

"Nairana." This force proceeded as fast as possible, as time was so important a factor, and arrived off the island on the morning of 1st August. The "Aube" had been delayed through striking a sunken wreck, so the "Attentive" and "Nairana" alone reached the rendezvous. The "Attentive" at once seized the lightship and demanded the instant surrender of the island. This surrender, after consideration, was refused, and the shore batteries opened fire. The seaplanes and "Attentive's" fire soon silenced the batteries, and the landing parties cleared up the island with very slight opposition. About thirty prisoners and some rifles and machine guns were captured, but the bulk of the garrison had fled to the south of the island and escaped. The armament consisted of seven 6 in. guns and six 6 in. howitzers. The enemy had been working very hard to complete their defences, and had our attack been delayed a few weeks longer the capture of the island would have constituted a very serious operation. By 10 p.m. we had finished clearing up the island and had made the minefields safe. We had also sent several seaplanes over Archangel to drop pamphlets and encourage our supporters. During the night the Bolshevik Government decided to evacuate the town, after having ordered two icebreakers to be sunk in the fairway to block our passage up the channel. On August 2nd the revolution planned by our supporters broke out at 4 a.m., and was completely successful. The Bolshevik Government was overthrown. The new Government cordially invoked our aid and declared itself pro-Ally, anti-German, and determined not to recognise the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. After some delay caused by exploring a passage between the sunken icebreakers, we were fortunate enough to find that there was just sufficient room to allow a passage for the ships. We then made a triumphal procession up the channel to Archangel, being everywhere greeted with enormous enthusiasm.

Meanwhile the enemy was retiring by boats up the Dvina and by trains down the railway. I organised at once forces to operate down the railway towards Vologda and up the Dvina towards Kotlas under the immediate command of Brigadier-General R. G. Finlayson, C.M.G., D.S.O.; who took up his headquarters at Isakagorka.

Vologda Force.

Of these forces the Vologda Force, under Lieutenant-Colonel Guard, D.S.O., occupied Oboserskaia on 4th September. This force consistently encountered most determined opposition. The enemy, assisted by German officers, was considerably superior in numbers, and by the destruction of all bridges, and occupation of strong defensive positions, was enabled to render our advance very slow. The country, consisting of practically nothing but forest and bog, presents the most extraordinary difficulties. This renders any attempt at a turning movement both difficult and slow. For a detachment to have to wade waist deep in bog, even on patrol work, is an almost daily occurrence. The success of this operation, which inflicted very heavy casualties on the enemy and took some 200 prisoners, reflects the very greatest praise on all ranks concerned.

This force is at the present time engaged in carrying out operations with a view to the occupation of Plesetskaia.

I have also occupied Onega with a small force of Americans and Slavo-British Allied Legion, under Lieutenant-Colonel Clarke, and have cleared up the country between Onega and Oboserskaia. I have also restored the overland telegraph line from Archangel-Onega-Soroka.

Dvina Force.

The Dvina Force was equipped and despatched under very great difficulties. We were short of ships, as the Bolsheviks had taken all the best and fastest ones. The few ships that we were able to collect were too weak to stand the strain of constant employment, and after a few weeks began to lead badly, suffer from engine troubles, and need constant overhaul. Moreover, the decks were too flimsy to stand the strain of the shock of discharge of the guns, and thus our guns were constantly going out of action at the critical period. In every "naval" engagement, therefore, in addition to being outnumbered, we also suffered from being out-paced and outranged. We also suffered from shortage of men. In the original expedition I despatched to reinforce the French 200 local Russian troops, of whom 40 were Poles. In inspecting this Detachment I found that the two N.C.Os. had both been N.C.Os. in the German Army, and had both been wounded fighting against us on the Western Front. Two more of the detachment were each short of one arm. They were taken to work machine guns with the one remaining arm. This detachment has done very good service, but the above will show some of the difficulties with which we had to contend. The force was originally under the command of Commandant Rangué, 21st French Battalion d'Infanterie Coloniale. This capable and gallant officer was, unfortunately, seriously wounded in an attack near Beresnik. He was replaced by Lieutenant-Colonel Josselyn, D.S.O., who is still in command. The force established itself at Beresnik—the confluence of the Dvina and Vaga rivers. On being reinforced with both ships and men, a most successful operation was carried out against the enemy, who were in considerable force on both banks of the river, and in considerable force also in ships. The result of these operations was that the enemy was completely routed and fled in disorder towards Kotlas, having lost heavily in men, material and prisoners. Four of his ships were sunk with heavy casualties by our fleet. The remainder were able to withdraw in safety, owing to the river having been mined. We have cleared both banks of the river as far south as Nijnitoimi. The enemy has sunk two lines of barges filled with sand, one about Troitsa Verkhotomski and the other near Krasnovorsk. Mines have also been laid to cover these blockages.

The approach of winter, lateness in arrival of stores, and shortage of tugs to tow the barges of supplies up the river have decided me not to attempt a further advance towards Kotlas until the spring.

This Force has carried out its operations, under most difficult conditions, to my entire satisfaction. All ranks have worked cheerfully and gallantly, and merit the highest praise.

Royal Navy.

I wish to put on record my appreciation of the work of the Royal Navy, and the hearty spirit of co-operation which they have invari-