

to the enemy for concealment, and for subsequent withdrawal.

7. The attack made by the enemy on 1st May, combined with the increased raiding by large gangs into the Derajat district, showed that the Mahsuds were becoming emboldened, and it became necessary to increase the strength of the garrison of the Derajat. Three additional infantry battalions which, with the 1/4th Gurkha Rifles, formed the 43rd Infantry Brigade, under the command of Brigadier-General W. M. Southey, C.M.G., and two sections of mountain artillery were therefore ordered to Tank, the 107th Pioneers and No. 7 Field Company, Sappers and Miners, having been previously sent into the area to improve communications. On 6th May, the force in the Derajat was constituted the Derajat Field Force, and Major-General W. G. L. Beynon, C.B., C.I.E., D.S.O., was appointed to command with Sir John Donald, K.C.I.E., C.S.I., as his Chief Political Officer. On the 12th May, the Bannu Brigade, under the command of Brigadier-General the Honourable C. G. Bruce, M.V.O., was placed under General Beynon's orders, and the troops in the Derajat and Bannu Brigades were designated the Waziristan Field Force.

8. Whilst these reinforcements were moving into the Derajat, an action was fought on 10th May in the vicinity of Sarwakai. The Officer Commanding the post, Major L. P. Collins, D.S.O., 1/4th Gurkha Rifles, hearing that a body of the enemy was retiring from the vicinity of Tormandu, moved out during the night of 9th-10th with a force of 450 rifles, comprising 1/4th Gurkha Rifles, 11th Rajputs, and South Waziristan Militia, with the object of intercepting the enemy's retreat. At dawn, the Mahsuds were successfully surprised, but large enemy reinforcements arriving very fierce hand-to-hand fighting took place. As there was danger of being surrounded, the Officer Commanding the detachment rightly decided to withdraw to Sarwakai. Although our losses in this engagement were severe, those inflicted on the enemy were also heavy, and included the leader of the *lashkar*. Great praise is, I consider, due to the troops, who were largely composed of young soldiers, for the steadiness and gallantry with which they fought.

9. Hitherto only certain sections of the Mahsuds had been hostile, and it had been hoped that the operations could be confined to those necessary for the security of the Gomal and the protection of the Derajat border. It was most desirable to avoid, if possible, undertaking offensive operations during the hot weather when the climatic conditions in the Derajat are of the worst description. Also, as soon as the rains commence, the railway and road communications are very liable to interruption. The confidence of the hostile sections of the Mahsuds in their immunity from punishment had, however, resulted in bringing in other sections of the tribe against us, and, on the 19th May, Government sanctioned the taking of punitive measures, with the Khaisara Valley as the objective.

10. To carry out these offensive operations the force in the Derajat was reinforced by the 45th Infantry Brigade, under the command of Brigadier-General C. C. Luard, two battalions of the 44th Infantry Brigade, one section

No. 1 British Mountain Battery, and No. 11 Field Company, Sappers and Miners.

In order to protect the Bannu district four additional battalions, two of which belonged to the 44th Brigade, commanded by Brigadier-General G. D. Crocker, were added to the garrison.

11. Meanwhile, on 16th May, a Mahsud *lashkar*, believed to have been of a strength of some 2,000 men, attacked, on the Gwaleri Pass, the second echelon of a convoy proceeding up the Gomal to ration Sarwakai and Wana. The convoy was unable to get through, and returned to Nili Kach. Major-General Beynon therefore directed Brigadier-General Southey to march from Murtaza to Nili Kach with two battalions. This General Southey was unable to do until 20th owing to the Gomal River being in flood. The convoy then proceeded to Wana without further incident.

12. The accumulation of supplies preparatory to carrying out of punitive measures in the Khaisara Valley from Wana had now to be undertaken. The Gomal River, however, again came down in flood, and the disadvantage of utilising, as a line of communication, a route traversing the long and dangerous defile of the Gomal and liable to be interrupted for long periods by floods in the river, made it desirable to consider the possibility of utilising an alternative line into the Khaisara. Major-General Beynon therefore submitted proposals, which had my full approval, for operations *vis à vis* Jandola and the Shahur Valley. On 26th May, these proposals were sanctioned by Government. In order to facilitate the passage of Major-General Beynon's main force through the Shahur *tangi* between Jandola and Haidari Kach, at which defile it was probable that the Mahsuds would endeavour seriously to oppose the advance of the force, it was decided that a detachment of two battalions and a section of mountain guns should be located at Sarwakai, from which place it could operate against the rear of any enemy holding the defile.

Steps were taken at once for the formation of an advanced base and for the accumulation of supplies at Jandola; also for the completion of the garrison of Sarwakai up to the strength decided upon.

13. Up to the end of May no hostile acts had been committed by the Mahsuds in the Tochi. On 31st, however, Tut Narai, a small post, garrisoned by the North Waziristan Militia, was captured by a ruse, the *lashkar* taking part being estimated to be some 600 strong. Owing to the fire brought to bear on the attackers by men holding the two outlying towers and to the rapidity with which the local village pursuit parties were turned out by Major F. H. Humphrys, the Political Agent, Tochi, the enemy were unable to damage the post. Brigadier-General Bruce, who was at Miramshah with the Movable Column, ordered Tut Narai to be at once regarrisoned, and a small column, under the command of Major G. B. Scott, D.S.O., Commandant, North Waziristan Militia, was despatched the same evening and effected its object without incident.

14. By the 9th June, Major-General Beynon's striking force and the line of communication troops destined for Jandola and the posts beyond were concentrated at Jandola. During this concentration the only aggressive action taken by the enemy was a determined attack on 7th June by a party of 300 men