CHAPTER 7

INDIAN ARMY IN EGYPT, PALESTINE AND SYRIA

For a clear comprehension of these campaigns a brief description of the geographical features of the region seems necessary. Here, as elsewhere, the results of the campaigns greatly depended upon this factor.

The Topography of Egypt, Palestine and Syria

The campaigns in Egypt, Palestine and Syria were fought along the valleys of the Euphrates and of the Nile. From Egypt the course of the Nile keeps close to the sea while passing over the inhospitable desert of Sinai, thence it runs up the fertile plains of Philistia and Sharon, leaving the highly rocky fortress of Judea to the east; crosses the Carmel Range by a low pass to the plain of Esdraelon or Megiddo; ascends past the sea of Galilee to the plateau east of the Jordan; and so on to Damascus and Aleppo.

The chief military theatres were Sinai, Palestine and Syria.

1. Sinai

The triangular-shaped Sinai Peninsula, 240 miles long from north to south, and approximately 120 miles from east to west, may be divided into three zones.

(a) The northern zone. It consists of a narrow coastal plain bordered by a belt of sand dunes of a breadth varying from five to fifteen miles. These sand dunes are impassable for wheels, and make it difficult going even for mounted men and infantry.

(b) The central zone. It is a barren stony plateau rising to a height of 3,000 feet. There are no made roads for vehicular traffic, but the going is better and firmer than in the northern zone.

1. Wavell, Field Marshal. The Palestine Campaigns, Sagar Publications, New Delhi, 1968, pp. 1-12,
(c) *The southern zone.* It is a mass of rocky precipitous mountains, some of which rise to 10,000 feet. The supply of water is precarious at all times, except after the winter rains. Water is scarest in the southern zone.

The construction of Suez canal during the time of Nepolean has contracted the desert by some fifty miles. However, crossing of the Peninsula could be accomplished only after serious preparation and organisation.

2. *Palestine*

The territory from Dan to Beersheba and from Mediterranean to the Hejaz Railway was known as Palestine. It is a small country. From Dan (Baniyas) to Beersheba is one hundred and fifty miles, from the Mediterranean at Jaffa to Hejaz Railway at Amman it is seventy-five miles. Its salient physical features are two mountain ranges. The eastern range, the Mountains of Moab (3,000-3,500 feet) sinks down gradually to the desert on the east and abruptly to the Jordan on the west. The other range, the Judaen Hills falls steeply to the Jordan, whereas on the Mediterranean side its descent to the coastal plain is more gradual. Between the two ranges runs the valley of the Jordan, seven feet below sea-level at Lake Huleh, 680 feet below at Lake Tiberias, and 1300 feet below at the Dead Sea. The dissecting of the country is completed by two depressions running east and west. The great depression is the Plain of Esdraelon, continued eastwards by the Yamrurk valley; the lesser is between Samaria and Judea which may be defined by a line drawn from the sea to the Jordan following the River Auja (north of Jaffa), the Wadis Deir Ballut, En Nimur, and Es Samaieh, another rever called Auja, flows into the Jordan eight miles north of Jericho.

From military considerations the Palestine theatre may then be subdivided into:

(a) The Maritime Plain and Plain of Esdraelon;
(b) The Judaen Hills
(c) The Jordan Valley;
(d) Transjordania.

(a) *The Plain Country—Philistia and Esdraelon.* These plains form natural and historical routes for great armies. The coastline is fringed by a strip of sand dunes, varying in width from a few hundred yards up to half a mile, and rising in places to a height of 150 feet above sea
level. Inland from the sand hills the plain stretches for some ten to fifteen miles to the foothills of the main Judaean Range; it is gently undulating and intersected with numerous small wadis. From April to June it is under crops. In the dry season there are no serious obstacles to military movement along this plain from Gaza to Galilee, save one small stream, the Auja, north of Jaffa, and that low spur of the main range which divides Sharon from Esdrachelon and ends near Haifa in Mount Carmel.

The Auja and the "brook kishon" in the plain of Esdraelon are the only perennial streams of running water.

Climate

The plain land of Palestine is on the whole healthy, though special precautions against malaria are necessary. The summer is hot, but not unbearable. The khamisn winds are most oppressive and provoke intolerable thirst.

The chief feature of its climate is its division into a dry and a rainy season. The regular rains last from November to March. There is also little rain at the end of October, and late in March and April. During the rainy season large tracts of plain land become a sea of mud, and the roads are often impassable.

(b) Judæan Hills. The Judæan Range consists of a narrow tableland at an average height of 2,400 feet with frequent spurs shooting east and west at right angles to the main ridge. The direction of the spurs, between which run deep wadis, make the move of an army a difficult task in the face of any opposition. The climate is healthy. Few means exist for storing water, which runs rapidly off. Consequently, the problem of providing water to a large army in the hills during the summer is a serious one.

In 1914 only two roads for wheels crossed the range: one from north to south by Nazareth, Nablus, Jerusalem, Hebron to Beersheba; another from east to west—by Jericho and Jerusalem. Jaffa operations in the Judæan range were bound to be slow in view of limited means of communications.

(c) The Jordan Valley. The Jordan valley and the Dead Sea act as a serious barrier to passage between the Judæan Range and the Mountains of Moab. The river is not a formidable obstacle by itself. The steepness of the descent from and ascent to the mountains on either side, the poor communications, and the sweltering heat of
the deeply-cleft valley have combined to restrict inter-course between the inhabitants of the two hill ranges.

(d) Trans—Jordan. The table-land east of the Jordan carries the railway from Damascus to the Hejaz, from which point the Turkish line of communication to Palestine branches off at Deraa Junction. The railway, and the whole of Trans—Jordania lies open to raid from the desert.

3. Syria

The country lying between the Mediterranean and the desert, from Aleppo in the north to Galilee in the south, was called Syria.

The Juadaean hills have as their counterpart in Syria a much loftier series of ranges which stretch along the coast right up to the Tarus Mountains; the most southorn of these is the range of the Lebanons. The western slope of these syrian mountains comes down close to the sea. The eastern chain, the continuation northwards of the Mountains of Moab, is formed by Mount Hermon and the Anti-Lebanon. Enclosed between them and the Lebanon is the fertile valley of El Bekaa. The southern slopes of Hermon descend to the Hauran plateau. North of the anti-Lebanon, about Homs, the eastern range sinks to a plateau running north-east to the Euphrates. From Homs to Aleppo the ground is open and level. Syria is more fertile than Palestine. It is irrigated by several large streams, and the difficulties of water supply are less. The climate is similar to that of Palestine.

Communications

(a) Sea Communications. Syria has two small harbours in Alexendretta and Beirut, neither of them was satisfactory. Haifa was good for anchorage but had no facility as a port. Jaffa was a harbour only in the name.

(b) Railways. The railways existing in Syria and Palestine at the outbreak of the war were:

I. Muslimie—Aleppo—Homs—Rayak.
II. Homs—Tripoli.
V. Deraa—Mezerib—Yamruk valley—Afule—Haifa.
VI. Afule—Sileh.
VII. Jaffa—Jerusalem.

(c) Roads. Few metalled roads existed either in Syria or in Palestine. During the dry season, many tracks were passable for wheeled transport, including heavy motor transport. The wet season was a handicap for the movement of motor transport.

The commanders had to plan their operations keeping in view the variety of terrain, climate, shortage of water, influence of rainy season on operations and lack of good maps.

OBJECTIVES OF THE CAMPAIGN IN EGYPT, PALESTINE AND SYRIA

Introduction
The entry\(^2\) of Turkey into the war in November 1914, on Germany's side resulted in the following:

(a) It closed the Dardanelles and broke the link with the Russian ally.
(b) It created a danger to the South Persian Oil fields.
(c) It Posed a danger to the Suez Canal.
(d) It created peculiar internal situation in Egypt.

ORIGINAL OBJECT\(^3\)

Protection of Suez Canal
The original objective in maintaining a force in Egypt was to guard the canal throughout its length of 100 miles. This was hard to achieve on account of Turkish raids.

Advance to the Palestine Border
In 1916 Sir Archibald\(^4\) Murray became the Commander of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force ("EEF"). He thought that passive defence of the canal was very wasteful of men and material. The

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4. Ibid., p. 41,
true strategical base for the defence of Egypt lay between El Arish and Kossima. His proposal to occupy Katia was approved by the War Office but judgement on further advance to El Arish was reserved.

Influence of Other Theatres

Events in other theatres of the war impelled a forward Policy in Palestine and gradually developed into a desire to administer the coup-de-grace to the Ottoman Empire. The events are traced in a chronological order.

1916 A.D.

(a) The defensive policy. The Russian offensive in the Caucasus diverted large Turkish forces to that front from Palestine. The danger to Palestine was thus reduced and it assumed the position of a defensive theatre only.

(b) Offensive policy. In December 1916, Lylod George succeeded Asquith as Prime Minister. One of his first acts, in accordance with his policy of "always searching for the joints in Germany's armour elsewhere than on the western front", was to send a telegram to the Eastern Command to say that success in the East was much required owing to the failure of the battle of Somme and of the Russian offensive. In compliance General Murray started making progress in Palestine with his available forces. The first move was the action at Raffa.

1917 A.D.

(a) Large scale operations deferred. In January the war cabinet sent a telegram to defer any large scale operations until later in the year, owing to preparations of a spring offensive in France. General Murray, however, set his eyes on improving the communications up to Wadi Ghuzze and even had an eye to capture Gaza. This resulted in the first battle of Gaza (26-27 April 1917).

(b) Jerusalem as objective. In March, while engaged in the first

5. Ibid., p. 42.
6. Ibid., p. 15.
7. Ibid., p. 58.
8. Ibid., p. 58.
9. Ibid., p. 67.
10. Ibid., p. 83.
battle of Gaza, General Murray was told by the War Cabinet to make Jerusalem his immediate objective. The second battle of Gaza (17-19 April 1917) ensued.

(c) General Allenby takes over the command of the EEF. The failure of the French offensive in Champagne made Lyod George more adament in his search for elsewhere. The cabinet decided to reinforce\textsuperscript{11} the EEF from the Salonica theatre and General Allenby was appointed the new commander of this force. The Prime Minister interviewed General Allenby and told him that Jerusalem was wanted as a Christmas\textsuperscript{12} gift for the British Nation.

(d) Sustaining fourth year of war. The spring of 1917 had been bitterly disappointing for the allies. Russia had collapsed. The French offensive in Champagne had been a failure. U.S.A. had just entered the war. Some striking success was needed in the fourth year of the war, to keep the morale of the civil population high. The collapse of Russia had released large Turkish forces for the recapture of Baghdad. The best counter-stroke seemed a full-scale offensive, in Palestine. The Prime Minister sent another telegram repeating the importance of capturing Jerusalem.

(e) To force Turkey out of the war.\textsuperscript{13} Immediately after the fall of Jerusalem, the Cabinet asked General Allenby for his future plans as it was the aim of the Cabinet to force Turkey out of the war.

1918 A.D.

(a) Offensive policy in Palestine. The Supreme War Council\textsuperscript{14} met at Versailles in February and passed a plan of campaign for the early part of 1918. The gist of it was to stand on the defensive in the west and to knock out Turkey in Palestine. Two Indian Divisions from Mesopotamia were moved for Palestine.

(b) Defensive policy. In March, when the EEF was scrambling through the hills of Moab, the German drive began in France as troops were available to them after the collapse of Russia. In view of these developments General Allenby was asked to adopt a defensive\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., p. 90.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., p. 96.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., p. 173-174.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p. 177.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., p. 183.
attitude. 24 battalions were withdrawn from the theatre for the west and were replaced by Indian troops.

(c) After the Somme. General Allenby was left free to proceed with his own plans.

While making ready for the grand effort, the Commander-in-Chief, by a system of continuous raids by small forces, wore down the enemy’s morale. Having thus prepared the ground, he poured down his famous divisions of cavalry and infantry for the attack on Damascus and Aleppo.

THE FIRST PHASE—SINAI
THE DEFENCE OF THE SUEZ CANAL

The First Turkish Attack

Turkey declared war on 5th November 1914, against Great Britain and her allies. This posed immediate threat to Great Britain in the oil fields of South Persia and to the Suez Canal. No risks were taken with either of these vital responsibilities. On 6th November 1914, the 6th Division\(^\text{16}\) from India landed at Shatt-el Arab. As the news came in of Turkish concentration in Palestine and Syria the immediate need for full trained troops was felt. In the middle of September, the 9th Sirhind\(^\text{17}\) Brigade and a brigade of mountain artillery were retained temporarily out of the 3rd Indian Division as it passed through to France. The Sirhind Brigade was relieved by the newly arrived troops from India and sailed on 23rd November\(^\text{18}\) to rejoin its division in France.

On the 20th November\(^\text{19}\) a patrol of 20 men of the Bikancer Camel Corps was attacked at Bir en Nuss, 20 miles east of Qantara, by the Turks. This was the first act of hostility. The party extricated itself with more than half of its numbers becoming casualties. By December the defence\(^\text{20}\) of the Suez Canal was entrusted to twenty four Indian battalions forming part of the 10th and the 11th Indian Divisions and

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16. Ibid., p. 23.
20. Ibid., p. 22.
the Imperial Service Cavalry Brigade (India), the Bikaner Camel Corps, three batteries of Indian mountain artillery, and a battery of Egyption artillery—about 30,000 men in all.

Sir John Maxwell entrusted to Major-General Wilson,²¹ commander of the 10th Indian Division, the defence of the Canal which was divided into three sectors.

The following was the disposition²² of troops in the Canal defence on 15th January 1915.


SECTOR—I

(Port Tewfik to Geneffe, both inclusive)

Headquarters—Suez.

Troops
30th Brigade (24th and 76th Punjabis, 126th Baluchis, 2/7th Gurkha Rifles)
1 Squadron Imperial Service Cavalry.
1 Coy Bikaner Camel Corps.
½ Coy Sappers and Miners.
1 Indian Field Ambulance.

SECTOR—II

(Deversoir to El Ferdan, both inclusive)

Headquarters—Ismailia old Camp.

Troops
22nd Brigade, less 3rd Brahamans (62nd and 92nd Punjabis, 2/10 Gurkha Rifles).
28th F.F. Brigade (51st and 53rd Sikhs, 56th Punjabis, 1/5th Gurkha Rifles).
1 Squadron Imperial Service Cavalry.
Bikaner Camel Corps (less 3½ Coys)
M.G. section of Egyptian Camel Corps
1 Brigade R.F.A. (T)

21. Wavell, Field Marshal, Palestine Campaign, Sagar Publications, Delhi, 1968, p. 27.
1 Battery Indian Mountain Artillery
2 Field Ambulances.

SECTOR—III
(El Ferdan, exclusive, to Port Said, inclusive).

Troops
29th Brigade (14th Sikhs, 69th and 89th Punjabis, 1/6th Gurkha Rifles).
1 Bn. 22nd Brigade.
½ Coy Sappers and Miners.
1 Squadron Imperial Service Cavalry
2 Coys Bikaner Camel Corps
2 Batteries R.F.A. (T.A.)
26th Battery Indian Mountain Artillery.
Armoured Train with ½ coy, Indian Infantry.
Wireless Section (T)
Indian Field Ambulance
Detachment R.A.M.C. (T)

ADVANCED ORDNANCE DEPOT, ZAGAZIG

Troops
1 Bn. 32nd (I.S.) Brigade
1 Troop Imperial Service Cavalry
½ Coy Bikaner Camel Corps.
½ Coy Indian Infantry

GENERAL RESERVE CAMP, MOASCAR

Troops
31st Brigade (1 less 1 Coy), (2nd Q.V.O. Rajput L.I., 27th Punjabis, 93rd Burma Infantry, 128th Pioneers).
32nd (I.S.) Brigade, less 1 Battalion (33rd Punjabis, Alwar, Gwalior and Patiala Infantry).
Imperial Service Cavalry Brigade (less 3 Squadrons and 1 Troop)
1 Egyptian R.E. Section (Camels)
1 Egyptian Mountain Battery
2 Sections Field Artillery with Cavalry Brigade.
3 Indian Field Ambulances.
Immediately on the declaration of war with Turkey, Egypt had evacuated all the frontier posts\(^{23}\), held by local Arab Police in Sinai. The Turks promptly occupied El Arish and Nekhl.

