

by other drafts totalling two officers and 100 other ranks, thus eventually accounting for almost the entire strength of this relatively small Imperial Service Unit.

According to Sandes,<sup>37</sup> towards the end of the second battle of Neuve Chapelle, 10-12 March 1915, Malerkotla sappers came under heavy fire during the German counter-offensive and suffered a number of casualties though no fatalities, given the dates of the eight deaths recorded by CWGC for the unit in France. On 24 April the two Bombay Companies moved with the Lahore Division to take part in the second Battle of Ypres, 26 April – 1 May 1915, where, again according to Sandes, “In the six days at Ypres, the Bombay Sapper companies lost 60 men, mostly from shell-fire, and apart from a line dug on the night of 28th/29th, little useful work was accomplished.”<sup>38</sup> Three Malerkotla deaths are recorded in this time frame (see Appendix II).

25 September 1915 saw two sections of 20th Company present, though not heavily engaged, in the action at Pietre during the Battle of Loos in which, as previously recorded, Lieutenant Rana Jodha Jung Bahadur of the Tehri-Garhwal Sappers displayed great courage in leading his men. With the decision taken to move the Indian Corps from France to the Middle East, the Bombay Sappers arrived at Marseilles on 16 December and travelled to Egypt. Of the Malerkotla Sappers, it was originally intended that, given the casualties they had suffered, they would return to India and the special arrangement by which they had been incorporated with units of the regular army would cease. The government was quick to point out that the troops had admirably met the calls upon them and that they were returning, not because of any failure or lack of efficiency, but in order that the unit may be given an opportunity of regaining its individuality, and time to be reorganised as a separate unit for service elsewhere should the occasion arise.<sup>39</sup> Within a week, however, the orders had been changed and, as with the Tehri-Garhwal Sappers, it was decided that they would also proceed direct to Basra (see chapter eight).

The Malerkotla Sappers and Miners were awarded the Theatre Honour ‘France and Flanders 1915’ as well as the Battle Honours ‘Neuve Chapelle’ and ‘Ypres 1915’. As with the case of Tehri-Garhwal Sappers and The Garhwal Rifles, although 3rd Bombay Sappers and Miners also earned ‘Aubers’ for the attack on Aubers Ridge in May 1915, this was not carried over to the Malerkotla Sappers but the Malerkotla Sappers were awarded ‘Festubert 1915’ – 3rd Bombay Sappers, having previously served at Festubert before the arrival of the State reinforcements, was given the Honour ‘Festubert 1914-15’.<sup>40</sup>

37 Sandes, *The Indian Sappers and Miners*, p. 450.

38 Sandes, *The Indian Sappers and Miners*, p. 451.

39 NAI: F&P Proceedings Internal 1916: F&P-Intl-Jun-P/9996-Intl A, tel 361-D dated 4.12.15, Secretary Government of India Foreign & Political to Chief Secretary to the Government of Punjab.

40 Sarbans Singh, *Battle Honours*, pp. 154-156. See Chapter 10 for further discussion on this subject.

## East Africa

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Often regarded as a ‘sideshow’, and therefore largely ignored or skipped over in brief detail only in many of the general histories of the First World War, the war in East Africa extracted a dreadful cost, both in terms of lives and money. As Byron Farwell noted, “These campaigns...would have excited the interest of the world and been followed in detail had they occurred at any other time, but because of the clash of millions in European abattoirs, the struggle of tens of thousands in Africa...have been largely neglected by historians since.”<sup>1</sup> This was a conflict that lasted until after the European armistice had been signed and cost the Indian Army a total of 5,018 casualties killed, wounded, died of disease, or missing.<sup>2</sup> Of those, some 540 deaths were of IST personnel and that figure is far from certain given the state of surviving records and the fact that at least 40 names covering all theatres have been found in war diaries that do not feature on the database of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. The troops fighting in East Africa faced a number of difficulties not experienced elsewhere. The vast areas that had to be covered, largely on foot, varied from open savannah at the higher levels, to impenetrable jungle around the lakes, along the river valleys and on the mountain sides. Much of the interior was largely unknown and certainly unmapped. What passed for roads were often no more than single tracks and were not intended for vehicular traffic, the human carrier or porter being the normal means of moving supplies and equipment. The nature of the ‘bush’, as the terrain was called, often meant that an enemy could not be seen even when only a few yards away. In addition, the troops had to contend with a debilitating hot and humid climate which not only sapped a man’s strength but also bred disease through a variety of insects that affected both man and animal. On top of all of this, and probably unequalled in any other theatre, men had to face the risks of wild animals; lion

1 Byron Farwell, *The Great War in East Africa (1914–1918)* (New York: W W Norton, 1986), pp. 13–14.

2 Harry Fecitt, *India and the Great War – East Africa* (Delhi: USII and MEA, Government of India, 2015), p. 17.

and rhinoceros on land, hippopotamus and crocodile in the water. One example has been found of an Indian State soldier being killed by a lion and one by a rhinoceros, while another was tossed by a rhinoceros but apparently lived to tell the tale.

