

be carried out near Kotlas, on the River Dvina. If this could have been effected the stability of the North Russian Government and its forces would have been secured and the withdrawal of the Allied troops carried out without difficulty. Owing to the retreat of the Siberian forces, however, it was soon evident that this hope could not be realised. Nevertheless, it was still intended to carry out an offensive on the Dvina as far as Kotlas, with the object of occupying the Bolshevik river base at that place. If this could have been reached and the enemy's river craft, wharves, depôts, etc., destroyed, the withdrawal of the Allied troops down the Dvina to Archangel could have been carried out without danger of any serious interference from the Bolsheviks. But, owing to the abnormally low water in the Dvina, which prevented our flotilla proceeding so far up the river, this project had to be abandoned and a disengaging blow struck at the enemy with a more limited objective.

With this intention an attack was carried out on the Dvina under Brigadier-General Sadleir-Jackson on 10th August. The attack was a complete success, very well carried out, and executed with a minimum of losses. All objectives were taken, and the advance ended with the capture of Puchega and Borok, 20 miles from our original position. We captured 2,296 prisoners. The enemy's casualties were estimated at 1,200 killed and wounded, whilst our losses were thirty-seven killed, eighty-five wounded and twenty-two missing. On the other fronts operations were limited to disengaging our troops and substituting Russian troops and Russian administration for the existing British organisation.

The extremely successful operations of Jackson's Brigade on the Dvina freed that front completely, and I was able to report to Lord Rawlinson on his arrival as Commander-in-Chief, North Russia, that evacuation could be successfully carried out according to the plans already submitted.

7.—Mentions.

I wish to make special mention of the following:—

Brigadier-General H. Needham, C.M.G., D.S.O., who has directed the Administrative Services with complete success under very difficult circumstances.

Brigadier-General R. G. Finlayson, C.M.G., D.S.O., and Brigadier-General C. C. Graham, D.S.O., the Commanders of the Dvina forces.

Colonel R. P. Crawley, M.V.O., D.S.O., R.A.S.C., for the direction of the Supply Services. The forces were never short of food under most difficult conditions of warfare.

Major A. W. Coxon, A.P.D., for his single-handed work in directing the payments of the various contingents.

Lieut.-Colonel R. S. D. G. Stokes, D.S.O., O.B.E., R.E., ably seconded by Lieut.-Colonel Morris, U.S. Engineers, in the direction of all engineering work.

Amongst the Officers of the Allied Contingent I wish to make special mention of:—

Major Brook Nicholls, U.S. Army, for his stirring work through the winter.

Brigadier-General Wilds P. Richardson, U.S. Army, for his energy and tact in directing the evacuation of the American Forces.

Colonel Donop, French Army, for his help in all the *liaison* between the British and French troops.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,
(Sgd.) E. IRONSIDE,
Major-General.

DESPATCH No. 4.

(With Appendices A and B.)

From General Lord Rawlinson, G.C.B., G.C.V.O., K.C.M.G., A.D.C., Commander-in-Chief, Allied Forces in North Russia, covering the period 10th August to 12th October, 1919.

11th November, 1919.

Decision of H.M. Government to withdraw British troops from North Russia.

In the spring of 1919 H.M. Government decided to withdraw the British troops from North Russia before the arrival of the winter ice closed again the ports to shipping.

This decision once taken, the question arose as to the best method of putting it into execution.

It was important to keep clearly in view two main objects. The first was that the actual operation of withdrawal, always attended with difficulties, should be conducted at the smallest possible cost to ourselves both in life and material. Secondly, there was the obligation which we owed to our Russian Allies of placing them in a favourable position to continue successfully the struggle against Bolshevism after our departure.

Judged from any sound military standpoint, it was evident that the surest way of attaining this dual purpose was to inflict a severe blow on the enemy forces at some period previous to our final withdrawal. Such an operation, if successful, would not only enable the withdrawal of the British troops to be effected unmolested, but would raise the morale of the Russian forces and strengthen their powers of resistance at what must necessarily be a critical time.

The forces at the disposal of Generals Ironside and Maynard were, however, few in number and composed of low category men selected originally as unsuitable for service in France, and further severely tried by the rigours of an Arctic winter. The despatch of reinforcements was necessary before the operations imposed on us by the decision to withdraw from North Russia in the autumn could be undertaken. Two infantry brigades, under the command of Generals Grogan and Sadleir-Jackson were sent, accordingly, in June to the Archangel front to effect the relief of the tired troops and generally strengthen our position.

The value of this relief force was soon to be demonstrated, for it was the presence of these tried brigades which saved the situation when in July serious mutinies occurred among the Russian battalions on the Dvina and Onega fronts. The important part they played in the operations which eventually ensured the successful conduct of our withdrawal will be apparent in the course of this despatch.