

3. These include:—

1. Operations on the Euphrates above Hit.
2. Operations against the Surchi and Zibari Kurds in the province of Mosul.
3. Minor aeroplane action against a recalcitrant tribe on the Lower Euphrates in the vicinity of Samawah.
4. Operations near Mosul and on the Baghdad-Mosul L. of C.
5. Events in N.W. Persia.

Each of these is described in a separate section.

4. In submitting this brief despatch I wish to bring to notice the admirable work of the troops and of the R.A.F. under extremely arduous conditions, varying from the snow and rain of winter to the intense heat of a Mesopotamian summer. They cheerfully responded to all calls on them; and these not infrequently had to be made when climatic conditions were at the worst. Despite this, the general health was surprisingly good. The light armoured motor cars, which were handled with dash and initiative, frequently proved a most disturbing factor to the Arabs. The transport was always hard worked, for the most part over roads which are only roads in name, and in spite of all difficulties a most efficient service was maintained.

It would be invidious to single out particular services and departments; and I am fortunate in being able to report that one and all, together with Commanders and Staffs, did not spare themselves to bring the operations to a successful conclusion.

5. I propose shortly to submit for consideration a list of the names of those whose services deserve recognition.*

I have the honour to be,
Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

A. HALDANE,
Lieutenant-General,
Commanding-in-Chief,
Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force

I.—REPORT ON THE OPERATIONS ON THE EUPHRATES ABOVE HIT.

1. The series of operations on this part of the Euphrates began in December, 1919, when one, Ramadhan Shalash, occupied Deir-*ez-Zor*. His action was repudiated by the Arab Government, who, however, retained the town in accordance with a decision which had previously been reached by His Majesty's Government, and a provisional boundary was fixed on the line of the Khabur and continued south-westward across the Euphrates. In January, Ramadhan Shalash and his followers attacked Albu Kemal, but were repulsed, and withdrew. Our advanced troops then occupied Salahiyah, which is about midway between Albu Kemal and Meyaddin, the latter place being on the provisional boundary and held by the Arabs.

2. About the 15th January Maulud Pasha assumed the Governorship of Deir-*ez-Zor*. Anti-British propaganda from the Syrian side of the provisional boundary did not, however, diminish, and Maulud Pasha claimed that the true boundary should be at the Wadi Hauran, 180 miles down stream from Albu Kemal.

3. The tribes on the Mesopotamian side of the frontier, assisted by others from beyond

the border, now attempted to make our occupation of Albu Kemal and Salahiyah impossible by cutting the long exposed line of communications from railhead at Fallujah through Ramadi, Hit and Anah. A series of attacks was made on convoys on the 14th February, and on the 1st, 5th and 7th March.

On the first of these days a determined attack was made by some 400 Arabs on three platoons of the 126th Baluchistan Infantry. After severe fighting the Arabs were driven off with the loss to our detachment of thirty casualties, including one British and one Indian Officer killed, while the Arabs are reported to have lost 34 killed and many wounded.

4. On the occasion of such attacks, which are initiated by raiding bands of varying size, the temptation to the villagers in the vicinity to join in with the prospect of loot generally proves irresistible, and the numbers of the attackers swell rapidly.

5. On the 16th February, the camps implicated in the attack of the 14th were visited by a mobile column and destroyed, the Arabs withdrawing before our Cavalry.

6. On the 1st March, three troops of Cavalry, with four Ford Vans carrying Infantry with machine guns, escorted a party sent out to repair the telegraph line which had been cut. Near Nahiyah, half-way between Alqaim and Anah, they were attacked by 300 Arabs, losing one British Officer killed and two Indian other ranks wounded.

The attackers were beaten off with considerable loss.

7. On the 3rd March a Camel convoy returning from Salahiyah to Albu Kemal was attacked by 300 to 400 tribesmen. A heavy storm rendered the road impassable, and the convoy had to return to Salahiyah. While this operation was in progress the escort was attacked in force, but drove off the assailants with the loss of one British Officer, ten Indians killed and three Indians wounded.

8. On the 7th March, the same convoy again left Salahiyah, a mobile column of the 10th Lancers having moved during the night to a concealed position near the scene of the action of the 5th. The convoy was attacked and the concealed squadrons coming into action surprised the attackers and inflicted heavy losses on the Arabs, who left 60 dead on the field, while many more were reported to have been wounded. Our losses were one British Officer and six Indians killed; two Indian Officers and twelve Indian other ranks wounded.

9. The result of this action was seen in the temporary cessation of attacks on convoys. Measures of reprisal were, however, taken during the following month against the tribes known to have been concerned in the attacks, and the tribesmen were driven off their fields, with the result that all tribal Sheikhs except those of one small section came in and accepted terms. These terms included the payment of a security for future good behaviour and a fine of rifles and money or grain in respect of past offences. Operations to prevent the resumption of agricultural work were continued against the section which had not submitted. These were continued until the loss inflicted upon them by the damage to their crops had exceeded the proportion of security

* Published in London Gazette, No. 32199, dated 20th January, 1921.