

enemy in an entrenched position some 10 miles east of the Canal. After some resistance the enemy fled hastily, leaving behind a quantity of equipment and rifle ammunition, the heavy going across the sandhills preventing our cavalry from cutting off their retreat. Our casualties on 22nd and 23rd were 5 killed and 19 wounded (Indian ranks). The enemy's losses were estimated at about 50.

6. The only other incident of note during the course of the month was the departure of the 30th Brigade for the Persian Gulf on 23rd. Its place in No. 1 Section was taken by the 28th (F.F.) Brigade, which in turn was relieved by the 31st Brigade from the reserve. Towards the end of the month reports were received of a considerable concentration of the enemy near Es Sirr, some 80 miles due east of Ballah. These reports were verified later by aeroplane observation, which estimated the hostile force as some 4,000, with guns.

7. On the 7th April our mounted patrols from Kantara encountered a hostile force, estimated at 1,200 men, which withdrew after shots had been exchanged. On the same day an aerial reconnaissance reported considerably fewer numbers retiring through Dueidar. The Imperial Service Cavalry Brigade was moved up to Kantara the same day, and on the 8th moved out in conjunction with part of the Kantara garrison. No enemy was encountered and the cavalry moved back to Ismailia, reconnoitring the country for some distance east of the Canal. On the 8th April, owing to suspicious tracks having been noticed on the east bank of the Canal between El Kap and Kantara, the Canal was dragged and a mine discovered and destroyed. The mine had evidently been placed in the Canal under cover of the demonstration of the previous day. Owing to this occurrence it became necessary greatly to increase our patrols. Intermediate night piquets were established between Posts and a system of hourly patrols along the east bank instituted. Arrangements were made for a thorough search of the Canal bank at daylight every morning, and Officers Commanding Posts were authorized to stop shipping in case of any suspicious circumstances being detected.

8. On the 28th April a reconnaissance of 90 rifles, Bikanir Camel Corps, encountered a hostile force estimated at some 200 men, with guns, about 12 miles due east of Ismailia Ferry Post. After a short skirmish the patrol withdrew to the Ferry Post with the loss of 3 killed, 4 wounded, and 2 missing; the enemy did not follow up their retirement. Later in the day an aerial reconnaissance located a body of the enemy in bivouac near El Hawawish, and the Imperial Service Cavalry Brigade (eight squadrons), supported by half-battalion 27th Punjabis and one section Egyptian Artillery, crossed the Canal after dark with a view to engaging the enemy at his camp next morning; or, should he have moved towards the Canal during the night, to cut off his retreat. During the night 28th/29th a hostile party, evidently from Hawawish, opened fire on a dredger in the Canal north of Bench Mark Post, but retired when engaged by one of our piquets. At daylight on 29th an aeroplane found Hawawish evacuated, but later on located the hostile force moving into Mahadat from the south-west, and the cavalry were directed on that place. Our column, however, only succeeded in engaging the rearguard at about 2 p.m.,

by which time the enemy had left Mahadat and was moving on Bada. The pursuit was carried on for three to four miles, but the great exhaustion of men and horses, owing to the heat and heavy going through the sandhills, prevented it from being carried further.

Our losses were one British, one Indian officer, and one sowar killed; one British officer and seven rank and file wounded. The enemy's losses in killed were about 20, and 13 prisoners were taken. The column returned to Ismailia early on the 30th.

9. On 7th April, the 7th Indian Mountain Artillery Brigade left the Canal Defences to join the Mediterranean Force, and on 26th the 29th Indian Infantry Brigade left for the same destination, being replaced in No. III Section by the East Lancashire Brigade (Territorial Force).

10. On 1st May a half battalion 56th Rifles were despatched from Suez to Abu Zenima owing to rumours of an attack on the Egyptian garrison of that place. This detachment returned on 3rd, no enemy having appeared in the vicinity. On several occasions during the month hostile patrols were located at some distance from the Canal, but these all retired eastwards as soon as forces moved against them. On the 29th a small party reached the shore of the Little Bitter Lake, and, wading out, boarded a Suez Canal pile driver, destroying one small boat and taking prisoner an Italian employee of the company. Pursuit was undertaken from the nearest Post as soon as the occurrence was reported, but without result.

On the night of the 30th/31st a party of Turks was detected trying to approach the Canal between El Ferdan and Ballah. On being fired on they retired, leaving behind a mine, which was discovered and brought in next morning. The next night the party returned with the evident intention of recovering the mine, but hastily retired on being fired on by a piquet which had been left near the spot to deal with any such attempt.

On the night of the 2nd/3rd June, parties of the enemy opened fire on the Posts of Kantara and El Ferdan, but withdrew hastily when engaged. Small columns from the above Posts moved out in pursuit, but were unable to come up with the raiders, who appeared to be all mounted men. One Turkish officer was taken prisoner.

11. Several changes in the garrisons of the Canal Defences took place during the month of May. Early in the month the Artillery and Engineers, as well as the East Lancashire Brigade of the Lancashire Division (T.F.), left to join the Mediterranean Force; the 4th Mounted Brigade and Divisional Artillery, 2nd Mounted Division, arriving in replacement. On the 29th May orders were received for the 1/5th and 2/10th Gurkha Rifles to reinforce the 29th Indian Infantry Brigade with the Mediterranean Force, and these battalions left on the 31st May and 1st June respectively.

Consequent on the above changes and reductions certain modifications in organisation became necessary, and were carried into effect during the month. It was decided to abolish the divisional organisation of the 10th and 11th Divisions and to include the whole of the forces in the Canal zone in one command with a Headquarter Staff approximating to that of a division. These changes were brought into effect from the 1st June.