The Advance of the Turks

The Turkish force in Syria and Palestine was about 60,000. Djemal Pasha\(^{24}\) was the Commander of the Fourth Army. The Headquarters of the VI corps was at Adana and the Headquarters of the VIII was at Damascus. The Turkish force that assembled around Beersheba in mid January 1915, for march to the canal consisted of 20,000 men. The principal units were 25th Division (Arab), one regiment of the 23rd Division, the 10th Division, one cavalry regiment and some camel companies and mounted Bedouin.

The expedition against Egypt was planned with the object that as the Turkish forces will draw nearer, the Egyptians would revolt against the British.

There were three possible lines of advance of the Turks:

(a) By the coast road from El Arish, through Bir el Abd and Katia to Kantara.
(b) By the central tracks from Beersheba and Auja by Hassana and the Wadi Muksheib towards Ismailia.
(c) From El Kossaima by Nekhl to Suez.

Djemal Pasha elected to send his major force along the central route, sending smaller forces along the other two routes to secure the flanks and to deceive the British as to the real line of attack. The main body, moving in two echelons at one day's interval, left Beersheba in the middle of January. The crossing of the desert was accomplished in ten days. On January 26th and 27th posts towards either extremity of the line at Kantara and at Kubri (seven miles north of Suez) were attacked. On the threatened front there were posts (each of two companies of Indian Infantry) on the east bank at Ferdan, Ferry Post (just opposite Ismailia) Tussum, Serapeum, and Deversoir (just north of Great Bitter Lake). The remainder of the defending force was on the west bank.


\(^{24}\) Ibid,
The Turkish attack\(^{25}\) was delivered at 3 a.m. on 3rd February 1915, under cover of darkness. They succeeded in launching pontoons and rafts to the canal bank just south of Tussum. Only three pontoons reached the west bank, and the occupants of these were killed. The attempt was a failure.

Notwithstanding the failure of their night attack, the Turks advanced again by daylight against the line Tussum and Senapeum to force a crossing. They feinted meanwhile at Ferdan and Kantara. The attack made no headway, and soon after mid-day the Turks began to retreat. The garrison of Deversoir Post (two companies of Gurkhas) had previously attempted a counter-attack on the Turkish left flank. Apart from this the withdrawal of the Turks was unmoled. It was not till the next day that the Imperial service cavalry Brigade crossed the canal at Ferry Post with the mission of reconnaissance and not of pursuit. Djemal Pasha, who was present in person, ordered a retreat to Beersheba.

The results of the attack showed the Turks that by mere threat of blocking the canal large number of British troops in Egypt could not be immobilised. Accordingly, while their main force withdrew to Beersheba, Kress was left in the desert with a force of three battalions, two mountain batteries and a squadron of camelry to keep British anxieties alive by minor enterprises and raids against the canal.

**The Western Desert Campaign**

In 1915, there were no Turkish troops to spare for any renewal of large scale hostilities against the canal. The Turkish troops were busy in a hazardous and ambitious enterprise—the invasion of the Caucasus in mid-winter and landing of British troops at Helles and Anzac in April 1915, and in the subsequent struggle for the Gallipoli Peninsula. The small force\(^{26}\) of Kress von continued to sow mines in the canal and wreck the railway on the western bank. As the threat to the canal had receded, one Indian brigade (the Gurkhas) departed for Gallipoli, another to Basra, and yet another to Aden. The canal front being thus weakened, Turkish troops from the Yemen threatened

attack. The reduction in the garrison had caused some anxiety to General Maxwell.

In December 1915, the Turks incited the Senussi against their British enemies in Egypt and Sudan. The Senussi force 5000 strong, was manned by Turks. General Wallace engaged the enemy near Mersa, Matruh, Hazalin on 13th and 25th December 1915, and on 23rd January 1916 respectively. On 20th February 1916, Major General Peyton succeeded General Wallace and defeated the Senussi by 14th March at Sollum. Thus the Turkish danger in the western desert was wiped out.

The Second Turkish Attack on the Canal

In the beginning of 1916, the defence of the canal became a serious problem for the British. The Turkish troops released from Gallipoli posed a serious threat for a fresh invasion of Egypt. The news of constant departure of formations from Egypt compelled the Turkish Higher Command, on German, bidding, to order some activity towards the canal, in the hope of alarming the British and preventing any further withdrawal of troops.

In March 1916, Sir Archibald Murray was appointed Commander of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, the title of which was also changed at the same time to that of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force (EEF).

Sir Archibald Murray reviewed the problem of defence of Egypt. He looked upon the passive defence of the canal as very wasteful of men and material and considered the occupation of El Arish and Kossaima vital for the defence of Egypt as it blocks the northern

27. Ibid., p. 33.

The Senussites were a religious sect of Islam founded by a pious Sheikh of the Sahara Desert. His aim was to unite all Moslems of North Africa into one brotherhood based on principles of Islam.


32. Ibid., p. 41.
route across the Sinai. His proposal to take Katia was approved by the war office but on the question of further advance to El Arish the judgement was reserved. At the end of February, construction of a standard gauge railway from Kantara towards Katia war started.

Action of Katia

Kress von Kressenstein set out in the middle of April 1916, along the northern route. He had with him two battalions and one coy of the 32nd Regiment, a regiment of Irregular Arabs on camels and a battery and a half of mountain artillery.

The 5th Mounted Brigade (Warwickshire, Yeomanry, Gloucestershie Hussars, Worcestershire Yeomanry) was at this time in the Katia district, covering construction of the railway, which was now approaching Romani. On the evening of 22nd April, two squadrons of the Worcesters were at Oghratina, four miles east of Katia. Kress’s raiding force after a nights march, fell on the detachment at Oghratina at 4.30 a.m., on the 23rd. The Yeomanry were surprised and overwhelmed. The Turks then pressed on to Katia which they succeeded in taking. The 2nd Australian Light Horse Brigade, however, re-occupied Romani and Katia on 25th. The Turks withdrew to Bir el Abd. After his success at Katia, Kress made no further move for nearly three months.

The Battle of Romani

The standard-gauge railway from Kantara reached Romani in the middle of May, and the 52nd (Lowland Division) was moved forward to occupy a position there. A light railway had been built from Port Said to Mahemdiya; a branch of standard-gauge line from Romani to Mahemdiya was completed in June and thus railway communication was established close behind the whole position.

In early July Kress moved again. His force consisted of the 3rd (Anatolian) Division and Pasha I. The objective of this new venture was to reach and entrench a position within gun range of the canal, so as to interrupt traffic.

34. Ibid., pp. 175-203
Steps were at once taken to reinforce No. 3 Section of the Canal Defences, in which forward position at Romani was included. On July 22nd this was held by the 52nd Division and one brigade of the 53rd Division and 42nd Division was also placed under command of Major General Lawrence, Commander of No. 3 Section. At El Ferdan (in No. 2 section) a mobile column of four companies of the Imperial Camel Corps and four squadrons was formed, under Lieut. Colonel C.L. Smith, VC.

On 24th July, the Turks after advancing within ten miles of Romani, made practically no further move for ten days.

The British troops (1st and 2nd A.L.H.) Brigades kept the Turks under close watch. One of these two brigades in turn used to move out before dawn each morning, and reconnoitered the enemy’s position, returning to Romani at nightfall. On the evening of August 3rd Kress’s troops followed up the 2nd A.L.H. Brigade, while it was returning to its camp, with the intention of surprising the British and seizing Wellington Ridge during the night. Anticipating an imminent Turkish attack, General Chauvel had placed the 1st A.L.H. on the line stretching from Katib Ganit to Hod el Enna. The Turkish attack, therefore, met strong resistance and in the process the 1st A.L.H. Brigade was forced back on the Wellington Ridge on 4th August. Having seen that the British were in a strong position, Kress withdrew. On 6th and 7th August he withdrew to El Arish after fighting several rear guard actions. Romani was thus a decided victory for British arms.

In October 1916, Sir Archibald Murray moved his headquarters from Ismailia to Cairo. It was through Murray’s foresight that the standard-gauge railway and the 12 inch pipe-line had been laid. It made possible the subsequent advance of the Army up to and beyond the gates of Aleppo. The railway and the pipe-line reached Romani in the middle of November.

**Advance to El Arish**

The period of three or four months following the battle of Romani, during which the railway was brought within striking dis-

36. Ibid., pp. 242-251.
tance of the Turkish position at El Arish, caused much, weariness to the troops in the desert. Early in December, the advanced guard of the Eastern Force, known as desert column, came under the command of Lieut. General Sir Phillip Chetwode. It consisted of Anzac Mounted Division, the Imperial Camel Corps Brigade and 42nd and 52nd Divisions. When the mounted troops surrounded El Arish on the morning of 21st December, they found the place unoccupied.

Capture of Magdhaba

The enemy had retired partly on Rafa and partly on Magdhaba. Chetwode decided to strike at the latter force at once, and despatched against it General Chauvel with the Anzac Mounted Division, and the Imperial Camel Corps Brigade. On 23rd December, after a night march of twenty miles up the wadi El Arish Magdhaba was captured by 4.30 p.m. The force returned to El Arish during the night of 23rd/24th December.

As a result of the occupation of El Arish and the destruction of their rear guard at Magdhaba, the Turks withdrew the remainder of their posts from Sinai.

Action at Rafa

The next move was against the only enemy troops still remaining within Egyptian territory, a detachment of some 2,000 at Rafa, twenty-five miles to the east. The railway reached El Arish on 4th January 1917, and on 8th January General Chatwode, with Anzac Mounted Division, 5th Mounted Brigade the Imperial Camel Corps Brigade surrounded the Turkish position south-west of Rafa on 9th. In view of strong Turkish resistance General Chetwode had given orders for withdrawal. Before the orders could reach them the New Zealand Mounted Bridgade had cleared a central position by a fine bayonet charge. The whole Turkish garrison surrendered with heavy casualties. The action at Rafa finally freed Egyptian soil from Turkish occupation.

First Battle of Gaza

General Murrey's army had now approached the southern frontier of Palestine.

37. Ibid., pp. 253-258.
38. Ibid., pp. 262-279.
39. Ibid., pp. 279-320.
After the loss of his detachments at Magdhaba and Raffa, Kress had occupied and entrenched a strong position at wadi, Sheikh Nuran just west of Shellal on the Wadi Ghuzze. Here he directly covered the Turkish railway to Beersheba and indirectly protected Gaza. On 5th March he withdrew to Gaza-Beersheba line as he expected a British attack.

In view of Turks withdrawal from Shellal and continued avoidance of battle General Dobell planned to attack Gaza.

On the evening of 25th March, a force was assembled to move on Gaza. The Desert column at Deir el Belah, the 54th Division near in Seriat, the 52nd Division at Khan Yunus, and the Camel Corps Brigade at Abasan El Kebir, just south-east of Khan Yunus, were included in it. In outline, the plan was that the mounted troops should from a screen north-east, and south-east of Gazaso as to prevent the retreat of the garrison. They were also to stop reinforcements coming to the Turks. The 53rd Division was to assault Gaza.

The town of Gaza is grouped on and around a small hill. About a mile from the town an irregular ridge runs from north-east to southwest. This is the famous Ali Muntar Ridge, the real key to the defence of the town.

In the early hours of 26th March the troops reached their allotted positions. By 5.30 p.m. Ali Muntar, afterwards known as the Green Hill, was successfully occupied. It was, however, soon lost to the Turks in a strong counter-attack. There was no longer any hope of retaking Gaza. During the evening of the 27th the line was withdrawn to the west bank of wadi Ghuzze.

The Second Battle of Gaza

On the War Cabinet’s insistence to dispose of Turkey, General Murray expressed the hope of capturing Gaza and of conducting a successful campaign in Palestine.

The Turkish line round Gaza ran from the sea across three to four thousand yards of Sandhills on to a feature known as Samson Ridge. Ali Manter was the real core of the defence.

The whole of the 3rd Division formed the garrison of Gaza, the 16th Division returned to Tel esh Sheria; while the 53rd Division and 79th Regiment formed a group between them. A detachment of two

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40. Ibid, pp. 326-349,
battalions and a battery held Beersheba; the 3rd Cavalry Division was in reserve near Huj.

The first stage of General Dobell’s plan of battle began on 17th April. The 54th and 52nd Divisions crossed the Wadi Ghuzze, and reached the allotted positions, with little opposition and few casualties. The 18th was spent in preparation for the final stage fixed for 19th April. At 7.15 a.m., the 53rd Division advanced to attack along the coast. Simultaneously, 54th and 52nd Divisions launched their assaults. Further to the right Imperial Mounted Division made a dismounted attack on the Atawineh works, while the Anzac Mounted Division protected the flank against the Hareira Redoubt.

Various attacks were pressed in vain. The Turkish defences were impregnable. General Dobell gave up attempt to attack Gaza.

The British casualties were about 6,500 against 2,000 of Turks.

Events from April to July 1917

The Turks were elated at their double success at Gaza. They settled down along the Gaza-Beersheba road as far east as Sheria, with Beersheba held as a detached post. More reinforcements joined Kress’ force.

General Chetwode\(^41\) succeeded General Dobell at the Eastern Force headquarters shortly after the second battle of Gaza. The command of the mounted troops passed to General Chauvel, from whom General Chaytor, a New Zealander, took over the Anzac Mounted Division. The British line ran from Sh. Ajlin on the sea by Samson’s Ridge and Blazed Hill to Mansura and Sh. Abbas. At Sh. Abbas close contact with the enemy ceased, and the line turned sharp back, to reach the Wadi Ghuzze at Tel el Jemmi, south-west of El Mandur. Hence the wadi was held as far as Gamli by a series to detached posts.

The failure of the French offensive in Champagne made Lloyd George more keen in his search for “a way round” the apparent deadlock on the western front. News of the Turkish concentration for the recapture of Baghdad was beginning to arrive and demanded some counter measure. So the Cabinet decided to reinforce the E.E.F from the unprofitable Salonica theatre.

41. Wavell, Field Marshal, *Palestine Campaign*, Sagar Publications, Delhi, 1968, p. 89,
The 7th and 8th Mounted Brigades arrived at the beginning of June from Salonica. Reinforcements from Salonica, India and Aden were rushed. While these reinforcements were arriving the communications of the force were being improved. A branch of the railway from Rafa to Shellal was begun at the end of April in order to broaden the front.

The War Cabinet with their resolve to invade Palestine appointed Sir Edmund Allenby to command the Egyptian Expeditionary Force. He took over command on 28 June.

The Third Battle of Gaza

The decision of the War Cabinet to reinforce E.E.F. and to undertake the conquest of Palestine made this theatre the most important centre of conflict outside Europe for the remainder of the war.

Throughout the war there was an incessant conflict of views between "the Westerners"—those who held that every possible man and weapon should be mustered against the main army of the principal enemy, and that all outside commitments should be reduced to the minimum compatible with mere safety—and "the Easterners"—those who believed that western front was impenetrable to either combatant, and that victory could more easily be won by striking down Germany's weaker allies and thus gradually tighten the iron ring round Germany herself.

Mr Lloyd George, the then Prime Minister, was the most persistent and persuasive advocate of the latter policy. He now had an additional reason for searching success in Palestine. The spring of 1917 had been bitterly disappointing for the Allies. Russia had collapsed, the French offensive in Champagne had been a failure. All hope of ending the war in 1917 was lost. The British Premier believed that some striking military success was needed to sustain the endurance of the civil population in the fourth year of the war. It was this belief that prompted him to say to General Allenby before his departure to Egypt that "he wanted Jerusalem as a Christmas present for the British nation."

42. Ibid., p. 91.
There were sound strategical reasons for striking a blow on the Palestine front at this time. The collapse of Russia, had set free numerous Turkish forces, and it was known that these were being assembled round Aleppo under German guidance and leadership, for the recapture of Baghdad. The threat thus offered to the Mesopotamian sector of the battle line could be more quickly and economically countered by an offensive in Palestine than by direct reinforcement of General Maude’s army. Thus, General Allenby’s main strategical objective was the defeat of the Turkish army in southern Palestine in order to draw down the Turkish reserves from Aleppo, and in this way to remove danger of an expedition against Baghdad.

Early in 1917 Turkey as the religious head of Islam was in a miserable plight. Out of the four sacred cities in charge of Turkey, two—Mecca and Baghdad—were already in the hands of her enemies, while Medina was besieged and Jerusalem threatened. Not only was she losing the war, but forfeiting her religious prestige as well.

