

to Chimo, to ascertain the wishes of the Japanese Commander-in-Chief, who, I was informed, had just arrived at that place.

I despatched Captain C. D. Hamilton Moore, D.A.A. and Q.M.G., to reconnoitre two roads over the Lao Shan Range, by which I thought I could move the force towards the left of the line of investment, which would be the most convenient position for purposes of supply, as my transport was only sufficient to carry 4 days' rations.

One of these roads was found to be quite unsuitable and the other only possible with a complete re-organisation of the transport, using pack mules or coolies over the worst parts of the Pass, and man-handling such carts as were necessary for use on the further side.

I was prepared to make this re-organisation if necessary.

On arrival, however, on the 25th, at Pu-li, about six miles from Lao Shan Bay, I learned that the Japanese Commander wished to use the Force under my command in the centre of the line, and he desired me, therefore, to march *via* Chimo and Liuting towards Litsun.

I also gathered that the Japanese plan of operations was to advance south from Chimo on 27th and 28th, and to attack on 29th and 30th the German advanced line, extending from Prince Henry Hill to Ku Shan, in order that siege materiel might be brought up to bombard the main position in front of Tsingtau.

To comply with the wishes of the Japanese Commander implied a very heavy strain on my transport, and probably very short rations, as it implied a line of communications nearly 40 miles in length, over a single, bad, narrow and congested road, or rather track.

It was essential, however, to make the effort, and I decided to do so, even if we had to exist on half rations.

On the 26th September the Force marched to Chimo, about 13 miles, where it arrived at 11.30 a.m., the transport arriving later in the afternoon, and a convoy of supplies from the Base about 11 p.m., after experiencing the greatest difficulties, owing to the blocked roads.

I consider that the officers and others concerned deserve the greatest credit for accomplishing what seemed an almost insuperable task, and I desire specially to bring to notice the excellent services rendered by Captain Don, Indian Supply and Transport Corps.

To the men, the marches, although not long, were very trying, owing to the constant halts and checks owing to the road being blocked by Japanese artillery and transport, but, with the exception of a few cases of fever, no men fell out.

On arrival at Chimo my supply difficulties were greatly lessened by the offer of the Japanese military authorities to use their transport for the purpose of establishing an advanced supply depot at Chimo, from which point our own transport would be able to work forward to the refilling point.

On the 27th the force moved on about 9 miles to Liuting and halted. I rode on to Divisional Headquarters, where I was received very cordially by Lieut.-General Kamio, the Japanese Commander-in-Chief, who gave me an outline of the following day's operations, in which we were to take part.

On the 28th, in accordance with his orders, the force proceeded towards Litsun with a view of participating in the attack on the German

advanced position, which was then being reconnoitred by the Japanese troops.

The Germans holding the position retired, however, before the Japanese advanced troops, who occupied the position which it was General Kamio's intention to have assaulted on the following night and morning.

The force under my command was therefore not engaged, and marched on to a village about 2½ miles in rear of the Japanese line, where it bivouacked.

This position, however, proved to be unsuitable, as we were exposed to the enemy's artillery fire, luckily without suffering any casualties; but on the 30th September I moved the force to the reverse slopes of a hill about 1 mile to the eastward of our former position, where the men were under cover, and were able to make splinter proof shelters.

I have, &c.,

N. W. BARNARDISTON, Brigadier-General,
Commanding Tsingtau Expeditionary Force.

[Despatch No. 2.]

From Brigadier-General N. W. Barnardiston,
M.V.O., to the War Office.

Investing Lines before Tsingtau,
29th October, 1914.

SIR,—

In continuation of my despatch dated 9th instant, I have the honour to report that on the 10th instant I received orders from the Japanese Commander to the effect that the Force under my command was to take its place in the front line of the investing force, a front of about 600 yards being assigned to us.

Accordingly, on the 11th instant I directed the Officer Commanding 2nd Bn. South Wales Borderers to take up, with 2 companies, a line running approximately north-west and south-west through a point a little north of Point 177 on Shuang Shan, furnishing two piquets with their supports and a local reserve. The remaining companies of the 2nd Bn. South Wales Borderers were distributed in such nullahs, south of Huang-Chia-Ving, as afforded the best cover from shell fire.

2. The range of heights forming the position of the line of investment south of that village, with their underfeatures, is intersected by numerous deep ravines of clay, excellent for protection and accommodation in dry weather. In wet weather, however, such as we have been unfortunately experiencing, the loose soil is washed away, the sides of the nullahs fall in, carrying with them the shelters for the troops; every valley becomes a torrent and every road or track a mass of deep mud. Cover for the men both from fire and weather becomes impossible. The men have been soaked through and through for as much as 48 hours, and equipment has been buried by falls of earth, and ammunition has rusted, but in spite of all hardships and privations the spirits and health of the troops have been excellent, and they have worked continuously at digging and at the heavy fatigue work of carrying rations and ammunition and heavy beams for head cover 1½ miles to the front where wheeled traffic has been impossible—often in liquid mud halfway up to the knees.

3. By degrees, and as I can obtain space, I am moving the rear companies up towards the front line preparatory to the attack on the fortress. Considerable delay has taken place