted.

2718 Q You were in charge ~~of~~ ^{at} the relief of Khartoum
 of the transport on the Nile
 + I was Lord Kitchener's staff officer for Quartermaster
 General's duties at that time

2719 Q About 1896
 + 1896 to 1898

2720 Q ~~You~~ What happened after the retirement of the
 forces under Sir John Nixon from Chesephon to
 Kut. Was Sir John Nixon superintending the
 retirement of the forces

+ No but he came down with the advanced
 part of the forces. All the wounded he brought
 down; and General Townshend was commanding
 the bulk of the forces during the retirement. Sir
 John Nixon so to speak, came on ahead with
 the prisoners and the wounded and at the
 same time he was the senior officer there
 on the spot

2721 Q Now it has been I think stated in the evidence
 before us that the evacuation of the wounded
 from ~~at~~ Chesephon to Kut and the transport
 of ~~our~~ ^{our} prisoners under the conditions was a
 good military operation
 + It is all hoaxay evidence. I was not
 present

present I believe it was; one has always heard

2722

Q But ~~when he~~ ^{so} the wounded ^{suffered} ~~to~~ a great deal, but as regards the actual result of the operation from a military point of view it was good
A Yes

2723

Commander Wedgwood Provided that the Turks did not press too hard

2724

Q Chairman Taking it as it was it was good, do I understand the Turks were pressing just as hard as they could or as hard as they dared, but we got our wounded back

A We got ~~all~~ our wounded back under very great difficulties. The river was extremely difficult at that time, and there are an enormous number of ^{bends} ~~bends~~ and as all our transport was boat transport a steamer went 30 miles a day while the troops were perhaps only marching 10 miles a day. To get the wounded and so ^{on} ~~one~~ away therefore, was a very difficult operation because they had to take much longer ^{bends of the} ~~distance~~ ~~than~~ river than the pursuing troops had to. If the Turks had pushed on hard it would have been a very difficult job indeed. Luckily they were kept off and the bulk of the steamers got away. You see the river, the bends are very bad. It is a very difficult navigation

2725

Earl of Donoughmore It is much further by water

A Yes - four times

2726

Chairman On the 1st January you joined the 2nd column and you took ^{over} the duties of chief of staff to whom ^{to General Agnew}

2727 Q You were with General Asplmex from then up to the 11th March when you were placed in command

A Yes

2728 General Sir Neville Lyttelton On his departure

A Yes I was his Chief of Staff. I did the administrative as well. You succeeded him

2729 Chairman in fact

A Yes

2730 Q How was it a great disappointment to you that the Tigris column was not able to relieve Kut

A Yes

2731 Q What was the ~~main~~^{critical} phase of the operation

A The ~~main~~^{critical} stage of the operation was the failure to capture the Sanaiyat position at the first attempt. That was on the morning of the 6th April

2732 Q There was a big fort was there not there

A ~~Yes~~ An entrenchment

2733 Sir Archibald Williamson The Dujalah redoubt was the ~~stronghold~~^{March} I understand

A You are speaking of the operation as a whole. If we had been successful in taking the Sanaiyat position on the 6th of April we should have relieved Kut. Therefore I put that as the critical ~~time~~^{thing}

2734 Chairman It is unpleasant to criticize people ~~without~~^{but we have to ascertain the} knowing the facts. What would be your criticism or explanation of the failure

A On the 6th April?

2735 Q Yes

A The explanation of the failure was this:

to begin with I think I should explain the natural difficulties which we were faced with during those operations. All that country is very liable to flood, In front of the Sanaiyat position was a very low ^{flat} piece of ground which on the north side is liable to be flooded by the ~~the~~ ^{Suwaikich} marsh ~~it~~ had been flooded by it previously but at the time when we attacked the water had gone back. I endeavoured to time my operations or my advance to the relief so as to attack at the time that the river was at its lowest

28

2736

I you were then in actual command & yes. I am speaking of April now. I had arranged and made all my plans to advance on the 1st of April, but when the ~~troops~~ ^{troops} were beginning to move up at night into their allotted positions on the 29th and 30th March we had a heavy downfall of rain and ~~at the~~ I had to postpone the operations until the country dried up. We could not move men or guns. Therefore instead of starting on the attack I had to postpone it from the most favourable time when the river was at its lowest between the rises until the time when the ground had dried sufficiently for me to move forward and to risk as I had no time to waste, the ^{chance} ~~time~~ for the river rising very fast while my operations were going on. ~~There was not time.~~ General Townshend's food did not admit of my waiting till the next rise had come and gone down. I was bound to go at the