The German High Command decided that some spectacular exhibition was required to restore the shrinking faith of their ally and suggested the reconquest of Baghdad. The negotiations that followed between Constantinople and Berlin it was decided to assemble a Turkish army at Aleppo and to support it with a special body of German troops (known as Pasha II or the Asia Corps). The projected operation for secrecy’s sake was to be called “Yilderim”—that is to say, “lightning”. The nucleus of the Yilderim force was to be the III and XV Army Corps. They were to constitute the Seventh Army, of which Mustapha Kemal was appointed the Commander. The headquarters of staff Yilderim consisted of sixty-five German officers and nine Turks.

Even before the second Battle of Gaza the staff of the Eastern Force had been considering an advance by the right as an alternative to a direct assault on Gaza. The obvious line of advance into Palestine was also by Gaza, keeping close to the sea. This route secured the full advantage of naval cooperation, directly covered the main line of communication, and presented comparatively small difficulties of water supply. But the defences of Gaza were now too solid to be broken except by a slow and costly process of siege.

VII. Jaffa—Jerusalem.

(c) Roads. Few metalled roads existed either in Syria or in Palestine. During the dry season, many tracks were passable for wheeled transport, including heavy motor transport. The wet season was a handicap for the movement of motor transport.

The commanders had to plan their operations keeping in view the variety of terrain, climate, shortage of water, influence of rainy season on operations and lack of good maps.

OBJECTIVES OF THE CAMPAIGN IN EGYPT, PALESTINE
AND SYRIA

Introduction
The entry\(^2\) of Turkey into the war in November 1914, on Germany's side resulted in the following:

(a) It closed the Dardanelles and broke the link with the Russian ally.
(b) It created a danger to the South Persian Oil fields.
(c) It Posed a danger to the Suez Canal.
(d) It created peculiar internal situation in Egypt.

ORIGINAL OBJECT\(^3\)

Protection of Suez Canal
The original objective in maintaining a force in Egypt was to guard the canal throughout its length of 100 miles. This was hard to achieve on account of Turkish raids.

Advance to the Palestine Border
In 1916 Sir Archibald\(^4\) Murray became the Commander of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force ("EEF"). He thought that passive defence of the canal was very wasteful of men and material.

4. Ibid., p. 41,
true strategical base for the defence of Egypt lay between El Arish and Kossima. His proposal to occupy Katia was approved by the War Office but judgement on further advance to El Arish was reserved.

Influence of Other Theatres

Events in other theatres of the war impelled a forward Policy in Palestine and gradually developed into a desire to administer the coup-de-grace to the Ottoman Empire. The events are traced in a chronological order.

1916 A.D.

(a) The defensive policy. The Russian offensive in the Caucasus diverted large Turkish forces to that front from Palestine. The danger to Palestine was thus reduced and it assumed the position of a defensive theatre only.

(b) Offensive policy. In December 1916, Lylod George succeeded Asquith as Prime Minister. One of his first acts, in accordance with his policy of “always searching for the joints in Germany’s armour elsewhere than on the western front”, was to send a telegram to the Eastern Command to say that success in the East was much required owing to the failure of the battle of Somme and of the Russian offensive. In compliance General Murray started making progress in Palestine with his available forces. The first move was the action at Raffa.

1917 A.D.

(a) Large scale operations deferred. In January the war cabinet sent a telegram to defer any large scale operations until later in the year, owing to preparations of a spring offensive in France. General Murray, however, set his eyes on improving the communications up to Wadi Ghuzze and even had an eye to capture Gaza. This resulted in the first battle of Gaza (26-27 April 1917).

(b) Jerusalem as objective. In March, while engaged in the first

5. Ibid., p. 42.
6. Ibid., p. 15.
7. Ibid., p. 58.
8. Ibid., p. 58.
9. Ibid., p. 67.
10. Ibid., p. 83.
battle of Gaza, General Murray was told by the War Cabinet to make Jerusalem his immediate objective. The second battle of Gaza (17-19 April 1917) ensued.

(c) *General Allenby takes over the command of the EEF.* The failure of the French offensive in Champagne made Lylyod George more adament in his search for elsewhere. The cabinet decided to reinforce\(^{11}\) the EEF from the Salonica theatre and General Allenby was appointed the new commander of this force. The Prime Minister interviewed General Allenby and told him that Jerusalem was wanted as a Christmas\(^{12}\) gift for the British Nation.

(d) *Sustaining fourth year of war.* The spring of 1917 had been bitterly disappointing for the allies. Russia had collapsed. The French offensive in Champagne had been a failure. U.S.A. had just entered the war. Some striking success was needed in the fourth year of the war, to keep the morale of the civil population high. The collapse of Russia had released large Turkish forces for the recapture of Baghdad. The best counter-stroke seemed a full-scale offensive, in Palestine. The Prime Minister sent another telegram repeating the importance of capturing Jerusalem.

(e) *To force Turkey out of the war.*\(^{13}\) Immediately after the fall of Jerusalem, the Cabinet asked General Allenby for his future plans as it was the aim of the Cabinet to force Turkey out of the war.

1918 A.D.

(a) *Offensive policy in Palestine.* The Supreme War Council\(^{14}\) met at Versailles in February and passed a plan of campaign for the early part of 1918. The gist of it was to stand on the defensive in the west and to knock out Turkey in Palestine. Two Indian Divisions from Mesopotamia were moved for Palestine.

(b) *Defensive policy.* In March, when the EEF was scrambling through the hills of Moab, the German drive began in France as troops were available to them after the collapse of Russia. In view of these developments General Allenby was asked to adopt a defensive\(^{15}\)

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11. Ibid., p. 90.
12. Ibid., p. 96.
15. Ibid., p. 183.
attitude. 24 battalions were withdrawn from the theatre for the west and were replaced by Indian troops.

(c) After the Somme. General Allenby was left free to proceed with his own plans.

While making ready for the grand effort, the Commander-in-Chief, by a system of continuous raids by small forces, wore down the enemy’s morale. Having thus prepared the ground, he poured down his famous divisions of cavalry and infantry for the attack on Damascus and Aleppo.

THE FIRST PHASE—SINAI
THE DEFENCE OF THE SUEZ CANAL

The First Turkish Attack

Turkey declared war on 5th November 1914, against Great Britain and her allies. This posed immediate threat to Great Britain in the oil fields of South Persia and to the Suez Canal. No risks were taken with either of these vital responsibilities. On 6th November 1914, the 6th Division\textsuperscript{16} from India landed at Shatt-el Arab. As the news came in of Turkish concentration in Palestine and Syria the immediate need for full trained troops was felt. In the middle of September, the 9th Sirhind\textsuperscript{17} Brigade and a brigade of mountain artillery were retained temporarily out of the 3rd Indian Division as it passed through to France. The Sirhind Brigade was relieved by the newly arrived troops from India and sailed on 23rd November\textsuperscript{18} to rejoin its division in France.

On the 20th November\textsuperscript{19} a patrol of 20 men of the Bikaner Camel Corps was attacked at Bir en Nuss, 20 miles east of Qantara, by the Turks. This was the first act of hostility. The party extricated itself with more than half of its numbers becoming casualties. By December the defence\textsuperscript{20} of the Suez Canal was entrusted to twenty four Indian battalions forming part of the 10th and the 11th Indian Divisions and

16. Ibid., p. 23.
20. Ibid., p. 22.
the Imperial Service Cavalry Brigade (India), the Bikaner Camel Corps, three batteries of Indian mountain artillery, and a battery of Egyptian artillery—about 30,000 men in all.

Sir John Maxwell entrusted to Major-General Wilson,21 commander of the 10th Indian Division, the defence of the Canal which was divided into three sectors.

The following was the disposition22 of troops in the Canal defence on 15th January 1915.


SECTOR—I

(Port Tewfik to Geneife, both inclusive)
Headquarters—Suez.

Troops
30th Brigade (24th and 76th Punjabis, 126th Baluchis, 2/7th Gurkha Rifles)
1 Squadron Imperial Service Cavalry.
1 Coy Bikaner Camel Corps.
½ Coy Sappers and Miners.
1 Indian Field Ambulance.

SECTOR—II

(Deversoir to El Ferdan, both inclusive)
Headquarters—Ismailia old Camp.

Troops
22nd Brigade, less 3rd Brahamans (62nd and 92nd Punjabis, 2/10 Gurkha Rifles).
28th F.F. Brigade (51st and 53rd Sikhs, 56th Punjabis, 1/5th Gurkha Rifles).
1 Squadron Imperial Service Cavalry.
Bikaner Camel Corps (less 3½ Coys)
M.G. section of Egyptian Camel Corps
1 Brigade R.F.A. (T)

1 Battery Indian Mountain Artillery
2 Field Ambulances.

SECTOR—III
(El Ferdan, exclusive, to Port Said, inclusive).

Troops
29th Brigade (14th Sikhs, 69th and 89th Punjabis, 1/6th Gurkha Rifles).
1 Bn. 22nd Brigade.
½ Coy Sappers and Miners.
1 Squadron Imperial Service Cavalry
2 Coys Bikaner Camel Corps
2 Batteries R.F.A. (T.A.)
26th Battery Indian Mountain Artillery.
Armoured Train with ¼ coy, Indian Infantry.
Wireless Section (T)
Indian Field Ambulance
Detachment R.A.M.C. (T)

ADVANCED ORDNANCE DEPOT, ZAGAZIG

Troops
1 Bn. 32nd (I.S.) Brigade
1 Troop Imperial Service Cavalry
½ Coy Bikaner Camel Corps.
½ Coy Indian Infantry

GENERAL RESERVE CAMP, MOASCAR

Troops
31st Brigade (less 1 Coy), (2nd Q.V.O. Rajput L.I., 27th Punjabis, 93rd Burma Infantry, 128th Pioneers).
32nd (I.S.) Brigade, less 1 Battalion (33rd Punjabis, Alwar, Gwalior and Patiala Infantry).
Imperial Service Cavalry Brigade (less 3 Squadrons and 1 Troop)
1 Egyptian R.E. Section (Camels)
1 Egyptian Mountain Battery
2 Sections Field Artillery with Cavalry Brigade.
3 Indian Field Ambulances.
Immediately on the declaration of war with Turkey, Egypt had evacuated all the frontier posts, held by local Arab Police in Sinai. The Turks promptly occupied El Arish and Nekhl.

The Advance of the Turks

The Turkish force in Syria and Palestine was about 60,000. Djemal Pasha was the Commander of the Fourth Army. The Headquarters of the VI corps was at Adana and the Headquarters of the VIII was at Damascus. The Turkish force that assembled around Beersheba in mid January 1915, for march to the canal consisted of 20,000 men. The principal units were 25th Division (Arab), one regiment of the 23rd Division, the 10th Division, one cavalry regiment and some camel companies and mounted Bedouin.

The expedition against Egypt was planned with the object that as the Turkish forces will draw nearer, the Egyptians would revolt against the British.

There were three possible lines of advance of the Turks:

(a) By the coast road from El Arish, through Bir el Abd and Katia to Kantara.
(b) By the central tracks from Beersheba and Auja by Hassana and the Wadi Mukheib towards Ismailia.
(c) From El Kossaima by Nekhl to Suez.

Djemal Pasha elected to send his major force along the central route, sending smaller forces along the other two routes to secure the flanks and to deceive the British as to the real line of attack. The main body, moving in two echelons at one day’s interval, left Beer-sheba in the middle of January. The crossing of the desert was accomplished in ten days. On January 26th and 27th posted towards either extremity of the line at Kantara and at Kubri (seven miles north of Suez) were attacked. On the threatened front there were posts (each of two companies of Indian Infantry) on the east bank at Ferdan, Ferry Post (just opposite Ismailia) Tussum, Serapeum, and Deversoir (just north of Great Bitter Lake). The remainder of the defending force was on the west bank.

24. Ibid,
The Turkish attack\textsuperscript{25} was delivered at 3 a.m. on 3rd February 1915, under cover of darkness. They succeeded in launching pontoons and rafts to the canal bank just south of Tu sum. Only three pontoons reached the west bank, and the occupants of these were killed. The attempt was a failure.

Notwithstanding the failure of their night attack, the Turks advanced again by daylight against the line Tussum and Sella to force a crossing. They feinted meanwhile at Ferdan and Kantara. The attack made no headway, and soon after mid-day the Turks began to retreat. The garrison of Deversoir Post (two companies of Gurkhas) had previously attempted a counter-attack on the Turkish left flank. Apart from this the withdrawal of the Turks was unmolested. It was not till the next day that the Imperial service cavalry Brigade crossed the canal at Ferry Post with the mission of reconnaissance and not of pursuit. Djemal Pasha, who was present in person, ordered a retreat to Beersheba.

The results of the attack showed the Turks that by mere threat of blocking the canal large number of British troops in Egypt could not be immobilised. Accordingly, while their main force withdrew to Beersheba, Kress was left in the desert with a force of three battalions, two mountain batteries and a squadron of camelry to keep British anxieties alive by minor enterprises and raids against the canal.

\textbf{The Western Desert Campaign}

In 1915, there were no Turkish troops to spare for any renewal of large scale hostilities against the canal. The Turkish troops were busy in a hazardous and ambitious enterprise—the invasion of the Caucasus in mid-winter and landing of British troops at Helles and Anzac in April 1915, and in the subsequent struggle for the Gallipoli Peninsula. The small force\textsuperscript{26} of Kress von continued to sow mines in the canal and wreck the railway on the western bank. As the threat to the canal had receded, one Indian brigade (the Gurkhas) departed for Gallipoli, another to Basra, and yet another to Aden. The canal front being thus weakened, Turkish troops from the Yemen threatened


\textsuperscript{26} Wavell, Field Marshal, \textit{Palestine Campaign}, Sagar Publications, Delhi, 1968, p. 33.
attack. The reduction in the garrison had caused some anxiety to General Maxwell.

In December 1915, the Turks incited the Senussi\textsuperscript{27} against their British enemies in Egypt and Sudan. The Senussi force 5000 strong, was manned by Turks. General Wallace\textsuperscript{28} engaged the enemy near Mersa, Matruh, Hazalin on 13th and 25th December 1915, and on 23rd January 1916 respectively. On 20th February 1916, Major General Peyton\textsuperscript{29} succeeded General Wallace and defeated the Senussi sites by 14th March at Sollum. Thus the Turkish danger in the western desert was wiped out.

**The Second Turkish Attack on the Canal**

In the beginning of 1916, the defence of the canal\textsuperscript{30} became a serious problem for the British. The Turkish troops released from Gallipoli posed a serious threat for a fresh invasion of Egypt. The news of constant departure of formations from Egypt compelled the Turkish Higher Command, on German bidding, to order some activity towards the canal, in the hope of alarming the British and preventing any further withdrawal of troops.

In March 1916,\textsuperscript{31} Sir Archibald Murray was appointed Commander of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, the title of which was also changed at the same time to that of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force\textsuperscript{32} (EEF).

Sir Archibald Murray reviewed the problem of defence of Egypt. He looked upon the passive defence of the canal as very wasteful of men and material and considered the occupation of El Arish and Kossaima vital for the defence of Egypt as it blocks the northern

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., p. 33.

The Senussites were a religious sect of Islam founded by a pious Sheikh of the Sahara Desert. His aim was to unite all Moslems of North Africa into one brotherhood based on principles of Islam.


\textsuperscript{29} Wavell, Field Marshal, *Palestine Campaign*, Sagar Publications, Delhi, 1968, pp. 37-38.


\textsuperscript{31} Wavell, Field Marshal, *Palestine Campaign*, Sagar Publications Delhi, 1968, p. 41.

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., p. 41.
route across the Sinai. His proposal to take Katia was approved by the war office but on the question of further advance to El Arish the judgement was reserved. At the end of February, construction of a standard gauge railway from Kantara towards Katia war started.

**Action of Katia**

Kress von Kressenstein set out in the middle of April 1916, along the northern route. He had with him two battalions and one coy of the 32nd Regiment, a regiment of Irregular Arabs on camels and a battery and a half of mountain artillery.

The 5th Mounted Brigade (Warwickshire, Yeomanry, Gloucestershire Hussars, Worcestershire Yeomanry) was at this time in the Katia district, covering construction of the railway, which was now approaching Romani. On the evening of 22nd April, two squadrons of the Worcesters were at Oghratina, four miles east of Katia. Kress's raiding force after a nights march, fell on the detachment at Oghratina at 4.30 a.m., on the 23rd. The Yeomanry were surprised and overwhelmed. The Turks then pressed on to Katia which they succeeded in taking. The 2nd Australian Light Horse Brigade, however, re-occupied Romani and Katia on 25th. The Turks withdrew to Bir el Abd. After his success at Katia, Kress made no further move for nearly three months.