Three other wars were fought against German territories in Africa – Togoland, Cameroon, and German South West Africa, though none involved either the Indian Army or Imperial Service Troops. It is, therefore, on the fourth of the African wars, in East Africa, that this chapter is focussed. In addition to the many Indian troops deployed, the campaign in that part of the continent also included troops from France, Belgium and South Africa as well as German and British forces with their respective African native contingents or askaris. On the outbreak of the war, with the exception of Ethiopia in the north east, the whole of East Africa was divided between occupying colonial powers, though the border lines dividing the territories were often no more than arbitrary lines drawn on a map with little or no regard for the impact on the traditional inhabitants of the land so that, in reality, indigenous tribal groups found themselves split between the occupying colonial powers. German East Africa (now Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi) was governed by Dr Heinrich Schnee, a 'ruthlessly efficient, zealously patriotic and cunning individual'<sup>3</sup> supported by, though some might say hindered by, his commander-in-chief of the Schutztruppe, Colonel Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, a veteran of mobile African warfare. Its land mass was twice the size of Germany and it was surrounded by what would become hostile opponents. To the north it was bordered by British East Africa (now divided between the southern tip of Somalia and Kenya) under its Governor, Sir Henry Conway Belfield; and Uganda, a separate British entity under its own Governor, Sir Frederick Jackson. To the west lay the Belgian Congo (now Zaire) with its Eastern Province under Commissaire-Général Josué Henry; to the south-west another two British protectorates, Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia), administered at that time by the British South Africa Company, and Nyasaland (now Malawi) under its Governor, George Smith; and to its south-east lay Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique) under its own Governor General. Initially neutral, Portuguese East Africa was to side with the allies as the war progressed. The eastern seaboard of German East Africa stretched for some 450 miles with several excellent harbours, the two northern of which, Tanga and Dar-es-Salaam, were to feature prominently in the war. About 20 miles off the coast of German East Africa, and roughly mid-way between these two ports, lay the British island of Zanzibar (now a part of Tanzania). Off the mouth of the Rufiji river lay the German island of Mafia. Within British East Africa a railway line ran from the port of Mombasa north-west through Voi, Tsavo and Nairobi to Kisumu on the shores of Lake Victoria. At Voi a branch line cut across into German East Africa between Taveta and Kahe and joined the 270-mile long Usambara railway line running from the port of Tanga up to Moshi at the foot of Mount Kilimanjaro. Another, and much

3 Edward Paice, *Tip and Run – the untold tragedy of the Great War in Africa* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2007), p. 18.

longer Central railway line within German East Africa ran almost due west from the port of Dar-es-Salaam to Ujiji and Kigoma on the shores of Lake Tanganyika. British East Africa boasted the Voi River while German East Africa had the Pangani, Umba, Wami, Ruvu<sup>4</sup> and Rufiji and Ruaha rivers as well as the Rovuma river which formed its border with Portuguese East Africa.

Administrative control of British East Africa and the various protectorates came under the remit of the Colonial Office in London. Neither the Germans nor the British had large military garrisons in East Africa. The local military force in British East Africa was the King's African Rifles, officered by British officers provided by the War Office but otherwise formed of local recruits from the colonies and protectorates. On the outbreak of war these numbered two battalions of the King's African Rifles, with two companies from a third battalion, a total of seventeen small companies, but they were already engaged either on internal security duties or on border duties with Abyssinia and Somalia. There was no reserve to speak of, though in Uganda a volunteer unit of Europeans had started to be formed and as soon as war was declared other volunteer units started to be formed from among the settlers, some of whom had previous military experience. It was only after the war had been in progress for two years that additional battalions of the King's African Rifles were raised and trained.

German East Africa was slightly better prepared with the Schutztruppe consisting of 260 Europeans and 2,472 askaris.<sup>5</sup> Once war was declared von Lettow immediately set in train steps to increase the numbers of his active and reserve companies of native troops.

No British troops had ever been deployed from the UK to East Africa and traditionally it had fallen to India to provide emergency support to the local defence forces if needed. Sir Henry Belfield sent a telegram to the Colonial Office in London on 4 August 1914 pointing out the precarious nature of his defensive position and asking for reinforcements from India to be placed on standby. The Colonial Office referred the matter to the India Office, which was already engaged in arranging reinforcements for Europe and Egypt, and so referred the request to the Committee of Imperial Defence and its 'Offensive Sub-Committee'. On 5 August they recommended that a force be despatched from India to attack the port of Dar-es-Salaam with a view to protecting British interests in the area. This was followed on 6 August by a second recommendation to send two battalions, immediately increased to three, to reinforce the King's African Rifles in British East Africa. Thus it was that two expeditionary forces were hurriedly put together in India.

<sup>4</sup> There were two rivers called Ruvu; the larger one running to Bagamoyo above Dar es Salaam, the smaller one a tributary of the Pangani. It is the latter which features in the earlier part of this narrative.

<sup>5</sup> Farwell, *The Great War in East Africa*, p. 109.

