

that a punitive expedition against the Zakka Khel Afridis had been approved by the Secretary of State for India. It was enjoined on me to keep the matter secret and to so arrange that within a few days the troops which were to form the expeditionary force should be ready to move at once on the orders for an advance being issued. I also received written instructions which gave a general idea of what was to be done; with detailed orders for the composition of the Force and a scheme of operations as a guide up to the time the troops entered the country of the Zakka Khel.

The following were the strengths :—

First Brigade.

1st Battalion, Royal Warwickshire Regiment.
53rd Sikhs (Frontier Force).
59th Scinde Rifles (Frontier Force).
2nd Battalion, 5th Gurkhas (Frontier Force).

Second Brigade.

1st Battalion, Seaforth Highlanders.
28th Punjabis.
45th Sikhs.
54th Sikhs (Frontier Force).

Third Brigade (in reserve).

1st Battalion, Royal Munster Fusiliers.
23rd Peshawar Mountain Battery (Frontier Force).
1st Battalion, 6th Gurkha Rifles.
55th Coke's Rifles (Frontier Force).

Divisional Troops.

2 Squadrons, 19th Lancers.
2 Squadrons, 37th Lancers.
23rd Sikh Pioneers.
25th Punjabis.
No. 3 Mountain Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery.
4 guns, 22nd (Derajat) Mountain Battery.
No. 6 Company, 1st Sappers and Miners.
No. 9 Company, 2nd Sappers and Miners.

Attached.—800 Khyber Rifles.

2. Later on I received instructions to be ready to move forward from Peshawar as soon as the Chief Commissioner, North-West Frontier Province, had interviewed the Afridi jirgahs, which had meantime been ordered to assemble there.

3. During the few days remaining all the railway, transport, supply, medical and other arrangements were completed, mostly by verbal orders. In accordance with instructions from Army Head-Quarters and in communication with the General Officer Commanding, Rawal Pindi Division, the troops and followers from that Division which were to form part of the Field Force were held in readiness. Up to the last moment secrecy was maintained and not until within a few hours of starting were all ranks of the advanced troops equipped with field service clothing, &c.

4. On the 12th February the Chief Commissioner, North-West Frontier Province, interviewed the Afridi jirgahs. This same afternoon troops began to move forward, and next day the piquets in the Khyber Pass were taken over by detachments of the Field Force; and line of communication posts were established at Jamrud and Ali Musjid. Half a battalion, 5th Gurkhas, marched to Lundi Kotal.

5. During the 12th February the 2nd Brigade from Nowshera and other troops from outside the 1st Division area arrived by road or rail at Peshawar and the Force which was to make the first advance was completed. The troops moving from the above two stations were at once replaced by the Reserve Brigade which arrived by train.

6. On 13th February the 1st and 2nd Brigades and Divisional troops left Peshawar and bivouacked at Jamrud. No tents were carried and all officers were on half field service scale of baggage.

7. On 14th February the Force moved to Lala China near Ali Musjid.

8. I felt convinced, considering the quiet way in which the Force had been mobilised, and how little was even known of its departure from Peshawar, that by a rapid march into the centre of Bazar we should not only morally surprise the enemy but forestall them in any of the positions they might have selected to defend. Accordingly at dawn on 15th February the following troops, under command of Major-General Barrett, C.B., left Lala China :—

With the Divisional Staff I accompanied this Column.

Strength.

3rd Mountain Battery.
Seaforth Highlanders.
28th Punjabis.
45th Sikhs.
54th Sikhs.
Wing 2-5th Gurkhas.
6th Company, Sappers and Miners.

Excepting a very small proportion of water, ambulance and other necessary mules, no transport accompanied this advance and officers and men carried three days' rations on the person. The route taken was by Chora in Malikdin country. The strong fort belonging to Yar Mahomed Khan at this place was occupied by troops from General Anderson's Brigade which moved up from Ali Musjid this same day.

No opposition was met with until after passing Chora when the Zakkas began firing on the advanced guard near Tanda Tangi and from the high hill Tsapara on to which the 5th Gurkhas were advancing. The column moved on, being fired at regularly from our left flank till we reached Walai, east of China. Only one casualty occurred, a gunner of the 3rd Mountain Battery being wounded.

It was getting late now and a position for the night was selected. The Seaforth Highlanders swarmed up Khar Ghundai, a steep hill 1,000 feet above the bivouac, and established themselves in sangars on the summit. Piquets were also placed round the Walai nala. Heavy firing was kept up throughout the night, but only caused us the loss of one Highlander and one sepoy, 28th Punjabis, killed, both in the piquets. The Highlanders also had an officer and four men struck by rocks hurled from close quarters into the sangars. The Zakkas lost three killed and seven wounded on Seaforth's hill, amongst the latter being the well-known raid leader Dadai, badly hit.

9. The 5th Gurkhas on Tsapara hill were also sniped all night, but had no casualties.

10. Whilst we were marching to Walai, a small column from Lundi Kotal, consisting of a wing 5th Gurkhas and 700 Khyber Rifles, under command of Lieutenant-Colonel Roos-Keppel, Chief