**The Battle of Romani**

The standard-gauge railway from Kantara reached Romani in the middle of May, and the 52nd (Lowland Division) was moved forward to occupy a position there. A light railway had been built from Port Said to Mahemdiya; a branch of standard-gauge line from Romani to Mahemdiya was completed in June and thus railway communication was established close behind the whole position.

In early July Kress moved again. His force consisted of the 3rd (Anatolian) Division and Pasha I. The objective of this new venture was to reach and entrench a position within gun range of the canal, so as to interrupt traffic.

34. Ibid., pp. 175-203
Steps were at once taken to reinforce No. 3 Section of the Canal Defences, in which forward position at Romani was included. On July 22nd this was held by the 52nd Division and one brigade of the 53rd Division and 42nd Division was also placed under command of Major General Lawrence, Commander of No. 3 Section. At El Ferdan (in No. 2 section) a mobile column of four companies of the Imperial Camel Corps and four Squadrons was formed, under Lieut. Colonel C.L. Smith, VC.

On 24th July, the Turks after advancing within ten miles of Romani, made practically no further move for ten days.

The British troops (1st and 2nd A.L.H.) Brigades kept the Turks under close watch. One of these two brigades in turn used to move out before dawn each morning, and reconnoitered the enemy's position, returning to Romani at nightfall. On the evening of August 3rd Kress's troops followed up the 2nd A.L.H. Brigade, while it was returning to its camp, with the intention of surprising the British and seizing Wellington Ridge during the night. Anticipating an imminent Turkish attack, General Chauvel had placed the 1st A.L.H. on the line stretching from Katib Ganit to Hod el Enna. The Turkish attack, therefore, met strong resistance and in the process the 1st A.L.H. Brigade was forced back on the Wellington Ridge on 4th August. Having seen that the British were in a strong position, Kress withdrew. On 6th and 7th August he withdrew to El Arish after fighting several rear guard actions. Romani was thus a decided victory for British arms.

In October 1916, Sir Archibald Murray moved his headquarters from Ismailia to Cairo. It was through Murray's foresight that the standard-gauge railway and the 12 inch pipe-line had been laid. It made possible the subsequent advance of the Army up to and beyond the gates of Aleppo. The railway and the pipe-line reached Romani in the middle of November.

Advance to El Arish

The period of three or four months following the battle of Romani, during which the railway was brought within striking dis-

35. Wazell, Field Marshal, Palestine Campaign, Sagar Publications, Delhi, 1968, p. 59.
36. Ibid., pp. 242-251.
tance of the Turkish position at El Arish, caused much, weariness to
the troops in the desert. Early in December, the advanced guard of
the Eastern Force, known as desert column, came under the command
of Lieut. General Sir Phillip Chetwode. It consisted of Anzac
Mounted Division, the Imperial Camel Corps Brigade and 42nd and
52nd Divisions. When the mounted troops surrounded El Arish on
the morning of 21st December, they found the place unoccupied.

Capture of Magdhaba

The enemy had retired partly on Rafa and partly on Magdhaba.
Chetwode decided to strike at the latter force at once, and despatched
against it General Chauvel with the Anzac Mounted Division, and the
Imperial Camel Corps Brigade. On 23rd December, after a night
march of twenty miles up the wadi El Arish Magdhaba was captured
by 4.30 p.m. The force returned to El Arish during the night of
23rd/24th December.

As a result of the occupation of El Arish and the destruction of
their rear guard at Magdhaba, the Turks withdrew the remainder of
their posts from Sinai.

Action at Rafa

The next move was against the only enemy troops still remaining
within Egyptian territory, a detachment of some 2,000 at Rafa,
twenty-five miles to the east. The railway reached El Arish on 4th
January 1917, and on 8th January General Chatwode, with Anzac
Mounted Division, 5th Mounted Brigade the Imperial Camel Corps
Brigade surrounded the Turkish position south-west of Rafa on 9th.
In view of strong Turkish resistance General Chetwode had given
orders for withdrawal. Before the orders could reach them the
New Zealand Mounted Bridgade had cleared a central position by a
fine bayonet charge. The whole Turkish garrison surrendered with
heavy casualties. The action at Rafa finally freed Egyptian soil from
Turkish occupation.

First Battle of Gaza

General Murrey’s army had now approached the southern frontier
of Palestine.

37. Ibid., pp. 253-258.
38. Ibid., pp. 262-279.
39. Ibid., pp. 279-320.
After the loss of his detachments at Magdhaba and Raffa, Kress had occupied and entrenched a strong position at wadi, Sheikh Nuran just west of Shellal on the Wadi Ghuzze. Here he directly covered the Turkish railway to Beersheba and indirectly protected Gaza. On 5th March he withdrew to Gaza-Beersheba line as he expected a British attack.

In view of Turks withdrawal from Shellal and continued avoidance of battle General Dobell planned to attack Gaza.

On the evening of 25th March, a force was assembled to move on Gaza. The Desert column at Deir el Belah, the 54th Division near in Seriat, the 52nd Division at Khan Yunus, and the Camel Corps Brigade at Abasan El Kebir, just south-east of Khan Yunus, were included in it. In outline, the plan was that the mounted troops should from a screen north-east, and south-east of Gazaso as to prevent the retreat of the garrison. They were also to stop reinforcements coming to the Turks. The 53rd Division was to assault Gaza.

The town of Gaza is grouped on and around a small hill. About a mile from the town an irregular ridge runs from north-east to southwest. This is the famous Ali Muntar Ridge, the real key to the defence of the town.

In the early hours of 26th March the troops reached their allotted positions. By 5.30 p.m. Ali Muntar, afterwards known as the Green Hill, was successfully occupied. It was, however, soon lost to the Turks in a strong counter-attack. There was no longer any hope of retaking Gaza. During the evening of the 27th the line was withdrawn to the west bank of wadi Ghuzze.

The Second Battle of Gaza

On the War Cabinet’s insistence to dispose of Turkey, General Murray expressed the hope of capturing Gaza and of conducting a successful campaign in Palestine.

The Turkish line round Gaza ran from the sea across three to four thousand yards of Sandhills on to a feature known as Samson Ridge. Ali Manter was the real core of the defence.

The whole of the 3rd Division formed the garrison of Gaza, the 16th Division returned to Tel esh Sheria; while the 53rd Division and 79th Regiment formed a group between them. A detachment of two

40. Ibid, pp. 326-349,
battalions and a battery held Beersheba; the 3rd Cavalry Division was in reserve near Huj.

The first stage of General Dobell's plan of battle began on 17th April. The 54th and 52nd Divisions crossed the Wadi Ghuzze, and reached the allotted positions, with little opposition and few casualties. The 18th was spent in preparation for the final stage fixed for 19th April. At 7. 15. a.m., the 53rd Division advanced to attack along the coast. Simultaneously, 54th and 52nd Divisions launched their assaults. Further to the right Imperial Mounted Division made a dis-mounted attack on the Atawineh works, while the Anzac Mounted Division protected the flank against the Hareira Redoubt.

Various attacks were pressed in vain. The Turkish defences were impregnable. General Dobell gave up attempt to attack Gaza.

The British casualties were about 6,500 against 2,000 of Turks.

**Events from April to July 1917**

The Turks were elated at their double success at Gaza. They settled down along the Gaza-Beersheba road as far east as Sheria, with Beersheba held as a detached post. More reinforcements joined Kress's force.

General Chetwode succeeded General Dobell at the Eastern Force headquarters shortly after the second battle of Gaza. The command of the mounted troops passed to General Chauvel, from whom General Chaytor, a New Zealander, took over the Anzac Mounted Division. The British line ran from Sh. Ajlin on the sea by Samson's Ridge and Blazed Hill to Mansura and Sh. Abbas. At Sh. Abbas close contact with the enemy ceased, and the line turned sharply back, to reach the Wadi Ghuzze at Tel el Jemmi, south-west of El Mandur. Hence the wadi was held as far as Gamli by a series of detached posts.

The failure of the French offensive in Champagne made Lloyd George more keen in his search for "a way round" the apparent deadlock on the western front. News of the Turkish concentration for the recapture of Baghdad was beginning to arrive and demanded some counter measure. So the Cabinet decided to reinforce the E.E.F from the unprofitable Salonica theatre.

The 7th and 8th Mounted Brigades arrived at the beginning of June from Salonica. Reinforcements\textsuperscript{42} from Salonica, India and Aden were rushed. While these reinforcements were arriving the communications of the force were being improved. A branch of the railway from Rafa to Shellal was begun at the end of April in order to broaden the front.

The War Cabinet with their resolve to invade Palestine appointed Sir Edmund Allenby\textsuperscript{43} to command the Egyptian Expeditionary Force. He took over command on 28 June.

\textbf{The Third Battle of Gaza\textsuperscript{44}}

The decision of the War Cabinet to reinforce E.E.F. and to undertake the conquest of Palestine made this theatre the most important centre of conflict outside Europe for the remainder of the war.

Throughout the war there was an incessant conflict of views between "the Westerners"—those who held that every possible man and weapon should be mustered against the main army of the principal enemy, and that all outside commitments should be reduced to the minimum compatible with mere safety—and "the Easterners"—those who believed that western front was impenetrable to either combatant, and that victory could more easily be won by striking down Germany's weaker allies and thus gradually tighten the iron ring round Germany herself.

Mr Lloyd George, the then Prime Minister, was the most persistent and persuasive advocate of the latter policy. He now had an additional reason for searching success in Palestine. The spring of 1917 had been bitterly disappointing for the Allies. Russia had collapsed, the French offensive in Champagne had been a failure. All hope of ending the war in 1917 was lost. The British Premier believed that some striking military success was needed to sustain the endurance of the civil population in the fourth year of the war. It was this belief that prompted him to say to General Allenby before his departure to Egypt that "he wanted Jerusalem as a Christmas present for the British nation."

42. Ibid., p. 91.
There were sound strategical reasons for striking a blow on the Palestine front at this time. The collapse of Russia, had set free numerous Turkish forces, and it was known that these were being assembled round Aleppo under German guidance and leadership, for the recapture of Baghdad. The threat thus offered to the Mesopotamian sector of the battle line could be more quickly and economically countered by an offensive in Palestine than by direct reinforcement of General Maude's army. Thus, General Allenby's main strategical objective was the defeat of the Turkish army in southern Palestine in order to draw down the Turkish reserves from Aleppo, and in this way to remove danger of an expedition against Baghdad.

Early in 1917 Turkey as the religious head of Islam was in a miserable plight. Out of the four sacred cities in charge of Turkey, two—Mecca and Baghdad—were already in the hands of her enemies, while Medina was besieged and Jerusalem threatened. Not only was she losing the war, but forfeiting her religious prestige as well.

The German High Command decided that some spectacular exhibition was required to restore the shrinking faith of their ally and suggested the reconquest of Baghdad. The negotiations that followed between Constantinople and Berlin it was decided to assemble a Turkish army at Aleppo and to support it with a special body of German troops (known as Pasha II or the Asia Corps). The projected operation for secrecy's sake was to be called "Yilderim"—that is to say, "lightning". The nucleus of the Yilderim force was to be the III and XV Army Corps. They were to constitute the Seventh Army, of which Mustapha Kemal was appointed the Commander. The headquarters of staff Yilderim consisted of sixty-five German officers and nine Turks.

Even before the second Battle of Gaza the staff of the Eastern Force had been considering an advance by the right as an alternative to a direct assault on Gaza. The obvious line of advance into Palestine was also by Gaza, keeping close to the sea. This route secured the full advantage of naval cooperation, directly covered the main line of communication, and presented comparatively small difficulties of water supply. But the defences of Gaza were now too solid to be broken except by a slow and costly process of siege.

In July, General Allenby approved General Chetwode’s\(^{46}\) plan to develop during summer such transport and administrative improvements as would enable a force to be thrust out on to the high ground between Beersheba and Hareira. The necessity for capturing Beersheba was felt for further operations.

The Eastern Force was now abolished, and troops were organised into three corps, viz.,

- The Desert Mounted Corps, under General Chauvel, consisting of the Anzac, Australian and Yeomanry Mounted Divisions. The XX Army Corps under General Chetwode—10th, 53rd, 60th, 74th Divisions.
- The XXI Army Corps, under General Bulfin—52nd, 54th and 75th Divisions.

The troops directly under General Headquarters included the Imperial Camel Corps Brigade, the 7th Mounted Brigade, the Imperial Service Cavalry Brigade and the 20th Indian Infantry Brigade.

The XX Corps and the Desert Mounted Corps (less one division) were to form the striking wing for the main blow against the Turkish left; the XXI Corps was to make a secondary attack on Gaza; and one mounted division was to cover the twenty mile gap in the centre between the two attacking wings.

The real difficulties\(^{47}\) of the plan were three—transport, water and secrecy. There were no metalled roads available south of the Gaza-Beersheba line. The country between the Wadi Ghuzze and Beersheba and the Turkish left was absolutely waterless, every drop of water required for the personnel had to be carried, while animals could not be watered between bases. The striking force could be supplied with food and ammunition up to Beersheba and for one march beyond by using all transport. The water could be supplied only up to Beersheba. Therefore, rapid capture of Beersheba became the corner-stone of the whole plan. The third difficulty was to concentrate a striking force sufficient to overwhelm the garrison of Beersheba rapidly and then to attack the Turkish left, without the Turks becoming aware of the plan. It was hoped to give the enemy the impression that the movement was merely a feint.

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46. Ibid., pp. 7-12.
47. Ibid., pp. 17-23.
In outline therefore the plan was as follows:

to concentrate as secretly as possible a striking force of four divisions and two mounted divisions opposite the Turkish left and Beersheba; to capture Beersheba rapidly and secure the water supplies at that place; thereafter, to assault with all the possible speed the Turkish left flank defences and to roll up the enemy line towards Gaza, holding the cavalry in readiness to push round towards the water supplies on the Wadi Hesi; and to intercept or harass the Turkish retreat from Gaza; during these operations to fix the enemy’s attention on Gaza by every available means, including a heavy bombardment and a determined holding attack.

General Allenby moved his Headquarters from Cairo to a camp at Um el Kelab, near Rafa.

The physical conditions of the summer were trying. The temperature rose to 110, the “khamsin” wind blew for several days and made life unbearable. The slightest cut turned sceptic in this climate. There was also the “sand fly fever” which was very trying on the soldiers.

Administrative Preparation

1. Kantara, on the Suez Canal became a port.
2. The doubling of the railway up to Deir el Belah progressed rapidly.
3. Pipe lines were developed and extended; new wells sunk and storage for water constructed.
4. Signal communications were improved.
5. Maps of the country were drawn.
6. The units of the army were being systematically trained for their task. Throughout the summer continual raids and enterprises were undertaken by the troops in the line against the enemy trenches opposite Gaza. The training behind the line was directed towards preparation for open warfare and great mobility. Special attention was paid to fitting the men for long marches over heavy ground. They were also trained to work on half a gallon of water per man per day.

7. By the end of autumn men and horses were to be fit and ready.

Deception Plan

It was impossible to conceal the preparations against Beersheba, but it was possible to conceal their size and extent. For the achievement of this, the following measures were taken:

(a) Army

(i) *Troops.* The great bulk of the troops was kept opposite Gaza till the last possible movement and then moved across rapidly and secretly.

(ii) *Railway and pipe-line.* The prolongation of the railway and the pipe-line across the Wadi Ghuzze into a 'no man's land' was postponed to a late stage of the programme.

(iii) *Stores.* The accumulation of stores was to be contracted into as little time and space as possible.

(iv) *Intelligence.* The intelligence branch conveyed the impression to the Turks that activity near Beersheba was a bluff and the British were faced with the difficulty of getting water and transport for a large force round Beersheba.

(v) *Zero day.* Zero day was the day on which Beersheba was to be assaulted. But operations were to begin a week before the Zero day with a systematic bombardment of the Gaza defences which would be supplemented by naval gun fire; with enemy's attention thus directed on Gaza, the striking force would be hurried secretly over to the flank.

(vi) *Assault on Gaza.* The XXI Corps was to make assault on a portion of the Gaza defences during the interval between the capture of Beersheba and attack on the Turkish left.