### Indian Expeditionary Force 'B' – Temp/Major General Arthur Aitken

16 (Poona) Brigade, then commanded by Brigadier General Aitken, was originally earmarked for the attack on Dar-es-Salaam but by the time a decision had finally been taken to launch the assault the Brigade had already been assigned to the strategically more important Persian Gulf, command having been transferred to Brigadier General Walter Delamain CB, CMG, DSO. Aitken remained in India and retained his instruction to prepare for Dar-es-Salaam. As the official history noted, given the European and Egyptian requirements already being met and against the need to maintain security on the North-West Frontier, it was decided 'that the brigade for East Africa must be that whose withdrawal would least impair India's strategic security. The choice fell on the brigade farthest from the frontier: the 27th, stationed at Bangalore in southern India.'<sup>6</sup> Some have interpreted this as the Government of India opting for second rate troops for East Africa, largely untrained and certainly less experienced than their northern-based counterparts, on the premise that any conflict there would not be of the same order of intensity as in the more 'sophisticated' theatres. IEF 'B' therefore comprised:

- 27 (Bangalore) Brigade under Brigadier General Richard Wapshare CSI consisting of:  
2nd Battalion, The Loyal North Lancashire Regiment  
63rd Palmacottah Light Infantry  
98th Infantry  
101st Grenadiers
- The Imperial Service Brigade (East Africa) under Brigadier General Michael Tighe CB CMG CIE DSO consisting of:  
13th Rajputs (The Shekhawati Regiment), Indian Army  
2nd Kashmir I S Rifles under the command of Colonel Raghbir Singh, with Major Cecil Ames, 52nd Sikhs (F.F.) and Captain Grenville Hanson, 69th Punjabis, as SSOs  
A composite battalion formed of four companies 3rd Kashmir I S Rifles under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Durga Singh, Bahadur, IOM with Captain Ernle Money as SSO, and four companies 3rd Gwalior I S Infantry under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Ganpatrao Nimbalkar, with Captain George Denton as SSO  
Faridkot I S Sappers and Miners under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Harnam Singh, with Major Bertie Mainprise, RE, as SSO.
- 6 Lieutenant Colonel Charles Hordern, *Official History of the Great War – Military Operations – East Africa, Vol 1, August 1914–September 1916* (London: HMSO, 1941), p. 63.

- Force Troops
  - 61st KGO Pioneers
  - 28th Mountain Battery (six guns)
  - 25th and 26th Railway Companies
- Lines of Communication Troops under Brigadier General Wilfrid Malleson:
  - Hospitals and medical support units, Post Offices, engineer, ordnance, finance and labour units

It was originally intended that the Maharaja of Patiala should be attached to General Aitken's staff but this was amended before departure and he went to a different theatre. In September it became known that, as the force was proceeding to German East Africa, the Rao of Cutch approached Sir Henry Belfield in British East Africa and offered his services in any capacity – a large number of his subjects were resident in the German colony. This was not brought to the notice of the Government of India at the time, though General Aitken was made aware. It is not clear from surviving records if the offer was ever taken up but it seems likely that it was not.<sup>7</sup>

### **Indian Expeditionary Force 'C' – Brigadier General James Stewart CB**

This force was intended to reinforce the King's African Rifles in British East Africa and consisted of:

- 29th Punjabis, Indian Army
- Half a battalion each provided by Imperial Service troops from:
  - Bharatpur Infantry, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Girdhari Singh, Sardar Bahadur, with Captain Walter Ayscough, 7th Rajputs, as SSO.
  - Jind Infantry, under the command of Major General Natha Singh, Bahadur, C in C Jind Forces, with Captain Robert MacBrayne, 15th Sikhs, as SSO.
  - Kapurthala Jagatjit Infantry, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Indar Singh with Captain Ivan Gordon, 56th Rifles, as SSO.
- 1st Rampur Infantry, under the command of Major Shuab Khan, with Major Walter Douglas, 3rd Brahmans, as SSO.

<sup>7</sup> BL/IOLR/ L/MIL/17/5/2429: Collection of Army Department (General Service Branch) correspondence relating to the European Crisis, 1914, Vol 9, Sep-Oct 1914 (Diary 4505), letter DO-1362-W dated 23 September 1914, Secretary Government of Bombay Political Department to Secretary Government of India, Foreign & Political.

The Force also included The Calcutta Volunteer Battery, later re-designated 8th Field Battery, 27th Mountain Battery, Volunteer Maxim Battery and one section of 120th Indian Field Ambulance.

### Early Operations

From mid-August onwards, and prior to the arrival of troops from India, there had been a number of small-scale incursions by and engagements with the Germans – the small British frontier post at Taveta had been captured, the defence unit falling back on Voi, while in the coastal area the British frontier post of Vanga had been withdrawn, though not without first making an attack on its German counterpart at Jasin. 29th Punjabis with Brigadier General Stewart arrived in Mombasa on 1 September and was immediately sent by train to Voi. Leaving half the battalion there, the remainder moved on to Nairobi where Stewart established his headquarters. Within days of arrival at Voi, 29th Punjabis and King's African Rifles (KAR) troops were engaged with the enemy at Tsavo while other KAR units were involved in actions at Kisii and in the coastal area at Majoreni. The IST element of IEF 'C' did not leave Bombay until 22 September and arrived at Mombasa on 3 October from where they were immediately deployed; Jind Infantry by sea along the coast to Gazi, the Kapurthala Infantry on the Uganda Railway line at Kajiado, the Rampur Infantry divided into two, with two companies deploying to Tsavo and two to Voi, and the Bharatpur Infantry also at Voi.

