

extended into the snow line up the spur of the hills,—(vide sketch A.*)

16. Course of the action.—The course of the action was as follows:—

The advanced guard formed up at about 800 yards from the position, and the main body in rear.

The 32nd Pioneers then advanced to the attack—

One section, "C" Company extended (left of line).

One section "C" Company extended in support.

Two sections, "C" Company in reserve.

"A" Company in reserve.

The guns now took up position on the right and opened on "A" Sangar at a range of 825 yards.

As the action progressed, the supporting section of "C" Company advanced and reinforced. The remaining half of "C" Company advanced, and, leaving sufficient space for the guns, took up their position in the firing line on the extreme right.

Volley firing at first was opened at 800 yards, but the firing line advanced 150 to 200 yards as the action progressed. At a later stage one section of "A" Company was pushed up to fill a gap on the right of the guns in action in the centre of the line.

The enemy, after receiving some well-directed volleys and correctly-placed shells, were seen to vacate "A" Sangar by twos and threes, until it was finally emptied.

17. Flank attack.—During our advance to the fan, shots were heard in the direction of the hills, Lieutenant Beynon having come into contact with the enemy in their sangars up the hill-side, who were driven from ridge to ridge.

18. Flight of enemy.—When "A" Sangar was vacated, attention was directed on "B" Sangar, and the same course adopted with the same result; at the same time those driven down from the hills above streamed into the plain and there was then a general flight. Six shrapnel were fired into the flying enemy at ranges of 1,000, 1,200, and 1,350 yards (three rounds per gun).

19. Capture of enemy's position.—A general advance was then made down precipitous banks to the bed of the river, covered by the fire of the reserves, the river forded, and Sangars "A" and "B" occupied. The guns were then carried across and the whole line of sangars having been vacated, the column was re-formed on the fan; the time taken in crossing enabled the enemy to get well on their way to Mastuj; the advance was then continued to a village a mile and a half further along the bed of the river, where a halt was made.

20. General details.—The casualties consisted of one man of the 32nd Pioneers severely wounded, and three Kashmir Sappers slightly.

The action commenced at 10.30 a.m., and lasted one hour. The position was of unusual natural strength and the disposition of the sangars showed considerable tactical ability, being placed on the edge of high cliffs on the left bank of the river.

The enemy were computed at 400 to 500 and were armed with Martini-Henry and Snider rifles; several dead were found in the sangars and the losses I estimate to have been from 50 to 60.

The whole action was carried out with the extreme steadiness of an ordinary morning parade, the volleys being well delivered and controlled.

21. Advance on Mastuj.—After a halt we continued our advance by the left bank till within three miles of Mastuj, where the river was forded

and the garrison of Mastuj was seen drawn up on the crest of the fan.

During the day-time the garrison had noticed the enemy gradually vacating their positions; some were said to have heard our volleys and guns. By evening the enemy had all gone towards Chitral, and the garrison were able to turn out after an investment of eighteen days.

The column arrived in Mastuj at about 5 p.m., and the baggage guard by 8 p.m.

22. Mastuj, 10th to 12th April.—From the 10th to 12th a halt was made in Mastuj, to allow of arrangements for supplies and transport for our own onward progress; the guns were mounted on local ponies, and the second detachment of the 32nd Pioneers arrived on the 11th April, accompanied by Surgeon-Captain Luard, Indian Medical Service, with the base hospital, which was established at Mastuj.

On the 10th April I ordered Captain Bretherton, Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General, to return to Ghizr and carry out the duties of his office between Gilgit and that place.

Opportunity was taken during this period to repair the bridge over the Yarkhun river, one mile below Mastuj, and on the 11th April a reconnaissance was made by the levies, who reported that the enemy were preparing a strong position on the Nisa Gol.

23. Reconnaissance of Nisa Gol.—On the 12th April a further reconnaissance was made with the levies under Lieutenant Beynon, the enemy perceiving his actions.

An excellent sketch "C"* of their position was the result, and clearly guided me in my course of action, and ladders were also made to use in crossing the main nullah where practicable.

24. Description of enemy's position at Nisa Gol.—The position of Nisa Gol was a practically strong one and considered by the Chitralis to be impregnable. It is situated on a fan, having a deep nullah bisecting it from far away inside the hills to the Yarkhun river, the walls of the nullah being perfectly precipitous and from 200 to 300 feet deep. The main road "D" (sketch*) runs along the whole length of the fan, winding down to the bottom of the nullah near the river and up the other side into the corresponding half of the fan. The second path "C" (vide sketch*) is a mere goat track, which goes almost straight down and up the other side; this was destroyed on our side of the nullah. The enemy had erected sangars at the head of these roads which entirely commanded the approaches, and would have swept us away if we had used them.

The sangars were sunk into the ground, and head-cover was provided by a covering of timber and stones.

On the left of their position they had sangars on the spur of the hill in a general line with the sangars on the plain, and on the hill above, parties of men were stationed to throw down stones. Sangar No. 16 (see sketch*) was fortunately unoccupied. On the right of their position, across the river and slightly in advance of the general line, they had another line of sangars on a spur stretching away high up into the snow line.

25. Orders for attack.—My orders for the attack were therefore as follows:—

The advance guard, on gaining the maidan, was to make its way well up to the right and high up the fan, where the formation of the ground favoured an advance under cover to within 500 yards of the nullah. It was directed to direct its attack on Sangar No. 17 with well-directed volleys,

* Not published.