Navy

British command of the sea, which made the Turks naturally nervous about their right flank, also helped in the deception of the enemy.

(i) *Rumours.* Intelligence service spread rumours that a landing would take place in the rear of Gaza.

(ii) *Naval vessels and small crafts.* Naval vessels were allowed to be seen taking soundings of the coast and small crafts collected at
Deir-al-Belah as if they were to be used for the transport of a landing force.

(c) Airforce

All these devices to mislead the enemy were possible due to the arrival of new aircrafts which maintained air superiority.

(d) Measures taken to Practice a Feint towards Beersheba

The enemy was given the impression that the activity towards Beersheba and his left flank was a bluff to distract his reserves by the following means:

(i) Reconnaissance. Once a fortnight reconnaissance was pushed close up to the defences of Beersheba by a cavalry division, firstly, to suggest that the allied efforts on this side would be confined only to demonstration, and secondly, when the real attack goes the Turks would mistake it for another reconnaissance. Thus a complete surprise would be gained.

(ii) Wireless messages. Wireless messages meant to be read by the Turks were transmitted to give an impression that activity around Beersheba would be confined only to a demonstration.

(iii) Study of ground. Periodical advances towards Beersheba provided screen for commanders and staff to get acquainted with the ground.

Dispositions of the Opposing Forces

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>British Forces</th>
<th>Locations</th>
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<td>Anzac Mounted Division</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australian Mountain Division</td>
<td>Khelasa</td>
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<td>7th Mountain Brigade (attached)</td>
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<th>XX Corps</th>
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<td>60 Division</td>
<td>Bir-el-Esani</td>
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<td>74 Division</td>
<td>Khasif</td>
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<tr>
<td>Imperial Camel Corps Brigade</td>
<td>Shellal</td>
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</table>
XXI Corps

52 Division
54 Division
75 Division
Composite Force (25th Indian Infantry, Imperial Service Brigade)

Opposite Gaza
-do-
Sheikh Abbas
El Mendur

Turkish Forces

Eighth Army
X, XII Corps, consisting of 3rd & 53rd Divisions.
XX Corps, consisting of 16th & 54th Divisions.

Gaza
Sheria

Army Reserve
7th and 19th Divisions

In the rear

Seventh Army

III Corps, consisting of 24th Division & 27th & 23rd Cavalry Divisions

Kauwukh
Beersheba

Concentration

On the night of 30/31 October 1917, 40,000 troops of all arms (XX Corps and D.M.C.) moved to take up their battle positions for the attack on Beersheba by 0300 hrs on 31 October. Full moon favoured night approach.

Capture of Beersheba

The 60th and 70th Divisions of XX Corps succeeded in everrunning Turkish defences south and south-west of Beersheba and fixing the Turkish garrison (the 27th Division). D.M.C. now launched their cavalry charge on Beersheba from the north and north-east of Beersheba. Bir-el-Sakati fell by 1300 hours. The charge of 4 A.L.H. Brigade captured Beersheba by night fall. Difficulty experienced by mounted troops which overcame resistance at Tel-as-Saba confirmed the need for supplementing the fire power of the cavalry by providing additional artillery with a heavy air shell. The Turks were com-

50. Ibid., pp. 115-124.
pletely surprised at the unexpected time, strength and direction of the British attack on Beersheba.

Capture of Gaza

The bombardment of Gaza defences opened on 27 October, and continued gradually with increasing severity. The assault was undertaken by the 54th Division with the 156th Brigade of the 53rd Division attached on 31st October. The attack was successful and at 6.30 a.m., the farthest objective, Sheikh Hasan, was captured. The capture of this place seriously menaced the Turkish position.

Capture of Kauwukah and Sheria

By 6th November, the British striking wing (D.M.C. and XX Corps) had completed its dispositions for the decisive attack and stood as follows:

(a) 53 Division at Tel Khuweilfeh
(b) Yeomanry Mounted Division left of the 53rd Division.
(c) 74th, 60th and 10th Divisions on the western side of Kauwukah.
(d) On the left of the 10th Division the Australian Mounted Division some, fifteen miles between XX and XXI Corps.

The 74th Division began its advance on 6 November. It bore the brunt of the days fighting under the cover of constant artillery and machine-gun fire. It captured its objectives north of Kauwukah. Meanwhile, the 60th and 10th Divisions had worked up to the main Kauwukah defences, on which artillery had carried out methodical bombardment, and soon over-ran the defences. In the night, very hard fighting took place at Khuweilfeh, and the 53rd Division managed to secure a foothold on the main Khuweilfeh ridge.

On the left, the XXI Corps advanced on 7th November and over-ran the famous Ali Muntar Knoll, the key to Gaza. The Turks had evacuated Gaza and were in full retreat.

The Pursuit through Philistia

The cavalry chased the retreating Turks, stopping them from

51. Ibid., pp. 129-138.
52. Ibid., pp. 136-137.
escaping to the north. Chaytor's Anzac Division captured Ameidat station with four hundred prisoners and large quantities of stores. Tel esh Sheria was captured on 7th November. Meanwhile, General Bulfin, on the left, pressed the pursuit of the Turks who had withdrawn from Gaza. The 157th leading Brigade of the 52nd Division crossed Wadi Hessi; the 54th Division occupied the defences of Gaza itself; while the Imperial Service Cavalry Brigade pressed past Gaza towards Beit Hanum.

On 8th the 60th Division occupied Huj. By the evening of 8th the first stage of the exploitation of the victory had ended. The mounted troops had failed to intercept any large portion of the Turkish forces mainly because of water difficulties.

General Allenby issued orders to the mounted troops to capture the objectives Et Tineh-Beit Duras by 9th November which would turn the Nahr Sukherier line.

The Desert Mounted Corps was incapable of a further combined effort. Only the Anzac Division had succeeded in watering the horses during the night of 8th and 9th and went forward first to El Mejdel and then to Beid Duras and Esdud. The Australian Mounted Division and Yeomanry Division remained to provide water. The Anzac Division succeeded in capturing large number of Turks in hot pursuit. Had all the three divisions been able to advance together a greater part of the Turkish army would have been over-run. During 10th and 11th the pace of the pursuit slackened on account of hot exhausting wind.

During these days the enemy's resistance stiffened. He was preparing to defend the junction of the Jerusalem line with his main railway.

During the 12th the force got into position for the attack. On the east, the Australian Mounted Division, advancing in the direction of Tel es Safi, was heavily counter-attacked by four Turkish divisions and driven back. On the other hand, the 52nd Division had a hard fight at Burka, north of the Wadi Sukhereir. The capture of this strategic point opened an approach on the enemy's main line for the next day.

General Allenby's orders directed the Australian Division of the Desert Mountain Corps to attack to the south of the main Gaza Junction station road. The XXI Corps (75th and 52nd Divisions) was to attack between the road and Katrah, towards the Junction Station and the railway immediately north of it. The Yeomanry
Division, supported by the Anzac Division, was to attack on the left of the XXI Corps with the Camel Brigade in the belt of Sandhill along the coast. As soon as [the Junction Station and the railway were reached, the mounted troops were to swing north, to occupy Ramley and Ludd and to reconnoitre towards Jaffa.

The attack began at 7 a.m. on 13th November. By 10 a.m. the 75th Division, advancing along the main road, had taken Tel-el-Turmus and Kustineh meeting with little opposition. The 52nd Division had occupied Beshshit and the Yeomanry Division Yebrnah. The 75th division had a hard fight for Mesmiyeh, while the 52nd was held up in front of Katrah and El Mughar. But with the help of the 6th Mounted Brigade El Mughar was eventually cleared.

The 52nd Division had taken Katrah. The 75th Division had pressed on Mesmiyah where the Turkish forces were in full retreat.

On 14th a brigade of the 75th Division occupied the Junction station and the Australian Mounted Division entered Et Tineh.

On the 15th the Australian Mounted Division and 75th Division advanced east of the Junction station towards Latron, where the Jaffa-Jerusalem road debouches from the hills, the Anzac Mounted Division meanwhile occupied Ramleh and Ludd.

On the 16th the Australian Mounted Division occupied Latron and the New Zealand Brigade entered Jaffa without opposition.

With the occupation of Jaffa and the withdrawal of the Eighth Turkish Army behind the line of River Auja and of the Seventh Army to the shelter of the Judaen Mountain Range, the pursuit up the Plain of Philistia came to an end.

In the ten days since the breaking of the Gaza-Beersheba line the British forces had advanced approximately fifty miles. Most of the cavalry had covered 170 miles between October 29th, and November 14th. The 52nd Division had marched sixty-nine miles and fought four severe actions in nine days. The Turks had lost 10,000 personnel as prisoners and 100 guns, but had avoided complete annihilation that at one time seemed to threaten them.

The battle casualties of the British forces during the period of the pursuit—November 7th to 16th—amounted a little over six thousand.

The Capture of Jerusalem

Taking advantage of the enemy’s disorganisation, General Allenby

decided to advance on Jerusalem at once. On 18th the operations were resumed after a days halt.

On the 18th, while the Australian Division was manoeuvring the Turks out of Latron, the Yeomanry Division made good progress towards Lower Beth-horon. The 75th Division assembled towards Latron, and the 52nd at Ramleh and Ludd.

On the 19th, the 75th Division, which comprised some battalions of Gurkhas and other Indian units, battled its way within a short distance of Saris. The leading brigade of the 52nd Division reached Beit Likia, and the Yeomanry Beit-ur el-Tahta. All these troops, in their thin Khaki with no greatcoats and few blankets, suffered severely from the cold and wet.

On 20th November, the 75th Division won Saris and after difficult fighting, and also succeeded in controlling the Kuryet el Enab ridge.

On 21st, the 234th Brigade captured Nebi Samwil, a most important point towards Jerusalem. Meanwhile, the Turks made three fierce counter-attacks to get back Samwil from where the Jerusalem defences, and even the city itself could be viewed. The first attempt to take Jerusalem had failed.

The date of the second attack on Jerusalem defences was fixed for 8th December. The first attempt to pivot on the right and then swing to the left across the Nablus road, had failed mainly owing to lack of roads in the country north-west of Jerusalem. This want of road had deprived the infantry of adequate artillery support, whereas the Turks had the main Jerusalem-Nablus road behind their positions and could rapidly reinforce any threatened point. General Sir Philip Chetwode, Commanding the XX Corps, changed the line of attack. He determined to pivot on the left and then to swing up his right past the western outskirts of Jerusalem across the Nablus road just north of the city. This task was to be carried out by the 60th and 74th Divisions, while the 53rd Division, which had not reverted to the command of XX Corps was to send two brigades up the Hebron road towards Bethlehem.

Between 4th-7th December the troops took up their positions for the attack. The 10th Division extended its right so as to enable the 74th Division to concentrate and relieve the 60th Division at Nebi Samwil which was the principal pivot of the attack. The 60th Division assembled south of the Enab-Jerusalem road. It was to attack on
this road keeping in touch with the 53rd Division, which was to reach a position close up to the defences of Bethlehem by December 7th. The 10th A.L.H. Regiment and the Corps Cavalry regiment were to keep the 60th and 53rd in touch with each other. The attack was supported by divisional artillery and mountain batteries.

On December 7th/8th rain fell incessantly. It hindered the march of the 53rd Division. The main attack began at dawn in driving rain and mist. The strength of the Turkish Seventh Army was estimated at 15,000 to 16,000.

The 74th Division secured the ridge above Beit Iksa. The 60th Division, on whom fell the brunt of the fighting, took Deir Yesin and other defences east of the Wadi Surar. The Turks having seen some of their strongest positions falling, gave up the hope of defending them and retreated. The Mayor of Jerusalem surrendered the keys on the mid-day of the 9th to General Shea, Commanding the 60th Division.

The 53rd, 60th and 74th Divisions all advanced to their final objectives. On 11th December, General Allenby entered into Jerusalem.

The capture of Jerusalem was the climax of a most brilliant campaign. The main achievements of it were:

1. It had fully accomplished the objectives for which it was planned.
2. All danger to Baghdad and to the British conquest of Iraq was finally removed.
3. Practically the last Turkish reserves were drawn in.
4. The British nation received the Christmas present which Lloyd George so much desired.
5. It encouraged Arab revolt against Turkish suzerainty.
6. It humbled Turkey as it lost one more holy place in addition to Mecca and Baghdad. The Ottoman Empire suffered loss of prestige.

The Winter of 1917-18

The XXI Corps had taken over the defence of the coastal plain from the Desert Mounted Corps on 7th December, and had put all three divisions into the line, the 75th on the right, 54th in the centre, and 52nd on the coast. The objective of this advance was to drive the enemy out of the range of Jaffa, which was to be used as a port
for the landing of supplies, and of the Jaffa-Ludd line, along which a light railway was being built. The necessary bridging material was brought by night to selected points where a passage could be found. One such point was between Hadreh and Jerisheh and the other between Jerisheh and the sea. The 155th Brigade was to cross at the former and attack the Turkish positions at Hadrah; the 156th Brigade was to cross at the latter and secure Sh. Muannis.

In spite of rain and the river swelling to flood, all the three brigades were crossed on 21st morning and the Turkish line over-looking the river was taken.

On 21st/22nd the 54th Division drove the Turks from Mulebbis and Rantieh and the 52nd Division advanced as far as Arsuf. British warships assisted in the operation. The enemy’s line was pushed back to eight miles from Jaffa, making the harbour and intended railway secure. On 26/27 the Turks launched an abortive attack on Tel-el-Ful, a prominent hill about three miles north of Jerusalem. Next day the XX Corps began a general advance. The 60th Division took El Jib, Er Ram and Rafat. The 74th Division took Beitunia and the 10th Division Ain Arik.

The Spring and Summer of 1918

Immediately after the fall of Jerusalem, General Allenby was asked by the War Cabinet to give a death-blow to Turkey by advancing to Damascus and Aleppo. General Smuts\(^55\) was sent in February 1918, to discuss strategical problems and to find out the requirements of force needed for this purpose.

General Allenby’s plan\(^56\) was, firstly, to secure his right flank by the occupation of the Jordan valley and then to demolish the Hejaz railway around Amman so as to isolate Turkish forces. This done, the Arabs were to be encouraged in their revolt against the Turks. When the dry season approached he intended to advance to the Plain of Esdraelon and secure a line from Tiberias to Haifa. Thereafter, the main column was to proceed along the coast by Tyre and Sidon to Beirut. The right flank of this force would be protected by the mountains and by a friendly population. The flank of any Turkish force which stood to defend Damascus could be turned by the Tripoli-Homs gap. Subsidiary columns would work up the Yamruk

\(^{55}\) Ibid., p. 177.
\(^{56}\) Ibid., p. 176.
valley towards the Hauran and north of Lake Tiberias along the direct road to Damascus.

Operations in the Jordan valley and beyond took place between February and May 1918.57 The March from Jerusalem to Jordan was arduous, involving a descent from 2,000 feet, above sea level to a low sunken valley, 1,200 feet below sea level. Jericho was taken between February 19 and 21 and an abortive attack on Amman was made on March 30.

Reorganisation of EEF

During April and May the Egyptian Expeditionary Force58 was reorganised to become mainly an Indian Force. The 3rd and 7th Indian Divisions, 24 other Indian Infantry battalions and the 4th and 5th Cavalry Divisions replaced the older troops. These months were also utilised for improving communications, for broadening roads, lating railway lines, stock piling supplies and establishing superiority in the air. The stage was thus set for the final push.

OPERATIONS BETWEEN THE FIRST AND THE SECOND TRANS-JORDAN RAIDS

The Battle of Berukin59

Sir Edmund Allenby had informed the war office that after capturing Es Salt and destroying the Hejaz Railway at ‘Amman’, he hoped to resume his advance on Nablus and Tul Karm in April. By the beginning of April his raids had failed to do serious damage to the Railway and he had evacuated Es Salt. However, he decided to go forward with an attack to be carried out by the XXI Corps, which, if successful, would carry him to the Tul Karm rail head and the headquarters of the Turkish Eighth Army.

In the first phase, the 75th Division was to capture “Mog Ridge”, and Sheikh Subi, two miles respectively north-west of Berukin village; then the village of Ra-fat and the hill of ‘Arara’ north-east of it was to be captured.