time that I did. He ~~the~~ ^{could} ~~only~~ held out to the
 15th of April he said; ~~and~~ that was afterwards
 extended. He managed ~~by~~ altering his ratios
 to hold out until they had to surrender
 but at the time when I started it was
 calculated that ~~the~~ ~~15th or 20th~~ - ~~I think~~
~~I was~~ he could just hold out till
 the 20th April. I think it was the 15th or
 the 20th. I calculated that it would
 take me a week to get through the first
 phase of the operations and that if I could
 get through in a week and ^{seize} ~~take~~ the Samayut
 position and get astride the river facing
 the Sinn position I could ^{manoeuvre} ~~manoeuvre~~ so as
 to make ^{the enemy} ~~him~~ extend his flanks and my
 plan was ~~then~~ ^{then} to pierce through the
 centre immediately on the south side - that
 is the right bank, of the Tigris. Therefore
^{look on myself} I ~~take~~ ~~that~~ ~~most~~ as the critical time ⁱⁿ ~~for~~
 those operations ^{the time} ~~at~~ when we failed to capture
 that position in the ~~evening~~ ^{dawn} of April 6th.
 The attack was ordered to take place
~~at dawn~~ ^{at dawn}. The previous day we had
 captured ~~on the dawn~~ ^{at dawn} the Hammah position on
 the left bank. On the right bank the 3rd
 Division had pushed forward and ~~he~~ seized
 Abo Roman. At midnight the 13th Division had
 captured the enemy's position at Jalahiye
 at the bend of the river before you get
 to Samayut, and so far everything had gone
 well. During the day the river had started
 to rise rapidly and I had two courses to
 adopt - one was to follow on what had
 been two successful attacks on the left bank
 and

and without previous reconnaissance other than
 could be obtained ~~from~~ by the scouts that were
 in front of the attacking troops, make my attack
 across the open space under cover of darkness.
 It was impossible to lose the way. There
 was a ~~communication~~ ^{communicating} trench running from the
 Falahiyeh position to the Samaiyat position.
 The orders were to keep to the left of that
 communicating trench and to seize the left of
 the enemy's position where they had no entrench-
 ments because it had previously been flooded.
 The water had gone down and it was perfectly
 flat and perfectly open. There was a chance
 to seize that position and if we had been
 successful we hoped to be in reaching
 the flank of their position under cover of darkness.
 I have no doubt that we should have
 been able to turn them out of it. As it was
 the 7th Division ^{were} somewhat delayed in passing
 through to the 13th Division who had seized the
 enemy's position at Falahiyeh during the night.
~~Also~~ ^{There} were certain trenches to which had to be
 crossed, which though not formidable by day
 caused delay at night. They started ~~on the attack~~
~~advance~~ at one o'clock; they had got $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles
 to go and I know that several young men
 and myself thought that they would be able to
 do it easily and comfortably. ~~but~~ ^{How I cannot}
 explain but they misjudged the distance and
 at dawn instead of being on the left flank
 of the enemy's position they were 800 to
 900 yards away advancing. ~~There~~ ^{Heavy} machine
 gun fire ~~had~~ ^{leading} opened on the ~~retreating~~ ^{attacking} troops
 and the Divisions were unable to make headway.

It is very very ~~light~~ ^{flat} ground without a particle of cover and the only way to get over it was to ~~sap~~ ^{sap} up to it which time did not permit ~~us~~ ^{or} to attempt to cross it under cover of darkness. Subsequently on the 9th April an attempt was made by the 13th Division. That was in the early morning of the 9th. They succeeded in getting into the first line trenches and everything went well during the first part of the attack but the enemy lighted a lot of Verey's lights and for some reason which nobody has been able to explain the second line instead of pushing forward and supporting the first line retreated and went back. ~~They~~ ^{It} threw the third and fourth lines into confusion and before they could be rallied the first line had been driven out of the enemy's trenches. That was the second attack on Sandringham.

29

2737

2. ~~Attendant~~ What was the composition of the forces as regards British and Indian

a In the last attack it was all the 13th Division one of the new army Divisions

2738

2 All British
a All British

2739

2 What forces had you with you at that time

a At that time I had practically four Divisions three formed Divisions - the 3rd the 7th and the 13th. I had in addition three other brigades but they were not formed into a Division. They were used as Corps troops

2740

Commander Wedgwood The 7th was your old Division
a The 12th was my old Division. My old Div

Division was broken up — to go to General
Toursheim

Chairman He may ~~presume~~ ^{assume} that the weather was
against you and in carrying out ^{a somewhat} ~~some~~ complicated
manoeuvre there was some tactical blunder
and that ~~affected~~ ^{upset} the success of the operation
On the 6th April?

2742

I The attack you were just describing
A There were two When the second line
dodg came back it was through the want
of training of the troops I think. None of
the old Divisions would have done it.
They were new army troops and I know
that the Divisional General himself was confident
that ~~he~~ ^{we} would be able to take the position.
I do not think that you can call it a
tactical blunder I think that we can only
put it down to lack of training

2743

General Sir Neville Lytton The first line went on all
right

The first line got in

2744

I The same Division

All the 13th Division

2745

I Something unaccountable occurred

A The enemy sent up flares with their
lights which ^{lit} ~~light~~ up the whole place
The first line got in. They had actually
got into the trenches before the Turks
sent up any flares at all and directly
our first line got in the Turks sent
up flares to the ^{right} ~~left~~ of them and to the
left of them and lit up the whole place
and also they opened with their Artillery
too. The officers of the second line say

That

that the men when those flares went up stopped; they hesitated and went back. Whether they thought mines ~~an~~ had gone off or what it was I do not know but that is what happened. I have ~~brought~~ brought with me a copy of ~~the~~^a letter with which General Mande wrote to me after that attack had failed.

