

tion of reopening communication with Fallujah. The force at his disposal was extremely limited, and the work was frequently interrupted by attacks on the construction parties, but by the 24th September communication was restored with Fallujah, that place and Ramadi being already in touch. Shortly afterwards I directed the troops at Fallujah to take over the garrisons of the blockhouses between that place and Baghdad, and to construct a post to command the regulators of the Saklawiyah canal. The restoration of communication with the Upper Euphrates had a beneficial effect not only on that area but among the tribesmen who are settled between Samarra and Baghdad.

(87) Three days earlier the last of 173 blockhouses on the Kut-Baghdad line was completed, and as certain defences had by this time been constructed at important points on the Tigris, the main line of communication from Baghdad to the Base could now be regarded as secure.

Operations for the Relief of Kufah.

(88) As I wished to impress that part of the country in which I was now about to operate, by displaying as many troops as possible, I reduced the garrisons of Musaiyib and the Hindiyah Barrage to one battalion, while a force of similar strength was allotted for the defence of Hillah. I also withdrew from Ramadi, on the Upper Euphrates, the Headquarters, and 2 squadrons of the 5th Cavalry, and as that area was now quiet, replaced on the 9th October the garrison of Hit, which post, as already mentioned, had been held by the loyal Dulaim tribe pending our re-occupation.

(89) It was necessary to leave troops north-east of Baghdad, where propagandists were reported to be busily engaged in trying to renew the disturbances, to continue there the process of restoring order, and to ensure compliance with the terms that had been issued. For this purpose, and excluding the detachment at Deltawah, I left under the command of Brigadier-General Beatty the following troops, which included those necessary for guarding the railway line:—

- 32nd Lancers (less 2 squadrons),
 - 13th Mountain Battery, R.G.A.,
 - 40th Mountain Battery,
 - 1st Bn., Royal Irish Fusiliers and M.G. Co.,
 - 1/94th (Russell's) Infantry,
 - 2/119th Infantry,
 - 99th (Deccan) Infantry,
- and certain details.

(90) The number of troops at my disposal was now, for the first time, sufficient to admit of operating simultaneously in strength in two directions, and by doing so it was expected that the insurgents would divide their forces. One of the objectives was to relieve the garrison of Kufah and to recover our prisoners at Najaf; the other to occupy Tuwairij and threaten Karbala, which lies some 12 miles to the west.

(91) The columns were composed as follows:—

- 55th Brigade Column—Brigadier-General H. A. Walker, C.M.G., D.S.O.
- 35th Scinde Horse (less 2 squadrons),
- 37th Lancers (2 squadrons and machine gun section),

- 39th Battery, R.F.A.,
- 97th Battery, R.F.A. (1 section),
- 131st (How.) Battery, R.F.A.,
- 45th Mountain Battery (less 1 section),
- 61st Company 2nd (Q.V.O.) Sappers and Miners,
- 67th Company 2nd (Q.V.O.) Sappers and Miners (less 1 section),
- No. 49 Pack Wireless Set,
- Cable Section,
- Detachment Bridging Train,
- 2nd Bn., Manchester Regiment,
- 2nd Bn., Royal Irish Rifles,
- 8th Rajputs,
- 1/15th (Ludhiana) Sikhs,
- 87th Punjabis,
- 1/116th Mahrattas,
- 108th Infantry (less detachment at Kufah).
- 1/32nd Sikh Pioneers,
- "C" Company, 8th Machine Gun Bn. (less 2 sections),
- 39th Combined Field Ambulance,

53rd Brigade Column—Brigadier-General G. A. F. Sanders, C.M.G.

- 5th Cavalry (less 2 squadrons and machine gun section),
- 2nd Battery, R.F.A. (less 1 section),
- 132nd (How.) Battery, R.F.A.,
- 45th Mountain Battery (1 section),
- 9th Co., 2nd (Q.V.O.) Sappers and Miners,
- No. 46 Pack Wireless Set,
- Cable section,
- Detachment Bridging Train,
- 2nd Bn., East Yorkshire Regiment,
- 1st Bn., Rifle Brigade,
- 3/9th (Bhopal) Infantry,
- 13th Rajputs,
- 1/12th Pioneers,
- "C" Co., 8th Machine Gun Battalion (1 section),
- 24th Combined Field Ambulance.

(92) As all operations that take place in Mesopotamia depend on the supply of water, and as troops moving along the Hillah-Kif road are forced to rely on what is carried by channels running westward from the Nahr Shah canal, special arrangements had to be made. It was decided that the Kufah force should march in two columns, one column along the canal which, in order that it might serve as a line of supply and to prevent the closing of the channels carrying water to the Kif road, was to be guarded by blockhouses at intervals along its banks. The other column would follow the Hillah-Kif road, which is a track superior to that along the canal, and crosses the channels at points where, as obstacles, they are less formidable than further eastward.

While following this road the column would be in a position to close the channels running to the westward of it to the inconvenience of the inhabitants on that flank.

(93) Before the date fixed for the advance on Kif and Tuwairij, and while the troops required to move against the latter place were assembling, an operation was undertaken on the 6th and 7th October to secure the dense belt of palm trees which stretches from Hillah to a point 2½ miles distant, where the Nahr Shah canal leaves the Euphrates (Hillah Branch). Strong opposition was encountered on the 7th, but after 3½ hours' fighting the 2nd Bn., Royal Irish Rifles, and the 8th Rajputs