57. Longer, V., Red Coats to Olive Green, Allied Publishers, Delhi, 1974, p. 166,
The preliminary attack of the 75th Division began at 5.10 a.m. on the 9th April. The first stage of assault was carried out by all the three infantry brigades in line: the 232nd Brigade on the right against Berukin and El Kufr, the 233rd in the centre against Ra-fat, while the 234th Brigade was to capture “Three Bushes Hill” and the ridge between it and Ra-fat, in order to protect the 233rd’s left. The objective was swiftly captured all along the front except on that of the 232nd Brigade. On this brigade’s left the 2/3rd Gurkhas seized El Kufr; but on the right the 2/4th Somerset came under heavy fire not only from “Tin Hat Hill”, its objective but also from Kufr ‘Ain Hill’ on its right flank. The latter proved to be a thorn in the side of the 232nd Brigade.

The delay had thrown the attack out of gear as neither the left of the 232nd Brigade nor the 233rd could advance to their second objective until Berukin was secured. Meanwhile, the enemy launched two counter attacks. Eventually Major General Palin decided to postpone the advance to Mogg Ridge. Sheikh Subi and Arara—for the next day.

On 10th April at 6 a.m. the advance was resumed. The 2/3rd Gurkhas of the 232nd Brigade reached the western edge of Mogg Ridge but there was confused and fluctuating fighting on this hill all day. After a twenty minutes bombardment in the afternoon the 2/3rd Gurkhas, assisted by companies of the 2/4th Hampshire and 58th Rifles (attached to the 233rd Brigade), secured almost the whole of Mogg Ridge; but a counter-attack, launched under cover of a trench-mortar bombardment and carried out with great determination by German troops, drove them right off it. In this fierce fighting Rifleman Karan Bahadur.60 2/3rd Gurkhas, won the Victoria Cross for a succession of deeds of extraordinary gallantry. In the attack his Lewis Gun Section engaged a Turkish machine-gun at close range. The No. 1 of the gun having been shot, Rifleman Karna Bahadur pushed his body off the gun and took his place; then under a shower of bombs, he fired a burst which destroyed the Turkish machine-gun detachment. He next switched his fire on to the bombers and silenced them. When the battalion fell back he covered the withdrawal by fire until the enemy was close upon him.
Campaign in Syria

The Turkish forces in Palestine were organised into three armies. The Seventh and the Eighth lay on the west of Jordan; the Fourth on the east; and the Eighth Army held the coastal sector and extended into the hills as far as Furkiah. It comprised of XXII Corps (7th, 20th, 46th Divisions), and Asia Corps (16th and 19th Divisions, 701st 702nd and 703rd German Battalions). Its commander was Djevad Pasha who had succeeded Kress von Kressenstein. The Army Headquarters were at Tul Keram.

The Seventh Army continued its line to the Jordan Valley with the main force on the Jerusalem-Nablus road. Mustapha Kemal was the Commander of this force and its Headquarters were at Nablus. The army comprised the III Corps (1st and 11th Divisions) and XXIII Corps (26th and the 53rd Divisions).

The Fourth Army was in the Jordan valley on the hills of Moab. It consisted of II Corps (24th Division and 3rd Cavalry Division) and VIII Corps (48th and Composite Divisions, including 146th German Regiment). The Commander of the IVth Army was Djemal. The Commander-in-Chief, had his headquarters at Nazareth.

General Allenby’s strategy for the Syrian campaign was based on the control of Deraa, Beisan, Afula and Messudieh—the vital points in the line of communication which could close the lines of retreat of all the three Turkish armies. His plan was to defeat and destroy the Seventh and Eighth Armies.

The salient points of his plan were:

1. The great mass of the troops should be launched on their ride northwards at the earliest possible moment.
2. A breach in Turkish lines should be swiftly made by the infantry, supported by the artillery.
3. The enemy must be kept in ignorance about the concentration on the coast and must be led to expect a blow elsewhere.

General Allenby’s plan was in fact the Gaza-Beersheba battle reversed. He proposed to break through on the coast while causing the Turk to believe that a blow was coming to them on their left.

61. Ibid., p. 194.
62. Ibid., p. 196.
flank.

When his concentration was complete, it seemed he had massed on a front of some fifteen miles, 35,000 infantry, 9,000 cavalry and 383 guns. On the same front the Turk had only 8,000 infantry with 130 guns not knowing what the actual strength of the enemy was. On the remaining forty-five miles of the front, 22,000 infantry, 3,000 cavalry and 157 guns faced 24,000 Turks with 270 guns.

The Battles at Megiddo\(^{64}\)

On 16th September Feisal's Arabs and Air Force began preliminary operations designed to disorganise the enemy's communications and to fox his attention on Deraa and on his eastern flank. On the 16th the railway line was effectively cut to the south between Deraa and Amman, and on the 17th to the north, between Deraa and Damascus, and to the west, between Deraa and Afule. The enemy Commander-in-Chief Limon van Sanders reacted to these attacks and sent his reserves from Haifa towards Deraa.

By 18th September, Allenby's concentration was complete and his main forces stood ready for attack. The opening move of the great battle was made by the XX Corps in the Judaen hills. The Corps with its two divisions, the 10th and the 53rd, planned to advance on Nablus.

The front of the XXI Corps (comprising of the 3rd, the 7th Indian, the 54th and 75th divisions) extended from Rafat in the foothills to the sea north of Arsuf. The task allotted to the 3rd (Indian), the 75th, and the 7th (Indian) Divisions was to make an assault on the Tarsus defences of the enemy and on the line from Jiljulieh to Et-Tireh via Kalkilieh. The 60th Division was to make for Tul Keram.

On 19th September at 4.30 a.m. a fifteen minutes sudden and intense bombardment with every available gun utterly surprised the Turks and aghast at the suddenness and pace of the onslaught, they could offer little resistance. The 3rd (Indian) Division carried the defences of Jiljulieh and Kalilieh and the 75th Division that of Et Tireh. The 7th (Indian) Division cleared the plain up to the marshes on the coast and swung north of Et Tireh, into the foothills. The 60th Division succeeded in breaking through all enemy defences and secured a brigade near the mouth of Nahr el Falik. The 5th

\(^{64}\) Wavell, Field Marshal, *The Palestine Campaigns*, Sagar Publications, Delhi, 1968, pp. 203-207,
Cavalry Division passed through it. The 60th Division captured Tul Keram before it was dark. The airforce made the task of the 60th Division easy by bombarding Tul keram. The Eighth Army was completely broken and ran helter skelter. The line reached by the XXI Corps at nightfall ran along Rafat (French)—Bidieh (54th Division)—Felamieh (3rd Indian Division)—Et Taiyibeh (7th Indian Division)—Tul Keram (60th Division). The infantry thus had satisfactorily completed the task of breaking the Eighth Army. It was now the turn of the cavalry to follow the rout.

Cavalry Pursuit

During darkness of the 18th/19th, the 4th and the 5th Cavalry Divisions were formed behind the 7th (Indian Divisions) and the 60th Division. The mounted troops took immediate advantage of the success secured by the infantry, and pursued the Turks. The leading brigades of both the divisions overtook enemy detachments and made prisoners in hundreds. On the 20th the leading brigade, the 13th of the 5th Cavalry Division reached by 5.30 a.m. the headquarters of the enemy Commander-in-Chief at Nazareth and captured 1,250 prisoners. They could not, however, hold Nazareth for want of adequate number of troops and withdrew to the plain.

The 4th Cavalry Division lost its route and passing by the Musmus defile reached El Lejjun by dawn. The 2nd Lancers (Indian cavalry), the leading regiment of the Division, rounded up small bodies of Turks who were completely taken by surprise. Supported by the fire of the armoured cars, the Indian infantry squadrons were fell upon the enemy before they could even complete their deployment. Forty-six Turks were speared, and the remainder, about 500, surrendered. The whole action lasted only a few minutes.

The 4th Division reached El Afule at 8 a.m. Leaving the 19th Lancers (Indian Cavalry) there, the Division moved to the Plain of Esdraelon. There they were joined by the remaining mounted force. Australian Mounted Division reached Lejjun. The 3rd A.L.H. Brigade occupied Jenin by the afternoon.

Thus by the evening of 20th September, the Turkish Seventh and Eighth Armies were utterly routed and all their communications were paralysed.

About noon on the 19th, on hearing the success of the XXI Corps, the XX Corps was ordered to clear the country up to Nablus and to block the routes leading eastwards to the Jordan valley. This was the only route through which the enemy could escape.

The 13th Brigade returned to Nazareth on the morning of 21st and reoccupied it. During the midnight of 21st/22nd, the 18th Lancers were attacked at Acre road by a Turkish battalion from Haifa. The Turks were routed in the light. Next day the whole of the Division moved to Acre and Haifa. At Haifa there was little action. The leading brigade of the 5th Cavalry Division, the 15th (composed of Imperial Service Units), had only two regiments—the Mysore and the Jodhpur Lancers. One squadron of the former was sent to climb Mount Carmel by a steep track and silence the enemy's guns. The Jodhpur Lancers, and the remaining two squadrons of the Mysore, (the fourth had been sent on a wide turning movement to the north), made a mounted attack on the Turks holding the defile. It was successful, and the squadrons then galloped on into the town. Almost simultaneously the Mysore squadron, reinforced by a squadron of the Sherwood Rangers, reached the guns of Mount Carmel and took them by a mounted charge. Sixteen guns and 700 prisoners were taken as a result of this action.

Pursuit to Damascus and Aleppo

Chaytor's force in the Jordan valley (Anzac Mounted Division, 20th Indian Infantry Brigade, two battalions of West India Regiments, two battalions of Jews), had been given the following task:

1. To occupy the attention of the Turkish Fourth Army.
2. To prevent any transference of troops to the west of Jordan.
3. To protect the right flank of the XX Corps, when it moves forward.
4. To advance to Jisr ed Damieh, Es Salt and Amman.

On 21st September, the New Zealand Mounted Brigade advanced on the west bank of Jordan, facing little opposition. On 22nd it succeeded in reaching Nablus, and the Jisr ed Damieh road after a brief fight. The New Zealanders occupied Es Salt on the evening of

23rd and Amman\(^7\) by 4-30 p.m. on the 25th September after a stiff fight.

In an action on the west bank of the river Jordan on 23rd September 1918, Risaldar Badlu Singh\(^8\) of the 14th Murray's Jat Lancers, attached to the 29th Lancers (Deccan Horse), won the Victoria Cross for most conspicuous bravery and self-sacrifice when he charged and captured a strong enemy position. While capturing one of the enemy's machine-guns, Badlu Singh was mortally wounded and died.

The Advance to Damascus

On 26th September Allenby issued orders for advance to Damascus.\(^9\) Chauvel's orders to the Desert Mounted Corps were issued the same evening. Barrow, with the 4th Cavalry Division, was to move via Irbid on Deraa. The Australian Division followed by Mac Andrew's 5th Cavalry Division, which was concentrating round Nazareth, was to make for Damascus by the direct road round the north end of Lake Tiberias and through Kuneitra. The distance which the 4th Division had to cover for reaching Damascus was 140 miles. For other Divisions it was only 90 miles. Therefore, the 4th Division was directed to move a day before others. These two widely separated columns eventually reached Damascus within the appointed time. The 4th Cavalry Division had taken up the direct road to Damascus. The Australian Mounted Division began its march for Damascus on 27th September. About mid-day the leading troops reached the crossing of the Jordan river at Jisr Benat Yakub. The enemy had destroyed the bridge and had withdrew from there. The bridge was repaired on 28th afternoon. The 5th Cavalry and the Australian Division reached Kuneitra by the night of the 28th and were forty miles from Damascus. The troops reached Damascus on 30th September 1918. After some confused fighting 20,000 Turks were made prisoners. Turkish rule came to an end and was replaced by Arabs.


\(^8\) *Gazette of India*, 27-11-1918.

The Advance to Aleppo and Conclusion of the Armistice

Immediately after the fall of Damascus, the war cabinet urged General Allenby to advance to Aleppo, which was 200 miles beyond Damascus. As a first step, General Allenby decided to advance to the Rayak-Beirut line. The cavalry were to occupy the Rayak-Beirut line, while an infantry division marched up the coast to Beirut.

The 7th Meerut Division had already marched for Haifa which it reached on 1st October. Leaving Haifa on 3rd October, it reached Beirut on 8th October.

The 4th Cavalry Division, had to come from the Rayak area to Aleppo. The XXI Corps cavalry regiment and some armoured cars, followed by a brigade of the 7th (Indian) Division, had occupied Tripoli on 13th October.

An advance on Aleppo was ordered. It was 120 miles from Homs. The enemy forces around Aleppo numbered nearly 20,000.

In the evening of 25th the Arabs entered Aleppo after minor engagement enroute. General Mac Andrew entered the city on 26th at 10 a.m.

By the time these operations were concluded, the war had practically came to an end in all the theatres. Negotiations had already been set on foot which culminated in the Treaty of Versailles and later the Treaty of Serves (1920). As described above, Indian troops had played a significant part in all the campaigns and India had also contributed in other ways for the success of the allies. It is now time to have a look on the after-effects of the war, with special reference to our own county.

70. Ibid., pp. 285-316.
CHAPTER 8

A SUMMING UP OF INDIA’S CONTRIBUTION IN MEN, MONEY AND MATERIAL TO THE FIRST WORLD WAR

India made tremendous contribution in men, material and money to the war effort. A number of steps were taken to augment the strength of the Army and to train\(^1\) officers and men. The Indian Army reserve was increased. Cadet Colleges\(^2\) were opened at Quetta, and Wellington; officers were taken from the Special Reserve and Territorial Force; Schools for instruction were established at Ambala, Bangalore, Quetta, Wellington, Sialkot and Nasik; and the Indian Medical Service\(^3\) was expanded through recruitment from various sources. Altogether 1,069 officers of the Indian Medical Corps, 1,200 Nursing Sisters, 2,142 Assistant and Sub-Assistant Surgeons, 97 followers were sent to the various theatres up to 31 October 1918. The strength of Army Bearer Corps\(^4\) during the war increased from 3,258 to 22,750. Skilled workers\(^5\) required for Military Works Services, Inland Water Transport, Irrigation, Ordnance, Labour Corps and other directorates were recruited and trained in special training camps. A total of 77,444\(^6\) men of Supply and Transport, including Indians and British, 177\(^7\) men of Veterinary, 4,000\(^8\) men of Posts and Telegraphs were sent abroad. From May 1916, to 31st October

3. Ibid., p. 86.
4. Ibid., p. 86.
5. Ibid., p. 88.
6. Ibid., p. 93.
7. Ibid., p. 93.
8. Ibid., p. 94.
1918, a total of nearly 150,000 of all classes were sent abroad.

An important contribution made by India was the provision of labour for the various theatres of war, especially France and Mesopotamia. A total of 104 Labour Corps, 13 Portar Corps, 15 Syce campanies whose strength in men was 1150, 576, and 210 each respectively, were employed in different theatres of the war.

The demand for followers which included bakers, blacksmiths, butchers, carpenters, cooks, shoe-makers, smiths, sweepers, tailors, washermen etc. was very heavy. 43,737 men were supplied to different theatres.

Twenty days after the commencement of the war, the first Indian division—the Lahore Division—forming part of the Indian Corps—sailed from Karachi for France on August 24th. By the end of 1914, six expeditionary forces had been sent from India to various theatres of the war. These included three infantry divisions, eight infantry brigades and one mixed force with three infantry battalions, two cavalry divisions, one cavalry brigade and the attendant administrative services as well as four field artillery brigades in excess of the normal allotment. Concurrently with the despatch of Indian Expeditionary Force to France, a mixed force was sent to East Africa to defend Zanzibar and protect the Mombasa-Nairobi railway. An infantry brigade was sent to the Persian Gulf while six infantry brigades together with one Imperial Service Cavalry brigade was sent to Egypt. Expeditions to Mesopotamia and Aden too sailed out of Indian ports. By the early spring of 1915, two more infantry brigades and one more cavalry brigade had been sent abroad. As the war progressed and commitments grew bigger, more and more men, animals and stores were sent from India. Up to November 1918, 1,302,394 personnel, 172,815 animals which included 85,953 horses, 65,398 ponies and mules, 10,781 camels, 5061 bullocks, 5692 dairy cattle

9. Ibid., p. 88.
10. Ibid., p. 92.
11. Ibid., p. 92.
12. Ibid., p. 92.
13. Ibid., p. 74.
14. Ibid., p. 76.
15. Ibid., p. 75.
16. Ibid., p. 75.
17. Ibid., p. 78.
18. Ibid., p. 78.
and 3,691,836\textsuperscript{19} tonnes of supplies and store left the ports of India for various destinations.