30
2746

The

Chairman.

□ I used the wrong word perhaps in saying tactical mistake. What I meant was that the manoeuvre failed because a certain part of the troops did not respond? -

Yes; they did not press on. I have seen officers and men who got in to the front line and were wounded and ~~were~~ afterwards brought out and they have all said that

"If they had only come on I've had got them running; we had got the position."

2747

Commander Wedgwood

The first line had got in without any casualties because they were not seen.

2748

Chairman

I suppose that ^{there was} a bit of alarm because they were new ^{and} untrained troops.

That is it. You can only put it down to that I think. They had had a certain number of casualties in the previous fighting on the morning of the 5th. I should put it down myself to lack of discipline and training.

2749

2 ~~In~~ the account you have given your original plans were frustrated by the heavy rain

The starting on the day. As the river was rising so rapidly I felt that I could not afford

afford to wait any longer. The river at that
 time comes up about once in 12 to 15
 days. It comes up and you see the curve
 on the chart and ^{of} the highest and the lowest
~~data~~ ^{tides} and I had calculated to make my advance
 when the river was on its downward grade
 so to speak before the next rise came on.
 Therefore I felt that ~~it~~ I could not afford
 to wait and ~~an~~ attempt to take this position
 after careful previous reconnaissance two or three
 days before hand, because I should only
 have the ground flooded if I did ^{and to} ~~the~~
 advance over the flooded ground was a matter
 of great difficulty. As a matter of fact
 I made a third attempt to seize that position
 which was the final effort which I made
 before reporting that it was no longer
 possible to continue the operation and that
 final attack succeeded in getting across the
 flooded ground into the first line and into
 the second line trenches. With regard to the
 second Dutch counter attack which came on
 * The first counter attack was wiped out
 by our enfilading machine gun and artillery
 fire from the right bank. With regard
 to the second counter attack made by 3000
 to 5000 men, there ~~was~~ ^{were} sufficient left to
 be able to turn our men out of the
 trenches before the supports could get up to them
 where I say ~~was~~ out of the trenches, the
 trenches were full of water and the cover
 which they had got behind the trenches the men
 who came back said "If we could
 only have used our rifles we could
 have

have stuck it" but their rifles²¹³
had got a certain amount of choke
coming through the flooded ground and
lying down they had mud in them
and very few of the men could
use their rifles

Chaplin

65

Admiral

2750

Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge: You said that ~~the~~ ^{we} ~~could~~ ^{only} ~~be~~ ^{used} ~~for~~ ^{rifles} "used for rifles"

A "If we could only have used our rifles we could have held our own!"
The Turks were counter attacking over dry ground. My supports had to come through the marsh. My supports could only move at a slow ~~to~~ pace. ~~although~~ ^{although} I had 36 machine guns and a battery looking over them firing at 1500 yards from the opposite bank of the river and enfilading ^{the} ~~my~~ advance, and the direction from which the Turkish counterattack was most likely to come and although their gun fire wiped out ~~the~~ first Turkish counter attack it was not sufficient to wipe out the second and ~~what was left~~ ^{those who were} drove my fellows back. But we had got in and the supports and everything were going on as well as they could and they ^{were} well covered by our artillery fire and ~~one~~ had every belief that that attack up to the last moment would get through. That was our final effort. I made those three attacks on that position because that position was the key to the whole operation. Once we ^{had} got that position we could have forced the ~~Turks~~, threatened the ~~the~~ ^{Turks} on both flanks and made them divide their forces.

^{because} They could not tell which flank we were coming on. I have a ^{big} map here which may explain the position better than those maps which you have before you. (The witness produced a map and ~~produced~~ ^{he pointed out} the position.) when we afterwards ^{occupied} got this I found that I was quite right and that we could have got through. The Turks could hold that with a relatively small force. They had their reserves there. I ~~am~~ ^{was} not able to enfilade that position from here (pointing to the map)

2751

General Sir Neville Lytton: How far did your right extend?

