

The results were such as might be expected from officers, non-commissioned officers and men of the British Army. Their adaptability to circumstances and energy in administration overcame all obstacles, and deserve the highest praise. Their duties were often carried out in circumstances of considerable danger, and, I much regret, in some cases with fatal results.

I desire specially to bring to notice the services of Major and Brevet Lieut.-Colonel (temporary Brigadier-General) W. J. N. Cooke-Collis, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., Royal Irish Rifles, Military Governor of Batoum province, who displayed administrative capacity of a high order, and whose actions, founded on common sense and thorough knowledge of the situation, were fearlessly carried out with energy and decision.

### III. EVACUATION OF THE BRITISH MILITARY MISSION IN SOUTH RUSSIA.

Except in its early days, the British Military Mission in South Russia had been in no way under my orders. In the beginning of March, 1920, when the Volunteer Army was in full retreat, I received instructions to the effect that I was responsible for its safe withdrawal and for the evacuation of a certain number of refugees, whose security had been guaranteed.

I had previously discussed the question with Major-General Sir H. C. Holman, K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., in charge of the Mission, who fully realised that, should the forces under the command of General Denikin be driven precipitately into the town of Novorossisk without adequate means of evacuation, a situation dangerous to the safety of the Mission might arise.

On 8th March this crisis appeared to be rapidly approaching, and I at once despatched to Novorossisk the 2nd Bn., Royal Scots Fusiliers, under the command of Lieut.-Colonel R. K. Walsh, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., with the object of securing the safety of the Mission; their arrival had a calming effect on the population. At the same time, as I was unable to leave Constantinople, Lieut.-General Sir G. T. M. Bridges, K.C.M.G., C.B., D.S.O., whose services had been placed at my disposal, proceeded to Novorossisk to supervise the concentration and withdrawal of both the Mission and the refugees.

I followed on 23rd March, and on arrival found the Volunteer Army falling back into the town; but everything possible had been done for the evacuation of the refugees, and the Mission was ready to embark at short notice. Little remained that could be done to avert the conclusion to which events were rushing, and the few remaining hours were employed in collecting and despatching to the Crimea as many wounded and refugees as possible. Those of the wounded whom it was impossible to move were collected in one hospital under the protection of the Red Cross and the flags of the Allies.

On 26th March the evacuation of the Volunteer Army and the Don Army proceeded, covered by the fire of the Allied ships, and it is calculated that before night, when the Bolsheviks entered Novorossisk, 45,000 Russian soldiers, besides sick and wounded, had been embarked. This rapid evacuation was largely due to the excellent organisation and untiring energy of the Royal Navy under Rear-Admiral

Sir M. Culme-Seymour, K.C.B., M.V.O.; Second in Command of the Mediterranean Fleet.

Representatives of His Majesty's Army and Navy remained till the end and received the personal thanks of General Denikin for what was in reality a work of humanity and mercy. The discipline shown by the young soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, Royal Scots Fusiliers, was what was to be expected from that distinguished regiment, and their presence and tactful behaviour did much to inspire a confidence at critical moments which was almost pathetic.

Brigadier-General J. S. J. Percy, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., who had rendered yeoman service as chief staff officer during these difficult times, now assumed command of that portion of the mission which had accompanied the Volunteer Army to the Crimea, and General Holman accompanied General Denikin to Constantinople *en route* for Great Britain.

After rendering such aid as was possible to the armed forces of South Russia, now under the command of General Wrangel, Brigadier-General Percy and the mission were withdrawn from the Crimea towards the end of June.

During the period of evacuation some 10,000 refugees, sick and wounded were despatched to Salonika, Egypt, Cyprus, Mudros and Prinkipo, where they received adequate assistance and medical treatment.

I desire to record my indebtedness to Major-General Sir H. C. Holman, K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., who commanded during the difficult period through which the mission had passed during the protracted struggle, which General Denikin had waged so stubbornly; and to Lieut.-General Sir G. T. M. Bridges, K.C.M.G., C.B., D.S.O., for the successful withdrawal, which reflected the greatest credit on all concerned.

### IV. GENERAL REMARKS.

Throughout the period covered by this despatch the staff and administrative services and departments have been severely handicapped owing to demobilisation, the lack of trained warrant and non-commissioned officers, and the shortage of British technical personnel and specialists.

The position of the Army has been peculiar, since, while its staff and administrative services were reduced to a peace footing, it had to be prepared to resume active operations at short notice. A peace régime of training, education and physical exercises had to go hand in hand with constant readiness for war.

Units have been continually on the move, due to the rapidly altering conditions. It has been impossible to grant leave; the comforts of peace and barrack life have been wanting, and, owing to the uncertainty as to the future and the lack of accommodation, it has been impossible to allow the men's families to come out. Newly-formed regular units have gradually arrived to take the place of the wartime formations, and over 90,000 men have been sent home. Demobilisation has been necessarily slow owing to the scarcity of transport, but the difficulties have been generally realised and the patience and good discipline displayed by all ranks in trying circumstances have been admirable.

I would specially commend the spirit of the many officers and men, who, although their civilian careers were in jeopardy, volunteered to remain because they realised that, without