There was tremendous expansion in the officer cadre and rank and file of the Army. At the outbreak of the war the total Indian strength of the Army in India was 239,561\textsuperscript{20} officers and men which included 193,901\textsuperscript{21} Indian combatants and 45,660\textsuperscript{22} Indian non-combatants. In addition, there were 72,209\textsuperscript{23} British other ranks and 4,744\textsuperscript{24} British officers. But by December 31, 1919, 877,068 Indian combatants and 563,369 Indian non-combatants had been additionally recruited. The grand total of the British and Indian officers, other ranks and non-combatants sent on service overseas from India was 1,381,050,\textsuperscript{25} including 285,037 British and 1,096,013 Indian personnel. During the same period 184,350\textsuperscript{26} animals were sent out on active service.

Within the first few weeks of the war, India supplied 70,000,000 rounds of small arms ammunition, 60,000\textsuperscript{27} rifles and more than 550\textsuperscript{28} latest-type guns. Considerable quantity of shell cases were manufactured. Army Clothing Department produced 41,920,223 garments\textsuperscript{29} between 1914-1918. Raw materials like rough tanned hides, wool, manganese, mica, salt-petre, timber, bamboos, raw silk, hemp, coir, tea, rubber, petroleum oils, and food stuffs were supplied. Everything required for troops in Mesopotamia, both British and Indian, was supplied either from Indian or from other places but paid for by India. India also provided all food-stuffs\textsuperscript{30} demanded for the Indian troops serving in East Africa, Egypt, France and Salonica. The approximate value of supplies sent overseas during the war to various forces depended on India, in France, East Africa, Mesopotamia,

19. Ibid., p. 78.
20. Ibid., p. 79.
21. Ibid., p. 79.
22. Ibid., p. 79.
23. Ibid., p. 79.
24. Ibid., p. 79.
25. Ibid., p. 80.
26. Ibid., p. 80.
28. Ibid., p. 152.
30. Ibid., p. 79.
Egypt, Persia and Aden (half) was £34,408,000. A total of 2,737,862 tonnes of important items like rice, flour, atta, ghee, sugar, tea, tinned meat, grain for animals, hay, jam, biscuits and firewood were shipped from India up to March 1919.

By the end of September 1918, the value of equipment and stores despatched to the various fronts amounted to about £80,000,000 sterling. India also supplied to Mesopotamia the whole of railway transport, as well as telegraphic and telephone equipment employed in that country.

A good many welfare committees organised by women collected and distributed tobacco, sweetmeats, clothing, newspapers, books, badges and other hospital requisites. Indian women helped in running canteens and reception centres for troops.

The Princely states played a notable part, sending 26,099 combatants overseas and recruiting 115,891 combatants and non-combatants for the regular army. These troops were maintained in the field at the expense of their rulers. Generous contributions by way of horses, mules, camels, motor ambulances, hospital ships and other conveniences were provided by units of states cavalry, camel corps, infantry, sappers and artillery which formed part of Imperial Service Troops. The troops gave excellent account of themselves, winning many a distinction in the far-flung theatres of war. Some of the state contingents were officered or commanded by the rulers themselves. Among them were Maharaja Sir Partap Singh Bahadur, Lt His Highness the Maharaja of Jodhpur, Colonel His Highness Sir Ganga Singh Bhadur of Bikaner, Major His Highness Sir Madan Singh Bhadur of Kishangarh, Captain, the Hon. Malik Sir Umar Hayat Khan Tiwana, Lt Raj Kumar Hira Singh of Panna, Lt Maharaj Kumar Hitendra Narayan of Cooch-Behar, Lt Maharaj Kumar Gopal Saran Narain Singh of Tikkari, Lt Malik Mumtaj Mahomed Khan and Capt Shah Mirza Beg. The state forces won 572 awards including four Military Crosses. (For details refer to Appendix-7).

31. Ibid., p. 139.
32. Ibid., p. 140.
33. Ibid., p. 107.
34. Ibid., p. 147.
35. Ibid., p. 174.
37. Ibid., p. 153.
Indeed, throughout the war Indian soldiers displayed courage, valour, devotion to duty and loyalty of the highest order. They fought on various battlefields of Europe, Africa and the Middle East with vigour and gallantry. The rigours of the terrain and the inclemencies of weather did not deflect them from their duty. Whether it were damp and flat fields of Flanders or the burning and swirling sands of Mesopotamia, the rocky cold and windy hills of Gallipoli or unhealthy uplands and stifling jungles of East Africa, Indian soldiers—Sikhs, Gorkhas, Baluchis, Punjabis, Pathans, Rajputs, Jats, Dogras, Marathas, Kumaonis, Garhwalis—left indelible imprints of their heroism, winning world-wide acclaim. For the first time Indian soldiers won the Victoria Cross for which they had become eligible in 1911. Eleven Victoria Crosses were won by them in Belgium, France, Egypt, Mesopotamia and Palestine. In addition six British officers of the Indian Army also won the highest award of gallantry in the British Empire.

The English did not think that Indians could stand up to the rigours of the European climate and much less did they have faith in the military prowess of Indian troops against an European Army. But the exploits of Indian soldiers even when they are matched against the renowned German army of Kaiser surprised everyone. The health of Indian soldiers gave no cause for concern. In fact their robustness and resilience outpaced those of English soldiers.

India made very handsome monetary contribution towards the war. By resolutions passed by both Houses of Parliament in 1914, it was decided that India should continue to pay the normal pre-War cost of maintaining her troops overseas while extra expenditure involved was met by the Imperial Government. According to the Parliamentary Resolution of September, and November 1914, India’s initial contribution payable to the end of 1919-20 was £ 47.5 millions.

In the beginning of 1917, the Imperial Legislative Council offered

39. Refers to Appendix ‘C’ attached.
a lump sum of £ 100 millions as a Special Contribution towards the expenses of the war.

In September 1918, a Resolution was passed by the non-official members of the Legislative Council of the Government of India offering to further contribute to His Majesty's Government towards the expenses of war which was accepted by His Majesty's Government. A further contribution of £ 13.1 millions was paid from the Indian revenues. Thus direct monetary contribution from the Indian revenues towards the cost of war amounted to £ 146.2 millions by the end of 1919-20, excluding the additional charge of £ 49.8 millions borne by India as a result of war condition for the protection of the North-Western Frontier of India. The protection of Sea-coasts cost India about £ 2.1 millions to the end of 1921-22. The Aden operations borne by India cost her £ 2.3 millions by the end of 1921-22. On measures of internal defence, India spent £ 2.7 millions to the end of 1921-22.

India's military budget for 1914-15, framed under peace conditions, was to the tune of £ 20.5 millions only whereas the 1918-19 budget was £ 121.5 millions, exclusive of cost of special services.

India incurred heavy expenditure, amounting to 2.25 millions for the acquisition of mechanical contrivances like armoured cars, armoured trains, aircrafts to increase mobility and fighting value of her troops, and £ 800,000 by 1918-19 in the development of frontier roads.

By the end of 1920-21, India contributed £ 3.2 millions for the raising of an irregular Persian Military Force.

Almost all ruling chiefs and the Rulers of independent neighbouring states, including Nepal, liberally contributed by donating large

44. Ibid., p. 160.
45. Ibid., p. 160.
46. Ibid., p. 160.
47. Ibid., p. 160.
49. Ibid., p. 161.
50. Ibid., p. 162.
51. Ibid., p. 162.
52. Ibid., p. 163.
sums. In money alone they contributed £ 5 millions. These gifts included lump sums towards the general expenses of the war, money for the provisions of aeroplanes, transport, upkeep of war hospitals, maintenance if convalescent homes, both in India and overseas, construction of religious edifices for troops on field service, the purchase of equipment and maintenance of the ‘Hospitalship Loyalty’ and for the purchase of motor-boats etc. Enormous sums were given to the Imperial Relief Fund. The total amount subscribed to the Imperial Relief Fund by the peoples and Princes of India amounted to Rs. 2,33,18,600.

India as a relatively poor country paid through her nose for maintaining an army bigger than she needed. The army, in fact, was used for Imperial purposes. In the great war India sent no less than 1,338,620 men to the different theatres of war and her direct money contribution has been officially put down at £ 146.2 millions, besides indirect help in money and material, what sacrifice Britain had to make in the interest of India till the end of the war can be adjudged in the light of these figures?

Britain kept in India one British soldier for every two Indian soldiers. The British soldier was expensive and added to the drain. This expenditure, if otherwise utilised in India, would have ushered in prosperity. Indian public opinion demanded Indianisation of the Army which was recommended by the Skeens Commission but received little attention.

The economic exploitation clearly affirms the truth that Britain offered hopeful promises only so long as India met her war needs. In March 1917, for the first time two delegates from India (Sir S.P. Sinha and the Maharaja of Bikaner) were considered worthy to participate in the Imperial War Conference, various public bodies of Britain conferred upon them honorary degrees of some universities and the freedom of the cities of London, Manchester, Edinburgh and Cardiff. For the first time it was conceded that India may look forward to a day when she may be treated as a partner in the Empire.

The Investors Review, London, dated 28th April 1917, remar-

53. Ibid., p. 169.
54. Ibid., p. 171.
55. Ibid., p. 160.
57. Ibid., pp. 374-376.
58. Ibid., p. 376.
59. Ibid., p. 376.
ked "sweet words are now raining upon India, and we trust foreshadow generous deeds".

The speech of the Maharaj of Bikaner given at a luncheon arranged by the Empire Parliamentary Association evoked some pertinent comments in the British Press. The Daily Telegraph\(^{60}\) dated 25th April 1917, remarked, "Everyone is aware that at the conclusion of the war not only India expects, but the majority of us at home also look forward to a considerable development, along the lines of political reform". On the conclusion of the war, the promises for self-rule and Indianisation of the army were conveniently forgotten.

\(^{60}\) Ibid., p. 376.
CHAPTER 9

THE GAINS OF THE ARMY

Some lessons had to be learnt from the First World War so far as the organisation of the Indian Army is concerned. As a result of these certain improvements were made.

Before the outbreak of the First World War Lord Kitchner had improved the training in the Army by instituting his system of ‘Test’\(^1\) which promoted healthy competition among units and cantonments. Still the Army had had no opportunities for higher training in warfare. The Army was hibernating and rusting. It was not ready for a major war, especially a war in Europe. The equipment was lacking. Artillery and guns were not available in sufficient numbers; rifles were obsolete; machine-guns had to be refitted; there were no howitzers; medical supplies and signalling equipment were poor. The Indian system of transport did not suit western conditions and there were many shortages. There was no system of properly trained reserves which could be drawn upon to provide suitable replenishments. The defects\(^2\) in the organisation and equipment of Indian Army came into greater prominence after the First World War in 1914-18.

1. The first and most serious defect was that the ancillary services were either non-existant or undeveloped. Out of 9 field army divisions only 7 were actually capable of immediate mobilisation.

2. Peace establishments were generally so inadequate that to effect mobilisation of the war divisions internal security units had to be largely depleted.

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2. Ibid., pp. 34-35.
3. Technical and administrative personnel, required on mobilisation, had to be found from the establishments of combatant units.

4. The standard of equipment in the Indian Army before the war was very low. The Indian troops were, therefore, at a grave disadvantage when they had to fight against those who used latest equipment.

5. There were neither mechanical transport services nor any Air Force.

6. The technical equipment in use was largely out of date.

7. The Indian Army was markedly inferior to the European Armies in respect of mechanical equipment (machine-guns, artillery, hospital equipment and medical establishment).

8. The divisional artillery was inadequate for modern requirements and the heavy artillery was obsolete.

9. Sufficient machinery for reinforcements was lacking.

10. The basis of reserve was discovered to be thoroughly unsound.

11. There was no organisation in existence to cope with the recruitment of fresh personnel, or with their training on the scale required to meet heavy war wastage and to permit a large expansion.

12. Lastly, one great cause of weakness was that India's indigenous resources had not been sufficiently developed and she was largely dependent on outside sources of supply for munitions of war.

The lack of initial preparation was partially made up by improvisation made by able military advisers. The improvisation, no doubt, delayed achievement and involved heavier expenditure. The military advisers, therefore, decided to reorganise and reform the army in the light of the lessons lately learnt.

In 1919 a Committee was appointed under the Chairmanship of Lord Esher with the following terms of reference:

1. To enquire into and report with special reference to post bellum conditions upon the administration, the organisation of Army in India, including its relations with the war office, and

3. Ibid., p. 35.
4. Ibid., p. 35.
the India office and the relation of these two offices to each-
other.

2. To consider the position of the Commander-in-Chief in his dual
capacity as head of the Army and Member of the Executive
Council, and to make recommendations in this regard.

3. To consider and to report any other matters which they may
decide as relevant to the enquiry.

The Committee submitted its report on June 22, 1920. There
were two Indian members on the Committee, Major Sir Umar
Hayat Khan⁵ and Sir Krishna Gupta.⁶

1. The Committee recommended that the Army Department and
the Headquarters Staff should be consolidated under one head
i.e. the Commander-in-Chief, who was to be a subordinate only
to the Governor-General-in-Council. The authority of the
C-in-C should be “second only to that of the Viceroy.”

2. Decentralisation was necessary at Army Headquarters to
relieve the C-in-C of all work that can be equally well perfor-
med by his subordinates.

3. The command system introduced in the Army in 1895 was
considered satisfactory.

4. The committee recommended that India be divided into 14
separate areas to be called “Districts.”

5. The Esher committee recommended the abolition of the Silladari
system in Indian cavalry as it was found not up to the mark
during the war.

The Governor-General-in-Council generally agreed with the
recommendations of the Esher Committee Report and conveyed
their Comments to the Secretary of State for India on 3rd February
1921, with the reservation that the Government of India should be
consulted on all questions of foreign policy involving the employment
of Indian Troops outside India.

A Committee⁷ of the Legislative Assembly was appointed to
examine the report of the Esher Committee. The committee, headed

178.
⁶. Ibid., p. 178.
⁷. Ibid., p. 185,
by Sir Tej Bhadur Sapru, submitted its report in March 1921, and
spelled out its recommendations. The main resolutions which were
adopted were:

1. "The purpose of the Army in India being the defence of India
against external aggression and the maintenance of internal peace
and tranquility," the organisation, equipment and administra-
tion of the Army should be "thoroughly uptodate" and "in
accordance with the present day standards of efficiency in the
British Army" so that it may repudiate the assumption under-
lying the whole report of the Esher Committee.
(a) that the administration of the Army in India cannot be
considered otherwise than as part of the total Armed
Forces of the Empire and;
(b) that the military resources of India should be developed in
a manner suited to Imperial necessities".

2. The Army in India "should not, as a rule, be employed for
service outside the external frontiers of India, except for
temporary defense purposes, or with the previous consent of the
Governor-General-in-Council in grave emergencies".

3. "The C-in-C and the Chief of General Staff should be ap-
pointed by the Cabinet on the nomination of the Secretary of
State for India, in consultation with the Government of India
and the Secretary of State for war."

4. The C-in-C's right of correspondence with the Chief of the
Imperial General Staff should be subject to the restriction that
it does not commit the Government of India to any pecuniary
responsibility or any line of Military policy which has not
already been the subject of decision by them."

5. (a) "That the King Emperor's Indian subjects be freely ad-
mitted to all arms of His Majesty's Military, Naval, and
Air Forces in India and the ancilliary services and auxiliary
forces", and "every encouragement should be given to
Indians including the educated middle classes subject to the
prescribed standards of fitness to enter the commissioned
ranks of the Army" and "in nominating candidates for the
entrance examination, unofficial Indians should be
associated with the nominating authority."
(b) "That not less than 25% of the King's commissions should
be given to His Majesty's Indians subjects to start with,"
6. (a) That adequate facilities should be provided in India for the preliminary training of Indians to fit them to enter the Royal Military College Sandhurst, and
(b) that a college similar to Sandhurst should be established in India.

7. "The pay of all commissioned ranks in all branches of the Army should be fixed on an Indian basis."

8. "...a serious effort should be made to organise the formation of an adequate Territorial Force", "a system of Short Colour Service followed by a few years in the reserves" and carry out gradual reduction of the ratio of the British to the Indian troops."