A To here. This is all marsh. The ~~marsh~~ ^{water} had gone back ~~at~~

at the time we attacked. In that country it is very very flat. The ground slopes on both banks away from the river like that (describing). Therefore when the river goes over the banks you get a complete flood. When the wind blows it blows the water ^{up} ~~was~~ here. You may see ground flooded on a certain day but when the wind changes it ~~flows~~ blows the lake over here and ~~that~~ that is what happened. When the wind changed it was impossible to advance here. I made the second attack ~~in the winter~~ ^{here} and I made the third attack in the ~~winter~~ ^{here} but at the weakest place. This was all flooded up to here and our fellows for nights and days had been working in ~~the~~ ^{the} flood

2752 Sir Archibald Williamson On the 8th March they were nearer Kut

A Yes; they made a night attack

2753 Q This is where the failure took place on the 8th

A Yes

2754 Chairman Have you General Maudslayi's letter

A Yes (~~producing the same~~) You will find it rather difficult to read

2755 Lord Hugh Cecil Perhaps you will read it for ^{to} us as you are familiar with it

2756 Chairman What was General Maudslayi's exact position

A He was commanding the 13th Division. I was commanding the corps. This is General Maudslayi's letter dated on the morning of the 9th April after the attack had failed: "I cannot tell you how sorry I am about the fight this morning. Though it seemed a tough job for partially trained troops, I felt ^{quietly} ~~quite~~ confident that with careful preparation, and given a small modicum of luck, we should have pulled off a success for you and so freed you from your anxiety about Kut. ~~But~~ ^{that we} were within an ace of doing so, all accounts seem to agree and if that flare had gone

up three minutes later all ^{would} probably ~~would~~ have been well. ~~Everything went first rate up to that time, troops moved off~~ that is the flare that I told you of

2757 Lord Hugh Cecil: It created a panic

A "Yes." Everything went first rate up to that time, troops moved off silently and punctually to the minute and covered the intervening ~~place~~ space much quicker than I had anticipated. When the first flare went up the men seemed staggered and though the first line went on in good style the second line faltered and got mixed up with the third line which with the remaining lines pressed on. Then came the second flare and the outburst of heavy fire, and though most of the shots, as I have so often explained to the Division, went high in the dark, the second line hesitated and finally fell back in spite of the superhuman effort of the officers and carried several of the other lines with them."

2758 General Sir Neville Lynton: That is the third ^{fourth} and ^{top} lines I suppose?

A "Yes, the third and fourth lines." There had been some loss of direction owing to the flares and this added to the trouble, although I had given a compass bearing to march on. The officers tried to rally the men again and again but could only get them forward a few yards. The first line behaved splendidly and went right in under a very heavy fire. Certainly ~~these~~ two platoons of the North Lancs and two platoons of the Wilts got in and I fear with one or two exceptions that none of them got out. Several other regiments also got within a few yards of the Turks trenches. They were counter attacked by superior numbers and driven out leaving some killed or wounded, most of the wounded were bayoneted ~~by Arabs~~ or clubbed by Arabs."

"It was all real bad luck and except for that ^{wrecked} second rank all would have been well. Indeed one of the commanding

officers told me ^{that} if all had gone straight ⁱⁿ we should hardly have had 100 casualties. As it is I fear I will total 1500 or 2,000 in killed wounded and missing. The officers did magnificently throughout, not excepting the medical Officers and Chaplains who were tip-top in every way. It is all the more disheartening because ^{last} ~~that~~ night the men were in fine fettle and longing to come to blows with the Turks. Once more I cannot say how sorry I am for your sake for I know how carefully you had thought out every detail, and for the sake of the cause" that shows the feeling of the Division.

2759 Commander Wedgwood: Was this the first fight they had had

A No

2759A I Were they raw troops

A No.

2760 I When had they arrived

A They arrived in March. They had taken the Hannah position on the morning of the 5th April with very few casualties and during the night had taken the second position

2760A I Were there three brigades or four

A Three brigades

2761 Lordy ~~by~~ Hugh Cecil What regiments were they?

A They were all new army - ~~the only~~ the North Stafford, South Lancs & East Lancs and ~~Jacks~~ Warwick

2762 I all British regiments

A Yes, all British

2763 General Sir Neville Lytton: No territorials

A No territorials

2764 Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge: Had they ever seen any flares before during your attacks or was this something quite new to them

A Some of that Division had been in Gallipoli where they

they had had flares ~~before~~. We used to alarm the Turks pretending we were attacking and so on and they used always to send off ~~these~~ flares, and we knew they did it. I cannot say definitely whether the men had all seen ~~these~~ flares before but the Division ~~had~~ as a whole ^{had} been in Gallipoli where the Turks had these flares, and it was the custom of the Turks always to light these flares. The previous night we had had a false attack to try to find out where the machine guns were, and they sent up flares for about three hours, and the men were not so far off ^{but} that they could ~~not~~ have seen the flares going. They must have done

33
2765 General Sir Neville Lytton. You said just now ^{that} when the flares went up there was heavy firing.

A Yes

2766 Q2 It went high. It was not enough to account

~~Q2~~ It was not enough for this.

A No. In a night attack as you know, nearly all the shooting goes high. The men ^{fire} fear the bullets high. When the outburst of the ^{heavy} fire started they had very few casualties from bullets, they told me. I happened to know from being behind, that bullets were coming where I was, and the bulk of them must have been right over the men's heads.