On the evening of 6 October<sup>8</sup> Gazi was attacked by an enemy force of about 300. By this time Jind Infantry had been joined by a company of 29th Punjabis and by 1st KAR and fighting continued into 7 October in the bush surrounding the village. At about midday one and a half companies of Jind reinforced 1st KAR in a counter advance and a sharp fight ensued leading to a number of casualties among the KAR as well as Captain Achhra Singh, Double Company Commander, and six Jind sepoys being wounded, the regiment's first casualties of the war. Indeed, this was the first engagement with the enemy by Imperial Service Troops on any front. Occasional exchanges over the next three weeks culminated in a column, including Jind Infantry, marching from Gazi towards the Makwembi river to confirm whether the enemy were still occupying Marjoreni, returning to Gazi on 1 November. Minor contact was made with an enemy advance guard and Jind Infantry lost one sepoy, Puran Singh, killed in action, their first fatality of the war.<sup>9</sup>

8 Hordern, *Official History* records the morning of 7 October but the Jind War Diary refers to 1800 hours on 6 October.

9 TNA: WD WO 95 5333 17: Jind Infantry War Diary and BL/IOLR/17/5/3182: Casualty appendix to war diary, Army Headquarters India, Indian Expeditionary Force 'B' (East Africa), CA/4/13, which gives the name PURAR SINGH. This engagement is not mentioned in Hordern, *Official History*.

The Kapurthala Infantry had its first taste of action during the period 2-4 November when, as part of the Magadi Column and in support of IEF 'B's imminent attack on Tanga, three companies formed part of the main attack force on Longido in German East Africa where the enemy force was estimated to be 200 Germans and 200-300 askaris. The Magadi Column, some 1,500 in all, was under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Arthur Drew, 29th Punjabis. Thick cloud on Longido obscured everything beyond 50 yards and the column lost touch with each other while finding themselves in contact with German troops. Although 29th Punjabis rallied, and two Kapurthala soldiers' names were brought forward for attention, the Kapurthala Infantry, which lost one naik killed and four men wounded, came in for some severe criticism from General Stewart. In his despatch of 11 November 1914 he noted that:

From 20 to 30 of the enemy gained, unobserved, a position on our left flank allotted to a picquet of Kapurthala Imperial Service Troops and commenced to fire directly into our position...Enemy's attack was checked by the fire of the 29th Punjabis, the Kapurthala Infantry being tired out and now unreliable, and after the withdrawal of the Section of the 27th Mountain Battery, the Kapurthala Imperial Service Troops retired. [And of the Frontal Column action under Major Laverton], Fifty Kapurthala Imperial Service Infantry were ordered to follow as reserve...It was now found impossible to advance on the hill with the small force available since the Imperial Service Troops in the reserve, being ordered up without any British officers to lead them, were unwilling to take the initiative.<sup>10</sup>

The column did not meet its main objective and had to withdraw. Subsequently deemed to have been a valuable reconnaissance, the operation demonstrated that Longido Mountain was held in strength and was thoroughly entrenched. Total losses for the expedition were one officer and 18 soldiers killed, two officers and 30 soldiers wounded and three soldiers missing in action. As the official history pointed out, the timing of the attack in relation to what was to take place at Tanga was unfortunate. The Longido attack went in on 3 November, the same day that the attack on Tanga was launched. A day earlier and von Lettow might have been deterred from sending reinforcements from the Kilimanjaro area to support the troops at Tanga; a day later

10 NAI: F&P Proceedings Internal 1916: F&P-Intl-408-Pt B,(Encl. 1: H-4077 dated 7 April 1915). Nevertheless, it was not all bad and two NCOs were named – 1761 Havildar KARM SINGH and 1486 Havildar DIWAN SINGH – brought to notice by the Supervising Officer (Captain Gordon) for courageous leading of their Sections. "These two NCOs were invaluable to me at a trying time, when their men were inclined to be panicky, and by their coolness and good example, steadied their men and enabled me to hold on to the position I had taken up." In forwarding the report Lt Col Drew noted, "I would recommend their being noted for promotion to commissioned rank on vacancies occurring."

and some of those troops would have been on their way to Tanga and Drew's column might have been able to seize Longido almost unopposed, giving them a good vantage point for attacking the Kilimanjaro area. As it was the withdrawal, coupled with subsequent events at Tanga, was not well received in London.<sup>11</sup> General Stewart in Nairobi wired to the CGS in Delhi, "It is reported by Colonel Drew who was in command at Longido that the Kapurthala Infantry are quite unreliable. They can be used for defence in an entrenched position with British officers, but they are worse than useless for offensive."<sup>12</sup> This caused something of a dilemma for the home authorities and their relations with the Princely States. The Secretary of State for India approved the Kapurthala Darbar being informed of the gallant conduct of the two havildars but cautioned discretion "In endorsing encomiums which may perhaps not be justified ... my attention has been drawn to very uncomplimentary remarks regarding Kapurthala in Longido operation which emphasise dubious official report on them by Colonel Drew."<sup>13</sup> Even if Colonel Drew's report was anywhere near accurate, given the gaps that existed in training before the war<sup>14</sup> it is, perhaps, not surprising that so soon into the war such failings should be noted. They were to suffer further setbacks but overall their reputation improved during the three year period that they served in East Africa.