9. Suggested reduction in the size of the administrative staff at Army Headquarters.

10. A committee adequately representative of non-official Indian opinion "should be appointed to report upon—
(a) the best method of giving effect to the natural rights and aspirations of the people of India to take an honourable part in the defence of their country and prepare the country for the attainment of full responsible Government.
(b) the financial capacity of India to bear the burden on military expenditure.
(c) her claim to equality of status and treatment with the self-governing dominions.
(d) the method of recruitment of the commissioned ranks of the Indian Army."

Under C-in-C Rawlinson, a number of changes\(^8\) were made in the Army:

1. The Temporary Royal Artillery Depot in India was reorganised on a permanent basis and provision was made that the Headquarters "shall include all Indian personnel required in connection with the administrative and disciplinary functions of the Centre. Improvement was made in the existing pattern of pack artillery gun equipment.

2. A self contained Indian Army Veterinary Corps was formed.

8. Lodger, V., Red Coats to Olive Green, Allied Publishers, Madras, 1974, pp. 185-187,
3. A reorganisation of the Military Engineering Services was carried out.

4. Regimental System was introduced into the Indian Infantry and Pioneers. (It was proposed to give all battalions of a ‘Group’ a common regimental title with each battalion being numbered in sequence with the regiment bearing an appropriate subsidiary title where deemed suitable.)

5. An Indian Signal Corps was formed on the line of Corps of Sappers and Miners.

6. Indian Ordnance Corps was established.

7. Mechanical Transport and Signal Services were added.

8. The Staff College at Quetta which was closed during the war, was reopened.

9. Service in the reserve was made compulsory. This ensured availability of trained manpower which could be drawn upon when required.

10. Better equipment and weapons were provided to the Army.

One of the post-war reforms was to provide a permanent base for the training of recruits during the war and peace so that combatant units could be relieved of this duty. Training battalions were provided for Infantry and Pioneers, Group-Depot for Indian Cavalry, Signal training Centre and Depot for Indian Signal Corps, Headquarters Corps of Sappers and Miners and the Royal Pack Artillery training centres for the Indian Personnel of the Regiment of Artillery.

**Improvement in Service Conditions of Indian Army Since the Commencement of the War and After**

When the war ended, a number of concessions and rewards were granted to serving and ex-service personnel of the Army. These included Honorary Commissions as Captains and 2nd Lieutenants to selected Indian officers of the Indian Army who had rendered distinguished Service during the war. Up to 1st January 1923, 371 commissions were granted.

In addition, 39 Indian gentlemen including certain Indian officers,

were granted King’s Commissions\textsuperscript{11} as temporary 2nd Lieut on probation after under-going a course of training at the Training School for Indian Cadets, Indore. Of these, 32 later received permanent Commissions.\textsuperscript{12}

King’s commissions\textsuperscript{13} as 2nd Lieutenants were granted to 20 Indian officers for specially distinguished services during the war.

Indian gentlemen of good family and education are made eligible for admission to Sandhurst for grant of King’s commission. The number of cadets was limited to 10 annually.

\textbf{Rewards}

Two hundred Special Jagirs\textsuperscript{14} (hereditary assignments of land as a reward for service to Government) were granted to selected Indian officers in recognition of their distinguished services during the war.

Twenty thousand other rewards\textsuperscript{15} consisting of grants of land or special pensions were awarded. The above were in addition to decorations, orders with increased monetary allowances, accelerated promotion and the various rewards that could be earned for special service in the field.

\textbf{Pensions}

The ordinary retiring and special pensions\textsuperscript{16} admissible to Indian officers were increased from 40 to 100 per cent and minimum qualifying service reduced from 18 to 15 years.

Similar increases were made in the rates of family pensions\textsuperscript{17} up to 135\%. The pension could be transferred to another dependent on the death of the original nominee.

Now rules\textsuperscript{18} were introduced with effect from 4th August 1914, affecting the grant of gratuities and wound, injury and disability pensions to Indian Officers and other ranks.

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., p. 237.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., p. 237.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., p. 237.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., pp. 237-238.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., p. 238.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., pp. 238-239.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., p. 238.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., p. 239.
Rations
Free rations19 and extra-messing allowance of ten annas per men per mess was sanctioned for the provision of extra articles of diet in each mess.
Free rations were also given to Indian troops and followers returning sick from the front.
All Government military servants were allowed to purchase any articles of supply and transport at favourable rates (whole sale rates).

Interior Economy
Better married accommodation20 was provided to Indian officers and other ranks. Comforts such as shelves, pegs were provided in barracks where troops lived.

Concession by Rail or Sea
Free passages21 were granted to Indian soldiers and their families when travelling by train in India.

Pay and Allowances
Monthly rates for field service22 were enhanced and special field allowances were granted to all Indian troops and followers serving in East Africa, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Aden, Persia etc.
With effect from 1st January 1917, the pay of all combatant Indian officers and non-commissioned officers was increased from 10 to 20 per cent.

Bonus
A bonus23 of Rs 50 was given to combatant recruits and Rs 15 on completion of training. From 1st June 1918, war bonus of Rs 24 and Rs 60 was given to Indian other ranks and Indian officers respectively for every six months.

Medical
The rates of pay were increased from 27 to 71 per cent and field

23. Ibid., pp. 241-243,
allowances were enhanced from 33 to 100 per cent in respect of Military Sub-assistant Surgeons\textsuperscript{24}. Free family accommodation was given for those in field service. They were given commissioned rank and were considered eligible for Military Cross.

**Hospitals and Sanitation**

Better accommodation and diet\textsuperscript{25} for Indian Station Hospitals were introduced.

**Miscellaneous**

Free supply of clothing and boots was introduced. For the benefit of disabled Indian soldiers, "The Queen Mary's Technical School",\textsuperscript{28} was established at Bombay. Regimental Schools for children were set up. The Indian Soldiers (Litigation)\textsuperscript{27} Act was introduced to protect Indian soldiers from civil and revenue litigation while serving under war conditions. Corporal punishment was abolished.

Indian Soldier’s Board was established in January 1919. They dealt with the following subjects:

1. Rewarding officers and men of Indian Army for distinguished service during the war;
2. Employment;
3. Education;
4. The after-care of the wounded and incapacitated;
5. Attention to the general interests and welfare of soldiers serving, discharged or deceased;
6. Relief of distress among the dependents or soldiers;
7. Commemoration of the exploits of the Indian Army.

Post cards\textsuperscript{28} with the addresses of the regiments printed on them were issued by depots free of cost to the relatives in India and were accepted free of charge by the post offices to ensure communication with the families.

**Incentives for Recruitment**

Material incentives were held out for joining the army. Former soldiers received relatively liberal pensions and those who served the

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., p. 243.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., p. 245.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., p. 246.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., p. 246.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., pp. 255-256.
British with distinction, or who were officers were given grants of land, jaggirs, and were further rewarded by having their relatives favourably considered for recruitment. At the end of World War I, 420,000 acres of land were distributed among 5902 VCO’s and other ranking Indian officers. Over 14,000 persons received Jangi-inams—special pensions—for two “lives” i.e. the amount (ten rupees per month for a VCO) was passed on to the next generation. Specially selected VCO’s received 200 Jagirs. These Jagirs includud:

(a) grant of land with full proprietary rights, yielding a net annual income of Rs 400, and assignment of land revenue for three lives;

(b) pensions amounting to Rs 150 up to the third generation, and

(c) 200 VCO’s were granted honorary rank of King’s commissioned officers. The King’s commissioned officer received double the pension of ordinary Viceroy’s commissioned officer upon retirement. The economic and social impact of these awards was very great in Punjab, where most of these were granted.29

War Memorial

At Brighton in England a marble umbrella30 (Chattri) was raised to the memory of those Hindu and Sikh soldiers who had come wounded from the battlefields of Flanders and died in the hospitals at Brighton. The Prince of Wales unveiled the memorial recalling that “our Indian comrades came when our need was highest” and said that they “fought so gallantly and bore themselves so patiently and so nobly. . .” Like-wise, the Muslim soldiers of India were buried with full military honours in England and a memorial gate adorned the cemetery pavilion.

An All India War Memorial Commemorating “the immortal story of the endurance and valour of the sons of India in the cold and mud of Flanders, the heat of Mesopotamia, indeed in every land where the soldiers of the Empire fought and bled”...was raised in New Delhi now known as India Gate at Rajpath. The foundation stone of this memorial was laid by his Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught on 10 February 192131.

31. Ibid., pp. 259-263.
Some Steps taken towards the Indianisation of the Army

On 25 August 1917\textsuperscript{32}, five days after the momentous announcement in the House of Commons by Mr Montagu, a significant step towards Indianisation of the Army was taken. King’s commissions in infantry and cavalry were for the first time granted to seven selected Indians\textsuperscript{33} already serving in the Army. They were:

2. Zorabar Singh, 1/3rd Horse.
3. Aga Cassim Shah, 104/th Rifles.
4. Bala Sahib Daphle, 16th Rajputs.
5. Mohd Akbar Khan, 1st Brahmans.
7. Rana Jodha Jang, 23rd Pioneers.

King’s commissions had earlier been granted to Indian officers of the Medical Services only. Before the war ended two\textsuperscript{34} more Indians, who previously held temporary commissions, received the King’s commissions. They were:


They received the commission on 23rd and 24th October 1918, respectively.

Edwin Montagu came to India early in November 1917, and undertook an extensive tour of the country. In April 1918, the famous Montagu\textsuperscript{35} Chelmsford proposals were made on 20 August 1917. Edwin Montagu, Secretary of State for India, made an important announcement in the House of Commons, stating that “the policy of His Majesty’s Government, with which Government of India are in complete accord, is that of increasing association of Indins in every field of administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the Empire.” Both the Governor-General and the Secretary of State praised the gallant and faithful services of Indian Army\textsuperscript{36} during the war and stressed the necessity

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., p. 171.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., p. 131.
\textsuperscript{36} Longer, V., \textit{Red Coats to Olive Green}, Allied Publishers, Madras, 1974, p. 171.
of grappling with the problem of Indianising it. So far Indians were excluded from commissioned ranks of the Army. As a gesture of Indianisation, ten vacancies at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, were reserved annually for Indians from fighting classes with good family background and education. These gentlemen, after passing out from Sandhurst, were to be granted King’s commissions in the Army. Indianisation was, however, looked upon as a reward for services rendered and not as a process in the evolution of India, towards self-government.

While in India, Montagu found the then C-in-C, Sir C.C. Munro, interested in the cause of Indianisation but the enthusiastic about it. Montagu wanted to open up an Indian Sandhurst and enable all qualified Indians to obtain a commission. Munro, however, was of the view that first priority should go to the sons of servicemen. According to Montagu, Munro looked upon the demand for commission as political. In addition to the quota of ten vacancies per year at Sandhurst some King’s commissions were given to specially selected non-commissioned officers and garduates of the Cadet College, Indore. Maj. Gen. Iskander Mirza, who later became President of Pakistan, belonged to the first category while the first C-in-C of India, Gen. K.M. Cariappa, belonged to the second. In December 1919, 39 cadets were given the King’s commission.

As the need for Indian assistance declined with the termination of hostilities, element both in the British and Indian Governments delayed in fulfilling the pledges. Nowhere was this postponement more obvious and blatant than the Indianisation of the officers corps because British did not want to share authority with others. The Esher Committee (1920), which had been appointed to examine the future of the army in India, was composed of high British civilian

38. Ibid., p. 74.
39. Ibid., p. 75.
40. Ibid., p. 75.
43. Ibid., p. 75.
44. Ibid., p. 73.
and military officials and had only two Indian members, Sir Krishna Gupta and Sir Umar Hayat Khan.

It rejected increased democratic control over the army, proposed strengthening C-in-C’s position, rejected a broadly-based recruitment pattern, and only cautiously encouraged an educational build up which would qualify Indians for Sandhurst. While paying lip service to the 1917 declaration on the future status of India, the Committee proposed little which could actually lead to the formation of Indian officer crops. The question of Indianisation was, in fact, evaded except in the minutes of the two Indian members, Sir Krishna Gupta and Sir Umar Hayat Khan. The former advocated a long service army, recruited exclusively from the martial races and officered by Indians drawn from the same martial races; while the latter held the view that maintaining and intensifying the present system was necessary for political safety of the British and for military efficiency.

The Sivaswamy Aiyer Resolutions

Under the constitution established by the Montagu Chelmsford Reforms, military expenditure was excluded from the control of the Indian Legislature. However, the members could express their views and exercise indirect influence on military administration and the Army budget.

The first Legislative Assembly under the new constitution sat after the Esher Committee’s report had been released. Sir P.S. Sivaswamy Aiyer introduced fifteen resolutions on the Esher Committee’s report at the end of the First assembly. The resolutions present a clear picture of what change Indian moderates and liberals wanted in the defence pattern. Most members were absent at the end of the session, and thus the Government had lost its majority. After attempting to modify the resolutions by amendment, the Government gave way and accepted them almost in full. The British later felt that it was a ‘tactical’ mistake.

One of Aiyer’s resolutions called for restrictions on the uses of the Indian Army; that it be used for Indian defence, internal or external, but not as a British Imperial Police Force. Another resolution called

45. Ibid., p. 77.
46. Report of the committee to inquire into the Administration and organisation of the Army in India Cmd 943 (1920) (The Esher Committee), p. 101.
47. Section 22 of Government of India Act, 1919.
for the substitution of a civilian member in the Viceroy’s council for the Commander-in-Chief, following British practice. Other resolutions called for a cut in the defence expenditure and covered other matters which had been or were going to be adopted by the government. Two crucial resolutions led to an extensive debate, and were to have serious political repurcussions. The first resolution, No. 7, called for admission of Indians into all branches of the army and suggested that every encouragement should be given to them, including the educated middle classes, subject to prescribed standard of fitness, to enter the commissioned ranks of the Army.

It also suggested that the quota of 25% of new King’s commissions be reserved for Indians. The second proposed the establishment of preliminary military training to prepare Indians for Sandhurst, and also for the establishment of an Indian Sandhurst.

The resolution calling for increased commissions for Indians was amended by the government. The granting of King’s commissions was restricted only to officers of the Indian Army who were already holding Viceroy’s commissions, and to those cadets who had been trained at Sandhurst. The general rule for selecting candidates for training should be that the majority of them should be from the communities which furnished recruits to the Army and, as far as possible, in proportion to the numbers in which they furnish recruits.

When the Government of India and the C-in-C accepted the Sivaswamy Aiyer Resolutions, they committed themselves to their implementation.

Rawlinson, the C-in-C formed a military committee to implement the Indianisation resolutions passed by the Legislative Assembly.

An alternative to the Rawlinson proposals was suggested by the Secretary in the Military Department of the India office (Lt. Gen. Alexander Cobbe) and supported by the Secretary of State for India, Viscount Peel.

48. India, Legislative Assembly, Debates, Vol. I, part 2 (1921). The debate was held on 28 March 1921.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.
51. The activities of Rawlinson’s Military requirements committee are recorded in Govt. of India, Army Deptt., proceedings December 1923, No. 85-112, Subject: Indianisation of the Indian Army, Ministry of Defence, Historica, Section File No 601/10728/H.
Cobbe argued that Indianisation must proceed with great caution\textsuperscript{52}, and that Indians should not be given the King's commission. Instead Indian officers might be limited to a few units only. This plan would permit Indians to serve as officers and would avoid, the embarrassment of Indians serving alongside British officers, or even worse, Indians commanding the British rank found in some units of the Indian Army.

The Cobbe scheme was received with dismay by the Government of India. The Viceroy, Lord Reading, replied by telegraph that the Rawlinson plan had in effect been accepted publicly by the Government of India; Indian opinion would not tolerate any backsliding on the Indianisation issue, which the viceroy called "the crucial test of our sincerity in the policy of fitting India to advance towards the goal of Self-Government".

Eight units were earmarked for the Indianisation "experiment". The government had earlier accepted the resolution on training and had established the Prince\textsuperscript{53} of Wales Royal Indian Military College in 1922, a pre-Sandhurst institution.

These changes provided only partial satisfaction to Indian public opinion. Preference was still to be given to youths from the martial classes\textsuperscript{54}, though non-martial classes were not totally excluded from holding commissions.

Indianisation, though only a drop in the ocean, resulted in the creation of a small but well trained contingent of Indian officers. When the need arose they were able to replace the British officers with little loss of administrative efficiency.

\textsuperscript{52} Cohen, p. 83.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., p. 84.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., p. 84.