2767 Commander Wedgwood. You get an awful lot of ricocheting too at night.

A Yes

2768 Chairman. Were they quite new units or partly old soldiers ~~and~~ partly new. They were all new Army, the first new Army

A - 2 These people had been in Gallipoli; ~~but~~ they had they lost their moral there.

A They ^{had} lost it in Gallipoli.

2770 General Sir Neville Lytton. The whole Division was not there.

A No

2771 Commander Wedgwood: They had been through it ~~safely~~ at Suwla,
2772 Chairman Was there not a battle in March where there was ~~a~~
the redoubt which we ~~failed~~ somehow failed to take. ~~Not~~

A That was the operation of the 3rd March when we tried to turn
the enemy's right flank

2773 Q You were Chief of Staff then

A Yes.

2774 Q How do you account for that failure?

A I account for that as I put in my Report by the failure
of General Kenball to carry out the instructions that were
given to him. The essence of that operation was surprise by
a night march with a large force in overwhelming
~~the trench~~ ^{strength} with the objective of seizing the Dujailah redoubt.
We have subsequently learnt, and we had information before
that it was ~~strongly~~ ^{not} held. They had a small garrison
there and the bulk of the troops really relied for water on
the river; that is to say that there was no large water supply
at the Dujailah ^{itself} there were pools useful for the animals to
drink. The bulk of the water for any large force would have to
come from the river. Since we have occupied it ourselves
we have found that our great difficulty. We have had
great difficulty to supply the force there with water
~~which~~ ^{is} as you see four miles away from the river
and you cannot rely on any water got by digging be-
cause it gets brackish

2775 Sir Archibald Williamson The canal is dry?

A Yes, the depression there is dry. Everything in that March
went well up to the time when the columns separated.
We had allowed an hour in case anything went wrong.
We were three quarters of an hour late in getting to the
place where the columns had to bifurcate. That is
where General Kenball's column was to go off the
to the ~~front~~ ^{bent} of the Dujailah depression. ~~where~~ The bulk
of the guns and the two brigades of the 3rd Division
where

were to move straight on toward the middle point between the Dujalah and the Sinnabtar so as to get within 3,500 yards of those two redoubts before it was light. ~~The latter part in the position and everything went on all right.~~

General Kemball had been specially told, as were all the generals commanding ^{divisions} and brigades, that the whole ^{essence} ~~essence~~ of this operation ^{was} that there must be no hesitation in seizing the Dujalah redoubt, ^{that} ~~and~~ everything depended upon that, ~~if~~ if there was any loss of time or any hesitation it would give time to the enemy to push up their reinforcements and that is what actually happened afterwards. We subsequently found out from information which we have got since we occupied Sinni and from Turkish prisoners that there were only 500 men altogether in that redoubt. When I drew out the plan ~~for~~ for that march I arranged the order of ~~the~~ march so that ~~the~~ the leading battalion in the leading brigade was in line with ^{of} ~~the~~ the Company column moving to a flank ⁱⁿ force. Each battalion followed in double Company column. The guns were in corresponding formation covering the same front as the infantry. The object of that formation was that there should be no loss of time over deployment. In the event of meeting with opposition ~~from the~~ all that you had to do was to ~~front~~ front from the leading troops ^{and} could go on through with the bayonet. I arranged that General Kemball's ^{column} should also have its field ambulances march with ~~them~~ ^{it} as they were to a certain extent detached. The left ^{flank} ~~column~~ of General Kemball's column was secured by the 36th Brigade and the cavalry. His rear was guarded by ^a half battalion of the 31st Pioneers. In that country one always had to make special arrangements for the rear because of Arabs cutting up the wounded. At the Conference of the day before in the afternoon at which General Aylmer was present, General Kemball

objected to ~~having~~^{taking} his field ambulances with him as he
 thought that they would hamper him during his march
 After some demur General Aylmer agreed, and I concurred
~~with~~ⁱⁿ the ambulances going with the 3rd Division transport
 because we did not want General Kemball to feel that
 he was hampered. Therefore when we started General
 Kemball did not have his field ambulances with
 him and that was at his own request. When we
 reached the point of bifurcation where the columns
 separated General Kemball sent back ~~to~~^{and} asked for his
 field ambulances to be sent up as he did not like
 going on without them and they were sent up shortly
 afterwards we got a message from General Kemball
 to say that he was halting to deploy the two leading
 battalions and the two leading brigades. By the time the
~~the~~ message reached me ~~about~~^{about} half an hour after the time
 it was too late then to tell him to go on and not to
 alter the formation. Waiting for the field ambulances and
 waiting for the deploying and the slow movement consequent
~~on~~^{on} moving across country two miles, he lost something
 from an hour to hour and a half and instead of reaching
 the bend of the depression where it comes down just
 near where four feet is marked on the map at dawn as
 was intended it was half past 6 before he got there