Similarly, and as already recounted in chapter three, General Stewart approached GHQ India as early as October 1914 to clarify his disciplinary powers over Imperial Service Troops, his complaint being that the Rampur officers and troops 'are absolutely untrained and both officers and men are unwilling to work or learn'. Another problem was highlighted in December 1914:

The reinforcements of Rampur Imperial Service Infantry which were recently despatched fall short of number of men which is required. It is also reported that their general condition is unsatisfactory. Several of the men are said to have lost the arms belonging to them on their way to Bombay. The men will therefore return to Rampur as Government of India regret that orders for embarkation have had to be cancelled. Rampur Darbar should be informed accordingly and will no doubt institute enquiries into the matter without loss of time.<sup>15</sup>

- 11 The Germans subsequently withdrew from Longido on 6 November and it was then occupied by British forces.
- 12 BL/IOLR/L/MIL/17/5/2429: Collection of Army Department (General Service Branch) correspondence relating to the European Crisis, 1914, Vol 14, Oct-Nov 1914 (Diary 7139), Tel P No X-12 dated 9.11.14.
- 13 NAI: F&P Proceedings Internal 1916: F&P-Intl-Jun-408-Pt B, (Encl 3, H-4077 dated 7 April 1915).
- 14 See Chapter 3
- 15 BL/IOLR/L/MIL/17/5/2438: Collection of Army Department (General Service Branch) correspondence relating to the European Crisis, 1914, Vol 18, Nov-Dec 1914 (Diary 9365), Tel 151-D.S., Secretary of State F&P to Chief Secretary Government of United Province dated 12 December 1914.

As discussed in chapter three, in their case it turned out to be a question of poor leadership but, as with Kapurthala, so the Rampur troops were subsequently to prove themselves of value in the campaign, even if in a support capacity.

### Tanga

IEF 'B' had sailed from India on 16 October and arrived at Mombasa on the 31st. By this time concerns about the continuing presence of German naval forces in the Indian Ocean, coupled with a realisation, based on the earlier contacts of IEF 'C' in British East Africa, that the German-led forces in German East Africa were not going to be the easy push-over some had forecast, led to an extreme example of what would now be termed 'mission creep', but without a corresponding increase in resources to ensure success. As the Official History noted, it was now decided that prior to any attempt to seize Dar-es-Salaam, the port of Tanga should be occupied. "From Tanga the Usambara railway led northwards to Kilimanjaro. An advance in that direction, co-ordinated with a convergent thrust from British East Africa, would, if successful—an all-important proviso—remove all danger from the British protectorate, secure possession of the richest and healthiest area of the German territory, and pave the way for subsequent operations farther south."<sup>16</sup> Operational details were to be left to Aitken's discretion.

The disaster that was to follow was not entirely of Aitken's making, though his preparation for the assault fell down in many ways, not least his apparent unwillingness to listen to advice and his failure to gather sufficient intelligence about the lie of the land and German dispositions. In fairness, his instructions from London had been slightly altered in re-transmission from Simla and in querying the thrust of his directive he was led to believe that London expected him to land at Tanga. Unbeknown to Aitken, the Naval Commander in the region had concluded a truce with the Germans and informed them on 2 November of the cancellation of the truce, inviting them to surrender. Any element of surprise that Aitken might have planned for was therefore lost, giving the Germans time to introduce reinforcements into the town.

The assault began in the early hours of 3 November 1914 with half of 13th Rajputs in the vanguard, but they were met at a heavily defended railway cutting by a hail of machine gun fire which halted their momentum. The remaining companies of Rajputs and three companies of 61st Pioneers were brought up to extend the line to the left, but at this moment the Rajputs' Commanding Officer was wounded and two other British officers killed. An advance by the Pioneers also resulted in many killed and wounded. The German askaris mounted a counter-attack and drove the remainder of the Rajputs and Pioneers back to a defensive line at Landing Beach 'A' known as Red House. Here another two newly-landed companies of Pioneers stood their ground and

16 Hordern, *Official History*, p. 65.

halted the German advance. Brigadier Tighe now suggested to Aitken that four more battalions should be landed before the advance was resumed. Meanwhile the German commander had withdrawn his troops to the west of the town to await reinforcements and so Tanga was actually unoccupied when Aitken landed, but since neither he nor Tighe mounted a reconnaissance of the area this fact passed them by. During the night, with the arrival of von Lettow on the scene, Tanga was re-occupied. "Sadly the British were too involved with licking their wounds and landing more men and they missed the chance to quickly occupy an undefended Tanga."<sup>17</sup>

The remaining infantry battalions were disembarked overnight 3-4 November though the Mountain Battery and Faridkot Sappers were left afloat, the former with instructions to use their guns from the deck of the transport vessel. Aitken now mounted a traditional type of attack with the 2nd Loyal North Lancashire Regiment in the centre of the line, the 63rd Palamcottahs on its left and the 101st Grenadiers on the left flank with 98th Infantry in left reserve. The 3rd Kashmirs were to the right of 2nd North Lancashires with the 2nd Kashmirs to their outer right, No. 1 Company of 3rd Gwalior Infantry under Captain Dattaji Rao<sup>18</sup> and 13th Rajputs in right reserve. 61st Pioneers were in reserve at the rear and the remainder of 3rd Gwalior Infantry was left in the rear to provide protection for the Red House hospital, White Stone signal tower and the landing beach at Tanga creek.

