

Lieutenant H. F. Baillie, Seaforth Highlanders, 1st Northern Nigeria Regiment.

Colour-Sergeant Miller, Royal Berkshire Regiment, 1st Northern Nigeria Regiment.

Lieutenant R. D. F. Oldman, Norfolk Regiment, 2nd Northern Nigeria Regiment.

Lieutenant L. Galloway, Royal Field Artillery, 2nd Northern Nigeria Regiment.

Lieutenant W. J. McLay, Royal Field Artillery, 2nd Northern Nigeria Regiment.

Colour-Sergeant Buey, Royal Munster Fusiliers, 2nd Northern Nigeria Regiment.

Infantry, 2 Companies, 2 Maxims.

Doctor Chesnaye, Civil Medical Staff of Northern Nigeria Protectorate.

Limber, 5 star, 18 double common, 12 case, 64 shrapnel.

Ammunition, Royal Artillery Reserve, nil, 9 common, 4 case, 48 shrapnel. Small arms, 300 rounds per carbine; Maxims, 6 belts each.

Of this force, 50 native rank and file under Lieutenant McLay and Colour-Sergeant Buey were forthwith ordered across the river via Mozum, and reached Dekina, some 18 miles distant from the river, the same night. On the following morning, 24th December, 1903, a further party of 54 native rank and file, and 1 2-95 quick-firing gun, crossed the river, reaching Dekina at 4 A.M. on the 25th December. News from survivors and native sources now left no room for doubt that both Europeans had been killed, and the remainder of the force crossed the river. The whole force massed at Oketti, 4 miles east of Dekina, on January 2nd, 1904.

Agwacha was reached on the 5th January, and here the first reliable information of the disaster was obtained. Major Merrick now organized a light column with European provisions for 7 days. This column consisted of the whole of his force, except 2 sections Infantry under a British Non-Commissioned Officer, who, with 200 carriers, were left at Agwacha in charge of reserve ammunition, stores, &c.

Opposition was first met with on the 6th January, when Major Merrick obtained information that an ambush had been prepared in a long stretch of bush about 2 hours distant from Agwacha. This stretch was carefully scouted and after about 2 hours, fire was opened by the enemy. The force pushed on, driving the enemy through Kworobia, which place, though stockaded, was not held. This place was occupied and about 2 hours after occupation the enemy commenced sniping from the bush. They were charged, however, and driven off. Our casualties that day were 1 native killed and 1 wounded.

From the 7th to the 12th January, Major Merrick made a sweeping movement to the south, covering an area of some 20 miles by 15, and on the latter date returned to his advanced base at Agwacha. The operations during this 7 days may best be described as a reconnaissance in force, as owing to the total absence of reliable intelligence and maps, Major Merrick had to glean what he could from native sources, and push his way bit by bit into the disaffected districts. In all 10 villages were rushed and destroyed, the enemy adopting the usual bush tactics, namely, trying to ambush the force, clearing out immediately they were discovered after opening fire, and returning at night to snipe the camp. Major Merrick's casualties so far were 11 killed and wounded. He was on more than one occasion able to inflict considerable punishment on the enemy. The nature of the country, thick jungle and forest, had seldom rendered it possible to make use of the 2-95 quick-firing gun, and the small arms rounds had for the most

part been expended in snap shots at a single enemy or groups of half-a-dozen or so.

So far the expenditure of ammunition was 10 shell and 8,263 rounds 303 small arms, or 40 rounds per man, which in itself speaks well as to the control of fire. Large quantities of live stock and foodstuffs had been captured. Two men captured from Captain O'Riordan's escort had been rescued and several carbines recaptured.

The next five days no operations of consequence took place. Separate columns, under Captains Williams and Rose, D.S.O., visited the surrounding villages, but the enemy were not located in any force. The wounded were sent back to Lokoja. On the 18th January, Major Merrick moved the whole of his force to Giatu, on the south-east limit of the country visited, his intention being to work south-west and west, at the same time going over some of his old ground.

On the 19th, Major Merrick attacked the town of Agioma, which had previously been visited from a different side. Here he found the enemy who had evacuated the place on the 10th once more in position, but practically no stand was made. Another town was subsequently rushed and destroyed, and the force halted at Kushagi, which was friendly. Our casualties on the day were one man.

On the 20th and 21st other unfriendly towns were surprised and destroyed, and a considerable amount of ground, considering the thickness of the bush, was covered—i.e., some 34 miles. During these days fighting was only of a desultory sort, and one casualty only occurred. On the evening of the 21st camp was pitched at Biradu, which was the southern limit of the disaffected country. Here there is a colony of Hausas, Nupes, and other friendly tribes. It being unnecessary for the moment to go further south, Major Merrick now struck north-west towards Dekina, arriving at that place on the 23rd, having thoroughly reconnoitred the country some 30 miles on the way and destroyed Afojiji, a town which had fired on the late Captain O'Riordan's party. No opposition was met with, the only casualties being two followers who died of disease. From Dekina, Major Merrick moved south to the River Niger at Idah, arriving there on the 27th. Here he was re-inforced by an officer and 36 rank and file, and was able to send back to Lokoja his sick and wounded. On the 29th the force struck east by a direct road south of that taken via Dekina, and passing Biradu, entered the hostile zone again on the 2nd February, meeting with slight resistance. On the 3rd, five villages were rushed and destroyed, and some captures of cattle and supplies were made; the column moving north to Ankpa on the 4th.

From the 5th February to the 12th, the whole time was spent in the centre of the disaffected district, in endeavouring to locate Okpotos, who had now left their towns and were in hiding in the bush. Some captures of cattle were made, but it was seldom that the force was able to get in touch with the enemy. On the evening of the 12th, after successfully turning two ambushes, Kushagi's friendly village was again occupied, and another of the captured policemen of Captain O'Riordan's party escaped and came in to camp; during the past seven days two other fugitives from the ill-fated patrol had also joined the column. On the 13th February, having gained useful information from the fugitive policemen, Major Merrick was able to locate the enemy and inflict punishment. His casualties were one man killed.

On the 14th February the force conveying sick and wounded moved north towards Amagide,