34
2776

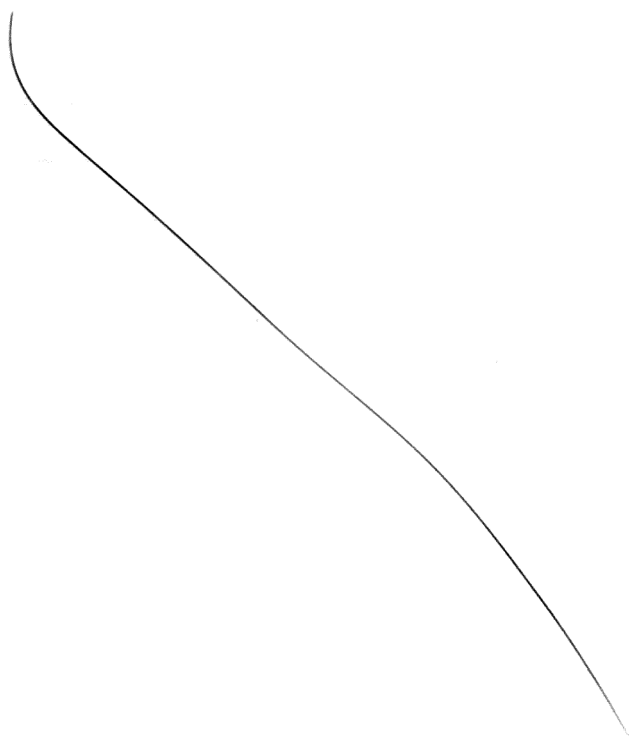
General Sir Neville Lytton: Dawn being when?

A Dawn at that time was about a quarter to 5. In
 the meantime the remainder of the troops had ~~left~~^{moved} according
 to the plan. The guns had got into position within 3,500
 yards to cover General Kemball's attack. General Kemball
 was given a brigade with artillery to accompany him in
 case he wanted more artillery support, but the actual
 covering of that attack was provided for by the
 machine guns of two brigades which were ~~left~~^{moved}
 forward in advance of the guns to within 1500

4050

yards of the enemy's position and by the fire of the whole of the artillery except that which accompanied General Kemball. As soon as we saw that General Kemball was not coming up as we expected about half past 5, orders were sent to him to push on - subsequent orders were sent to him to push on - but it was not until approximately half past 8, speaking from memory before he began to make his attack felt.

By that time I could see from where I was myself and General Aylmer could see reinforcements beginning to come up from the river over the ridge between the Sinnabtan and the Dujailah redoubt. General Kemball has explained to me his reasons for the delay which were ~~as~~ ^{that} as it was getting late he considered it necessary to get his guns registered on to the Dujailah redoubt as his objective before ~~the~~ ^{he} committed his troops to the attack, and he also explained that he having deployed his troops prematurely had difficulty in getting them to change their direction and getting them ~~formed~~ ^{formed} up ready for this attack



That

Chapter 3 Snell

That was consequent on carrying out that premature ^{deployment} at the time they did make their attack the Turks had pushed forward advanced troops ~~to~~ to ^{at} that trench which is as near as possible ~~1000 yards~~ I have been over the ground since and it is a trench which is not more than 800 yards long. It is just an ordinary water channel improvised trench; ^{with} ~~no~~ second line and no traverses or anything of the kind. It is a ^{simple} ~~small~~ water channel trench terminating in the open ground on the ~~high~~ ^{Hai} side; that is on the ~~west~~ ^{south} side of the depression. General Kenball had also strict orders ~~for~~ that in making his first attack ^{he was} to keep to ~~the~~ ^{the} right of the Dujailah depression and not to cross it. When he came under fire from this advanced detachment which had been pushed forward from the Dujailah redoubt down the depression, part of the 28th Brigade crossed the Dujailah depression contrary to orders, and were held up on the north east or east side of the Dujailah depression by fire from machine guns ~~which were in a leading trench~~. As far as one can make out on the far side the ^{36th} Brigade which was a brigade ~~ordered~~ ^{detailed} to watch his left flank ~~which~~ had pushed right forward in the meantime right past this trench and had ejected the Turks out of one of the advanced trenches that lying between the Dujailah redoubt and a place called Attan (on the bend of the river. The cavalry had also moved forward and both cavalry and the 36th brigade got since had turned the trench

which

which was holding up general Kenball's brigade.
 General Kenball reported that he was unable
 to advance and a staff officer was sent
 over at once to find out what was holding
 him up. because we could see that he was
 not in front of the ^{Dujailah} redoubt himself, but
 something was holding ^{him} up and they reported
^{was} what they ^{have} ^{just} described - that they were on
 both sides of the Dujailah ~~the~~ depression
 and that they could not get forward,
 General Kenball reported that any further
 advance was impossible at that time until
 it got dark. In the meantime the C R E
 of the 3rd Division, ~~Colonel~~ ~~Quinton~~ had
 been told to go into the water supply and see
 how much water we could possibly get ^{there} ~~there~~
 locally. At the back ^{is} ~~the~~ Um al Brahm,
 one would naturally think one could get
 water from there, but it is a very very
 bad depression and you have to go about
 a mile ~~into~~ ~~the~~ ~~land~~ before you can get
 any water at all and when you get the water
 it is all right but the difficulty of getting it
 out without a lot of previous work is
 very great. There were some pools near where
 General Kenball was. These were reported
 as sufficient for a small force but quite
 insufficient for the whole of the force and
 we were unable to water the bulk of
 our animals that day at all. Where General
 Kenball was himself, he was all right
 because there were water holes quite close
 to his headquarters and he could get
 water ~~all right~~, but the troops on the ~~extreme~~
 right