The line began to break up as it advanced in extreme heat over difficult terrain and then it came under heavy fire from German positions. 2nd North Lancashires and 2nd and 3rd Kashmirs engaged the enemy, 3rd Kashmirs losing three killed and several more wounded at this stage, but the Palamcottahs broke and ran to the rear and the 98th Infantry refused a request from 2nd North Lancashires to move forward, although some late reinforcements attached to that regiment from 83rd Wallajahbad Light Infantry did advance, but most were killed. On the left of the line the Grenadiers were taking heavy casualties and later suffered even more when coming up against four enemy companies. Other casualties occurred when rifle and machine gun fire smashed some African bee hives, letting loose a swarm of very angry bees. The Kashmirs used their turbans to wrap around their heads but others were not so fortunate. 2nd North Lancashires, the Kashmirs and many of the 13th Rajputs did manage to cross the German defensive line and enter the town, though Lieutenant Colonel Durga Singh of 3rd Kashmirs was wounded in the process.<sup>19</sup> Subadar Randhir Singh of 2nd

- 17 Harry Fecitt, 'Indian expeditionary Force 'B' at Tanga, German East Africa, 2nd-5th November 1914', article submitted for *Durbar*, Journal of the Indian Military Historical Society, November 2016, yet to be published.
- 18 TNA: WO 95 5369: 3rd Gwalior Infantry War Diary, entry dated 17 November 1914; because there were no British officers with the Gwalior Company that landed it was assumed by those serving with the regiment that no report on Gwalior's role would be required. They were soon put right by the Brigade Major.
- 19 He was awarded an IOM 1st Class for this action. He had gained the IOM 3rd Class as a Havildar Major at Chitral. He was the first of two officers, under the new two-class

Kashmirs won an Indian Order of Merit for his leadership in charging and securing an enemy trench and capturing a machine gun, an action in which he was wounded.<sup>20</sup> At 1730 hours orders were received to retire to the vicinity of the German hospital but 2nd North Lancashires lost many men in re-crossing the railway cutting. A new defensive line was established and at this time the Royal Navy was asked to shell the town, which it did to devastating effect, but the Germans had withdrawn to the western end and escaped serious casualties. Aitken thought to mount a bayonet attack on the town during the night but his three brigadiers opposed it and, given a shortage of water where they were, the decision was taken to evacuate. The navy insisted that it would only evacuate during the day, that only Beach 'A' would be used, and that no equipment except a rifle would be carried. On the morning of 5 November, therefore, 3rd Kashmir Rifles covered the withdrawal with 2nd North Lancashires on their left and 2nd Kashmirs on their right. After all followers and the other infantry units had been taken off the Kashmirs were boarded, with 2nd North Lancashires providing the final cordon.<sup>21</sup> No attempt was made by the Germans to interfere with this operation. The Red House at Beach 'A' had been used as a British hospital and by agreement with the Germans a number of casualties were subsequently recovered, though 49 were too ill to be moved and were left in the care of the German hospital. Also left behind were 10 machine guns, hundreds of rifles, numerous rounds of ammunition and much other equipment. The Official History summarised the fiasco of Tanga:

Unpractised in dis-embarkation and lacking information, it landed slowly and not without confusion. Unversed in bush warfare and insufficiently trained, especially in the use of machine guns, it found itself at a disadvantage in dealing with the German native troops on their own ground. Possessing an overwhelming preponderance of artillery, it suffered nevertheless from the omission to organize adequate artillery support. In actions fought on two successive days at short range in the bush the less reliable units, already dispirited and physically weakened by the voyage, lost morale and gave way. Expecting no resistance the force met with heavy defeat, and was fortunate in effecting a hasty re-embarkation and departure unmolested.<sup>22</sup>

regulations, to be advanced in the Order and thereby promoted directly from 3rd Class to 1st Class – see Appendix III.

20 See Appendix III.

21 NAI: F&P Proceedings Internal 1916: F&P-Intl-Jun-410-Pt B, (Encl 1). Lieutenant Colonel Raghbir Singh, 2nd Kashmir Rifles, and Lieutenant Colonel Durga Singh, 3rd Kashmir Rifles, were both subsequently commended by General Aitken for handling their units 'with conspicuous gallantry and skill...the good work done by their units throughout the operation reflects the greatest credit on them in every way.' This was forwarded to the Kashmir Darbar but because of an initial block on any awards to officers for either Tanga or Longido did not appear as an official Mention in Despatches.

22 Hordern, *Official History*, p. 102.

The German authorities released a number of British and Indian officers, NCOs and men on parole, including Subadars Chattar Singh and Randbir Singh, and Sepoys Khada Singh and Billu, all of 2nd Kashmir Rifles, and Lieutenant Colonel Durga Singh, Bahadur, IOM, of 3rd Kashmir Rifles. The Adjutant General in India noted, “[They] are not to be sent to the Front again during this war ... they are not to be employed as Instructors or on any duties in connection with preparation for war, but they may be used for all Station, Barrack and Line duties, Guards, Fatigues and similar work.”<sup>23</sup>

Despite the setback at Tanga, the Maharaja of Kashmir was moved to signal “Kindly communicate to IST my appreciation of their gallant behaviour in the fight, and my sympathies to the wounded who I trust are doing well.”<sup>24</sup> IEF ‘B’ sailed for Mombasa, British East Africa. As with General Stewart and the Kapurthala Infantry at Longido, so General Aitken was equally scathing in his criticism of two Indian Army units, “61st Pioneers only of use as skilled labour. 63rd Infantry very doubtful in defence and useless for offence.”<sup>25</sup> On 22 November London announced that control of the East Africa operation was being taken over by the War Office.<sup>26</sup> Although Aitken started to reorganise and re-equip the force, he was removed from his command and returned to England. IEF ‘B’ was amalgamated with IEF ‘C’ and came under the overall command of Brigadier General (temporary Major General) Wapshare of 27 Bangalore Brigade, though the force was divided into two areas – Mombasa under Brigadier General Tighe whose previous command, the Imperial Service Brigade (East Africa), had been disbanded; and Nairobi remaining under Brigadier General Stewart. At this time, therefore, the Imperial Service troops were distributed as follows:

- Magadi Area – Rampur Infantry, Kapurthala Infantry, both still of half battalion strength
- Voi-Tsavo Area – 3rd Kashmir Rifles, Bharatpur Infantry (both still of half battalion strength), Faridkot Sappers
- Coastal Area – 2nd Kashmir Rifles (full battalion strength) at Msambweni, Jind Infantry (half battalion strength) at Kikoneni and Upper Ramisi Ford

23 NAI: F&P Proceedings Internal 1915: F&P-Intl-War-July-10-Part B.

24 BL/IOLR/ L/MIL/17/5/2436: Collection of Army Department (General Service Branch) correspondence relating to the European Crisis, 1914, Vol 16, Oct-Dec 1914 (Diary 8297), Tel 8297-W 29.11.14 CGS to General Aitken.

25 BL/IOLR/ L/MIL/17/5/2435: Collection of Army Department (General Service Branch) correspondence relating to the European Crisis, 1914, Vol 15, Oct-Nov 1914 (Diary 7676), Tel 48-S 18.11.14 General Aitken to CGS.

26 BL/IOLR/ L/MIL/17/5/2435: Collection of Army Department (General Service Branch) correspondence relating to the European Crisis, 1914, Vol 15, Oct-Nov 1914 (Diary 7955), Tel P No 1396 22.11.14 Secretary of State for India to Viceroy (Army Department).

- Zanzibar – 3rd Gwalior Infantry<sup>27</sup> – garrison duty where it remained until October 1915

On the morning of 25 December 1914 a small British column comprising two companies of the King's African Rifles and one company of 101st Grenadiers attacked the small German post of Jasen, in the coastal area, just to the south east of the border between British and German East Africa and captured it after a short engagement. The post was then garrisoned by two companies of the Jind Infantry who mounted regular patrols towards the neighbouring garrisons of Umba Camp and Samanya, the latter having been garrisoned by four companies of 2nd Kashmir Rifles.

## 1915

For the next year there were very few significant offensive operations mounted anywhere in East Africa. There were numerous patrols, some small raids and some intense conflict. One village close to Jasen was investigated on 5 January by a joint patrol of Jind Infantry, 2nd Kashmir Rifles, a company of KAR and one section of 28th Mountain Battery. A strong enemy position was seen but, under orders not to become involved in any action, a withdrawal was made which was not hindered by the Germans. By 12 January Jind had handed over the Jasen garrison to two companies of 2nd Kashmir Rifles under the direct command of Colonel Raghbir Singh, with Captain Grenville Hanson, SSO, and a further company of 101st Grenadiers under Captain John Turner, 114th Mahrattas attached 101st Grenadiers. A small garrison of 40 men was deployed at the nearby sisal factory. Jind Infantry had returned to Umba Camp, three miles north of Jasen, which it shared with one company of 2nd Kashmir Rifles, the other company being at Samanya. The Germans mounted a reconnaissance against Jasen on 12 January 1916 but this was repelled by the garrison, though Jind and KAR reinforcements were deployed from Umba and suffered minor casualties. A further probe on 16 January was also repelled. On 17 January 2nd Kashmir Rifles rotated its garrisons, with G Company under Subadar Mardan Ali Khan and Captain Hanson as SSO relieving C Company (Jemadar Parsidh Singh) at Jasen. The following day, 18 January 1916, the Germans mounted a more concerted attack with nine companies of Schutztruppe, a total of 244 Europeans, 1,350 askari and 400 Arab levies with a total of 23 machine guns and four field guns.<sup>28</sup> When news of the attack reached Umba Camp three companies of KAR were ordered to deploy, as were a further 1½ companies of 2nd Kashmir Rifles from Samanya under the command

27 The composite battalion formed with 3 Kashmir Rifles was disbanded after Tanga

28 Paice, *Tip & Run*, p.81. Brigadier General Tighe's account of the action, based on the accounts of Captains Hanson and Turner, refers to "500 white and 1500 black troops, 3-6 guns and 16 machine guns" – TNA: WO 95 5360 5: HQ Mombasa Area War Diary.

of Major Haidar Ali Khan, with Captain Alexander (Alec) Kerr, 38th Dogras, as recently-arrived SSO. A short time later the two companies of Jind Infantry at Umba Camp were also ordered to deploy along with the mountain guns. The Jind Infantry strength had already been reduced by 120 men who were on their way to Mombasa while two sections were detailed off to escort the guns and ammunition. Attempts were made to join up with the KAR reinforcements but the nature of the bush made this difficult. Heavy German fire led to the Jind commanding officer, General Natha Singh,<sup>29</sup> his Adjutant and the British SSO Captain MacBrayne<sup>30</sup> being wounded. Eventually the KAR, Jind and 2nd Kashmir reinforcements were halted by enemy action and were ordered to withdraw without the Jasin garrison having been relieved. Two 2nd Kashmir sepoys, Bal Bahadur Chetti and Dal Bahadur Thapa, volunteered to carry a message to the besieged garrison.

