

10. The operations of the Force being throughout in a country which has hitherto been closed to us, has afforded special opportunities for certain branches of the service to earn distinction. This is notably the case as regards the Sappers and Miners and Pioneers. The rapid way in which almost impassable footpaths over mountain passes were converted into excellent mule and camel roads, testifies to the energy and zeal of the officers and the endurance and physique of the men of these branches of the service; while the hastily-constructed bridges over unfordable rivers and mountain torrents, with many of the gallery passages along bare cliffs built out from sheer precipices with cantilevers of beams, doors, &c., from the nearest villages, were marvels of ingenuity and resource.

11. The survey party with the Force has done most valuable work, which has principally consisted in triangulation, traversing, and large-scale surveys of country, and plans of various places. The extent of this work may be judged when I say that the area embraced by the triangulation has been upwards of 1,500 square miles; 60 miles have been traversed, while the country mapped at two inches, one inch, half an inch, and quarter inch to a mile scale has been respectively 40 square miles, 450 square miles, 100 square miles, and 1,200 square miles.

12. The Intelligence Branch also has lost no opportunity of adding to our knowledge of the country. Stage by stage as the Force advanced the officers of the Intelligence Department reconnoitred, sketched, and reported on the route to be followed by the troops in rear, the mileage of this alone being about 186 miles. In addition 600 miles of branch roads were sketched and reconnoitred as well as between 30 and 40 passes, and the whole country embraced by these reconnaissances was gazetteered and much new information collected.

13. The different actions in which the troops of the Force have been engaged have already been reported, but I may now briefly refer to them with the view of bringing to His Excellency's notice the names of officers who have earned distinction.

At the storming of the Malakand Pass, the attack, as already reported, was made by seven battalions of the 1st and 2nd Brigades, two battalions, the 4th Sikhs and Guides Infantry, being sent up the highest peaks with orders to make a turning movement on reaching the crest, while the direct frontal attack on the enemy's main position was made by the King's Own Scottish Borderers and the Gordon Highlanders, supported on the left by the King's Royal Rifle Corps, and on the right by the Bedfordshire Regiment and the 37th Dogras. The action commenced at 8.45 A.M., and the pass was captured at 2 P.M. I attach a casualty return, Appendix A, which shows the losses on our side. The enemy numbered about 12,000, and afterwards admitted a loss of over 300 killed.

I would bring to the notice of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief the admirable manner in which the regiments above mentioned completed a very difficult task, and the able manner in which they were led. I would bring the following officers to His Excellency's notice in connection with this action:—

Lieutenant-Colonel H. H. Mathias, Commanding the Gordon Highlanders, who led the right of the frontal attack.

Lieutenant-Colonel H. G. Dixon, King's Own Scottish Borderers, who led the left of the frontal attack.

Lieutenant-Colonel H. B. McCall, King's Royal Rifle Corps, who, by skilfully using his opportunities, brought his battalion to the main position of the enemy and joined the King's Own Scottish Borderers in the final rush and capture of the main position.

Lieutenant-Colonel A. M. Paterson, Commanding the Bedfordshire Regiment, who conducted the pursuit of the enemy on the north side of the pass.

Lieutenant-Colonel C. Dempster, Commanding the 4th Sikh Infantry, who led his regiment up the highest peak and conducted a difficult operation with great determination and skill.

Lieutenant-Colonel F. D. Battye, Commanding the Queen's Own Corps of Guides (since killed), who advanced on a parallel spur, leading his regiment with great judgment and gallantry.

Major J. Dacres Cunningham, Royal Artillery, who commanded the three batteries (16 guns) most skilfully, and by accurate firing largely contributed to the success of the day.

Captain O. S. W. Nugent, King's Royal Rifle Corps, displayed gallantry and presence of mind in rescuing a wounded man of his battalion. Captain Nugent was directed with a party of the battalion to occupy an adjoining empty sungar and endeavour to silence the fire of the enemy in a position from whence they had been causing loss of men to the advance. On occupying the sungar he found that one of his men was lying wounded outside and exposed to the enemy's fire, when he at once sprang out, together with No. 2664, Corporal W. H. Race, of the Bedfordshire Regiment (who was attached as a signaller), and brought the wounded man into a place of safety.

Lieutenant and Adjutant F. W. Kerr, Gordon Highlanders, who, after Captain Burney, of the same regiment, was wounded, collected the company and led the final rush of the party on the village at the top of the pass.

Captain F. Campbell, of the Queen's Own Corps of Guides, was detached with two companies and ascended the hill on a spur between the Guides Infantry and the 4th Sikhs, and rendered great service to the advance of both regiments by the skill with which he used his position and brought flanking fire from both sides on the enemy opposing the advance.

Lieutenant and Adjutant R. Harman, D.S.O., 4th Sikh Infantry, led a portion of the Dogra company of the regiment over some most difficult ground, and rendered great service to the advance until very severely wounded.

14. On the descent into the Swat Valley on the 4th April, the troops of the 1st Brigade were met by the advancing enemy. The troops held the eastern hills of the descent, while the baggage passed through the defile to the open in the Swat Valley. The brunt of the fighting fell on the 37th Dogras, supported by No. 4 Company of the Bengal Sappers and Miners, and by one company of the 15th Sikhs, who were ordered to hold a low hill which commanded the passage, and who repulsed repeated attacks of large bodies of the enemy; the final and most determined attempt being frustrated and enemy routed by a brilliant charge of the Guides Cavalry. I attach a statement (Appendix B) of our casualties on this occasion.

With reference to this action I would submit to His Excellency the names of the following officers:—

Lieutenant-Colonel A. McL. Mills, commanding 37th Dogras, who had the onerous duty of holding the position which was the main object of repeated attacks by the enemy in largely superior strength.