right were unable to fill their water bottles ~~with~~
~~it~~. After General Kemball had reported that
he was unable to make any progress General
Styler then conferred with me as to what
~~was~~ ^{the} best course to take was. In
daylight we could see the Turks reinforcing
very strongly and we had to make up
our minds about ~~the~~ further operations.

The troops had been marching all night
and therefore we could not call on them
to do very much more marching. The alternatives
that presented themselves to General Styler
were ~~to~~ to remain where we were and
make another attack that evening with
fresh troops, to remain where we were and
attack again at dawn the next morning or to
move off on to the high Hai where we
could have got water for the whole force,
or to go back and be reloaded and I agreed
that the best thing to do - in fact I strongly
represented it so - was to make a determined
attack on that redoubt in the evening. The
8th Brigade were brought across from the right.

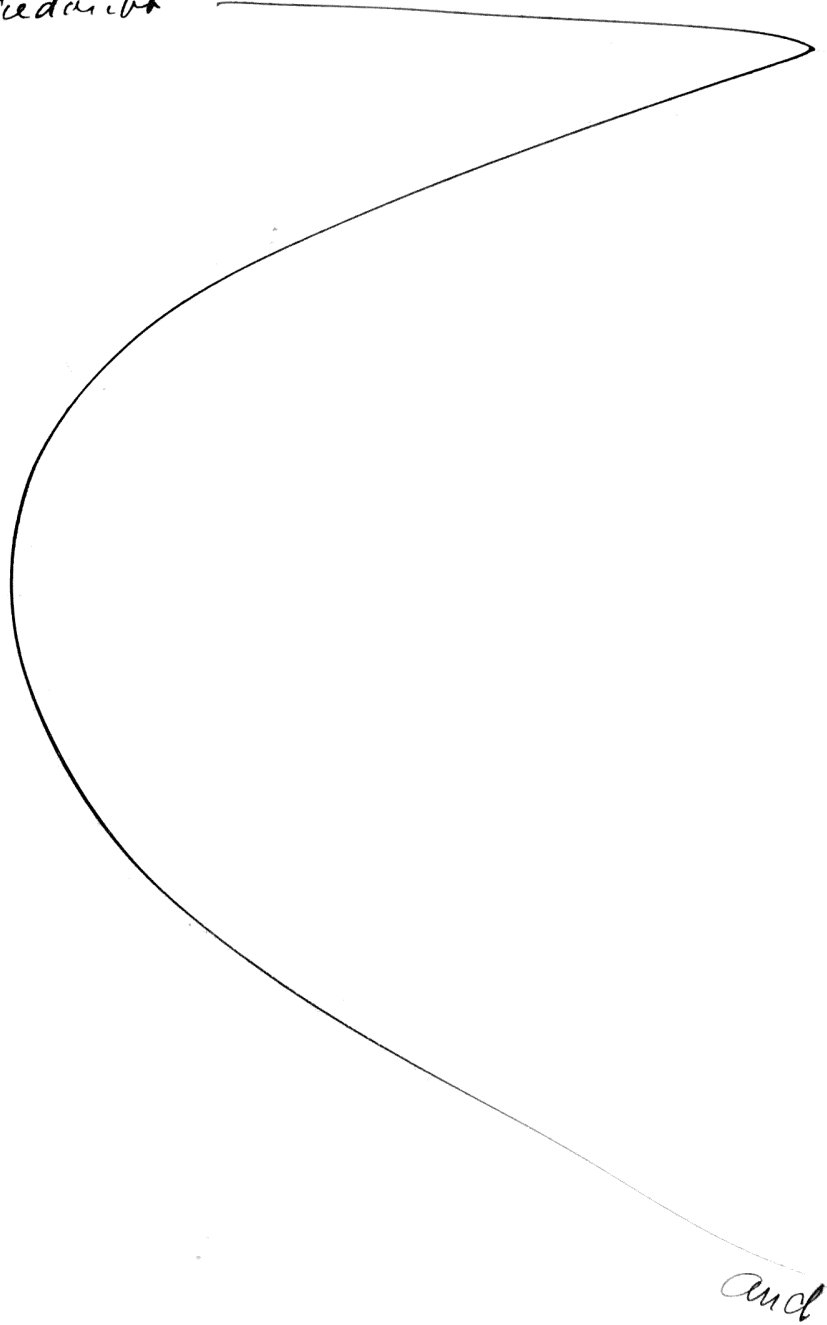
~~It~~ had not been in action all day but to
opposite the Dufailah redoubt, under the
covering fire of all the guns except those
with General Kemball an ~~the~~ attack was
launched ^{and} ~~arranged~~ in the evening of the 5th of
March on the redoubt

