

native officers, non-commissioned officers, and men who have distinguished themselves, and of whose excellent conduct and devotion to duty Colonel Wingate speaks in the highest terms.

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From Colonel Sir Reginald Wingate, Commanding Troops on the White Nile, to His Excellency Major-General the Right Hon. the Lord Kitchener of Khartoum, G.C.B., &c., &c, Sirdar.

*Fachi Shoya,*

*November 25, 1899.*

SIR,

IN accordance with your instructions to me to proceed with a flying column towards Gedi, and to deal with the Dervish forces under the Emir Ahmed Fedil and the Khalifa Abdulla, which were expected to be in that neighbourhood, I have the honour to inform you that, at 4 p.m. on the 21st of November, I left Fachi Shoya with a force of 3,700 men.

The troops bivouacked from 6 to 10 p.m., on the 21st November, five miles south-west of Fachi Shoya, and then marched during the night in bright moonlight to the vicinity of Nefisa (15 miles). During the advance the cavalry scouted two miles to the front, and drove in ten Dervish horsemen, whilst the camel corps covered both flanks and rear.

Our information led us to believe that a strong force of Dervishes, under the Emir Ahmed Fedil, with a considerable quantity of grain, raided from El Alub, was then at Nefisa, on his way to rejoin the main Dervish Army, under the Khalifa, in the vicinity of Gedi.

Leaving the transport in a good defensive position, the force advanced at dawn in fighting formation towards the Dervish position. Shortly afterwards, however, the cavalry reported Nefisa evacuated, and the Dervish camp, in which we found a quantity of grain, was occupied at 8 a.m.

A sick Dervish, who had been left behind, informed us that Ahmed Fedil's force had just moved to Abu Aadel, some five miles distant. This information was shortly afterwards confirmed by Captain Mahmud Hussein, who, with a few Arab horsemen, boldly reconnoitred the Dervish camp, which he found occupied.

Fearing that Ahmed Fedil might be continuing his move south to join the Khalifa, I lost no time in despatching Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel Mahon (8th Hussars), in command of the cavalry, camel corps, four maxims and two field guns, the whole escorted by the Irregular Sudanese battalions, with instructions to proceed with all speed to Abu Aadel, and there hold the enemy, until I could come up with the supporting infantry which had been delayed watering.

Colonel Mahon carried out my instructions admirably; coming in touch with Dervish horsemen on rising ground, he seized a position within 300 yards of, and commanding the Dervish encampment, on which he immediately opened fire.

The remainder of the artillery and maxims were at once pushed on to reinforce him, and the infantry followed with all speed to his support, arriving just in time to assist in repelling a most determined and bold attack by the Dervishes on the artillery position, which, owing to the configuration of the ground, the enemy were able to approach within a distance of 60 yards, before they were checked by the steady fire of the artillery, maxims and camel corps.

The whole line now advanced towards the Dervish position, which was concealed in the thick bush, and drove out the enemy who were already in full retreat. Streaming through the camp, they were seen emerging from the thick

cover on to a grassy plain a mile-and-a-half beyond, up to which point they were pursued by the infantry, whilst the cavalry, camel corps and maxims continued to follow up the fugitives for a distance of five miles.

Fedil's entire camp, containing a large amount of grain, arms, &c., fell into our hands, besides a number of prisoners, women, children, and animals.

The Dervish loss in killed is estimated at 400, and numbers of wounded men subsequently succeeded in reaching the small and polluted pool of water in the centre of the camp, where all prisoners and grain were collected.

Our casualties in this action consisted of Captain Mustapha Effendi Shahin, Camel Corps, dangerously wounded; rank and file, one killed, three wounded.

Information as to the exact whereabouts of the Khalifa's main body was now somewhat conflicting; most credence was attached to the statement that he had left El Homara three days before, with the intention of proceeding to Gedid, where Ahmed Fedil was to join him with his captured grain, and then the entire Dervish force was to march in a northerly direction.

At midnight, therefore, the advance of the force towards Gedid was resumed, and, after a somewhat trying march, that place was reached at 10 a.m., on the 23rd inst. Here, fortunately, a good supply of water was found in a pool. Had this pool dried up, as I had been led to expect, the force, having exhausted its water supply, would have been obliged to retire, and, in anticipation of this possibility, a convoy of camels had been sent back from Abu Aadel to the river to fetch sufficient water to enable us to return to Fachi Shoya.

A Dervish deserter, found at Gedid, reported the Khalifa's force to be encamped some seven miles to the south-east; Captain Mahmud Effendi Hussein, with a few Arab horsemen, was, therefore, again sent out to locate its position, which, after a most intrepid reconnaissance, he discovered to be at Om Dubreikat.

It was now clear that our occupation of Gedid had placed the Khalifa in an unfavourable position, strategically: his route to the north was barred, his retreat to the south lay through waterless and densely wooded districts, and, as our seizure of grain supplies in Fedil's camp would render his advance or retirement a matter of considerable difficulty, it seemed probable that he would stand. I therefore decided to attack him at dawn, on the 24th.

Leaving the transport well guarded near the water at Gedid, with instructions to follow us at 4 a.m., I advanced with the force at 12.20 a.m.

The cavalry and galloping maxims screened the advance about half a mile ahead, and the camel corps continued to scout along the flanks. During the advance, portions of the road were thickly wooded, and the cutting tools of the infantry pioneers and artillery were frequently used.

At 3 a.m., the enemy's position was reported about three miles distant, and the force was deployed into fighting formation. Meanwhile, the cavalry and maxims had halted two miles ahead at the foot of slightly rising ground, some distance beyond which the enemy's camp had been located the previous day, and its position was now fully confirmed by the personal reconnaissance of Colonel Mahon. Very cautiously, and with as little noise as possible, the entire force continued to advance; in the distance the beating of "noggaras" and the blowing of "ombeyas" was suddenly heard, but the sound soon died away, and at 3.40 a.m.