35
2777

Commenced Wedgwood After dark

At 10.15 speaking from memory I was about
half past 5 or about an hour ^{before} ~~before~~ dark
We laid that attack so as to ~~start~~ ^{make} under
cover of our artillery fire. General Kemball
was

was told that this attack was to be made
 and that he was to make every effort to
 push forward to cooperate with it. The
 attack was made by the 8th brigade and
 they got into the redoubt. General Kemball's
 troops who were to support the attack
 and cooperate with it, were unable to make
 any further headway themselves, ^{although} ~~and~~ the 8th
 Brigade ~~although~~ they had made a most
 determined effort to get in to capture
 the redoubt



Chaplin

and

and although, after they had been driven out the first time they made another attack and got in only to be driven out again, the attack on that redoubt failed. We lost during that attack something like 3500 men and in the previous operations ~~of~~ General Kemball

2778 Sir Archibald Williamson: What was the total number engaged in this operation

A. By the whole force?

2779 2 Yes

A. There were seven brigades. We had approximately 17,500 rifles

2780 Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge: All under fire

A. No. The 5th Brigade and part of the 37th Brigade attacked the Dujailah Redoubt. The 5th Brigade at that time was about 3000 strong, if I remember rightly. The attack was made probably, therefore, by something under 3000 rifles after you have taken out the men for the transport, and so on.

2781 Q. We had how many casualties

A. In the whole operations of ~~with~~ General Kemball's force and ~~with~~ of the other brigades a total of 3500

2782 Sir Archibald Williamson: Out of a total of 17500

A. Out of a total of 17500 - taking the whole force

2783 Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge: The attacking party, would be much less

A. Yes. The losses were very heavy; they were all knocked to pieces

2784 General Sir Neville Lyttelton: There were two days' losses, were there not

A. There was only one action

2785 Q. Was there no attack at all on the first day

A. This was the evening of the first day

2786 Q. The 5th or the 9th

A. This is the night of the 8th

2787 Q. On the morning of the 8th there was an attack?

A. By General Kemball

36
2788

for Archibald Williamson, that is included in the casualties, is it not

A Yes. The total casualties of the operation were 3500

2789

Admiral Sir Cyprus Bridge, Were only two brigades actually in action, the 8th Brigade and General Kemball's. No, the 9th Brigade and the 28th Brigade were under General Kemball, and on the flank of General Kemball was the 36th Brigade who also took part in these operations. There were the 5th Brigade and part of the 37th Brigade who took part in the final assault. The 7th Brigade were in action acting purely as a covering force ~~holding~~ ~~the~~ ~~line~~ ~~at~~ ~~the~~ ~~Abtan~~. The 36th Brigade were covering. They were a very weak brigade and they were badly hammered.

2790

Commander Wedgwood, The 8th Brigade had been through the whole campaign

A Yes

2791

Q. Were they Indians
A Indians and the Manchester regiment

2792

for Archibald Williamson: How many Highland regiments were there

A The H.L.I. in the 9th Brigade. The Seaforth's and the Black Watch were in the 7th Division but they did not take part in these operations at all; they remained behind with General Youngblood in front of the Hammah position

2793

Chairman: What was the number of Turks that you were fighting against in these two engagements. Take first March 8th and 9th and then April 8th and 9th. Had they a superiority in numbers

A. At the time that we attacked on the 8th March we estimated that the total number of Turks on the right bank of the river on the Sinn position would be about 10,000. That, speaking from

(D) memory.

memory, is the number that we calculated, and then in addition to that there were the troops on the other bank. During the day re-inforcements were ferried over. During the whole day they brought over reinforcements as fast as ever they could but owing to water difficulties they had to camp the bulk of the troops right down on the river at Mahira Masuo. The way to seize that position was to get there before the Turks had time to reinforce, to get to that position, ^{unobserved} ~~you observe~~, if only we could and forestall them in reinforcing. That was the plan which we hoped to carry out, because the Turks could not maintain the whole of their force on that line. If you look at the map you will see that it is a very difficult place to keep a large number of troops in

27942. What were the numbers

A. There were 10,000 troops. They had 500 men in the Dujailah Redoubt. I do not think they had more than an outpost line, and we know for an absolute certainty that they had no inkling of that move being made round their flank until we absolutely surprised the Arab troops on the extreme right flank.

They went off helter-skelter across the Had. Owing to the delay in the early morning they were able to bring up from the river all their reinforcements against the right flank. They could see perfectly well from the high ground that no attack of ours was coming on there and we had no troops to make a holding attack. We took only seven Brigades. During the day they ferried over reinforcements as fast as ever they could and took a large number of men over from the left to the right bank

27952. What would be the total that they had altogether & I should say, that by the night the numbers were equal