They failed to get through but both were subsequently awarded the IOM 2nd Class.<sup>31</sup> Jind Infantry lost many men killed in action or wounded,<sup>32</sup> and a further



Sepoys Bal Bahadur Chetti and Dal Bahadur Thapa, 2nd Kashmir Rifles, attempting to reach Jasin. (USI-CAFHR)

- 29 NAI: F&P Proceedings Internal 1916: F&P-Intl-June-Encl to Pro No 414-Pt B, extract from 'Copy of reports by Major General Wapshare, Operations in the Umba Valley, January 1915.' General Wapshare wrote of him "He led his men with ability and dash in the action at Gazi in October and also at Jasin on January 18th, where he was severely wounded. I attribute the efficient state of the Corps in action, and as regards discipline and their excellent state of health, to his personal attention and influence. I trust his name may be submitted to the Government of India for some suitable reward". He was appointed OBI 1st Class with the title of Sardar Bahadur in August 1915, and later CIE in 1917 – see Appendix III.
- 30 TNA: WO 95 5360 5: L of C Mombasa Area War Diary. Although recommended by Brigadier General Tighe for a DSO no British officers were rewarded for either the Tanga or Jasin operations. Captain MacBrayne was invalided to India and his place as SSO taken by Captain William Lloyd, 122 Rajputana Infantry.
- 31 See Appendix III.
- 32 TNA: WO 95 5333 17: Jind Infantry War Diary Oct 1914-Feb 1916 merely states 'many men both killed and wounded'. Hordern, *Official History*, p.126, f/n 2 says 36 killed and 21 wounded; the CWGC database says 37 killed.

26 officers and men wounded, but earned a commendation from General Wapshare who wrote to the CGS at Simla on 23 January, "In the attempt to relieve Jasin post the fighting lasted for 9 hours. Great gallantry was displayed by ... the Jind Infantry. The odds were heavy more particularly in machine guns."<sup>33</sup> Among the 2nd Kashmir Rifles relief force from Samanya five were killed, including Assistant Surgeon Sadhu Narain who died of his wounds on the evening of 18 January. The 40 men at the sisal factory under Subadar Mardan Ali,<sup>34</sup> having expended all of their ammunition, charged out with bayonets and kukris and scattered into the bush.<sup>35</sup> Eventually 29 of the 40 men reached Umba Camp earning a similar commendation from General Wapshare to that given for the Jind Infantry.<sup>36</sup> Within Jasin garrison Colonel Raghbir Singh was killed in action while another eight were either killed in action or died of wounds, a total of 25 men of 2nd Kashmir Rifles lost in this one operation.<sup>37</sup> On the morning of 19 January Captain Hanson surrendered the garrison at Jasin. The war diary for the unit, which Captain Hanson maintained, was destroyed by fire at this time, probably deliberately by Hanson realising that he was about to surrender. He and Captain Turner were taken before Von Lettow-Vorbeck and released on parole on the understanding that they would not fight again during the war. Of the 135 Kashmir Rifles prisoners, 115 were wounded.<sup>38</sup>

Much later, in 1920, it became clear how harshly the prisoners of war had been treated by the Germans. Statements made by five Kashmir soldiers, Naik (later Jemadar) Afrasil Khan and Sepoys Feroz Ali, Ghulam Hussain, Dewan Ali and Mohammad Hussain were forwarded to London.<sup>39</sup> Captured at Jasin, the wounded were taken to a hospital at Karogo while the healthy were moved either to Morogoro or to Mayamaya. All complained of having had their boots, putties and socks removed from them before being put to various labouring tasks in the jungle, such as cutting wood for railways, making roads or carrying heavy stones and other material for buildings, or moving ammunition. Having to work in bare feet, they soon became infected by worm and, when no longer fit for work, they were moved on, sometimes

<sup>33</sup> NAI: F&P Proceedings Internal 1916: F&P-Intl-Jun-Encl to Pro No 414-Pt B Pt B, quoting tel No. 183-S dated 23 January 1915.

<sup>34</sup> He was recommended for the award of the IOM but was actually awarded the IDSM. His second in command, Jemadar Hakim Khan, who was mentioned in the same letter by General Wapshare, was not further recognised and nor were a number of other soldiers recommended by Wapshare for the IOM.

<sup>35</sup> Hordern, *Official History*, p. 125.

<sup>36</sup> NAI: F&P Proceedings Internal 1916: F&P-Intl-Jun-Encl to Pro No 414-Pt B Pt B, quoting tel No. 183-S dated 23 January 1915.

<sup>37</sup> Hordern, *Official History*, p. 126, gives 25 for Jasin camp alone but these figures do not tally with other sources.

<sup>38</sup> Major K Brahma Singh, *History of the Jammu & Kashmir Rifles (1820-1956)* (Delhi: Lancer, 1990), p. 114.

<sup>39</sup> BL/IOLR/L/MIL/7/18753: Breaches of Law and customs of war by German authorities, Miscellaneous Despatch No 48 to Secretary of State for India dated 17 June 1920.

to receive medical treatment. They lived in what little shelter they could construct for themselves. The meagre rations consisted of flour made of mogra roots, but it was often crawling with worm, although later this was supplemented by maize or grain. Beatings and kicking were administered frequently, both by Germans and by their African askaris, and death among the prisoners because of this treatment was not unknown. Eventually all five who made these statements were able to escape and re-join Allied lines.

Following the fall of Jasin, Brigadier General Tighe planned to mount a counter attack against the post. It was shelled by HMS *Weymouth* on 20 January, but orders received from London on 22 January forbade further offensive action. In issuing his directive, Kitchener said, "You are entirely mistaken to suppose that offensive operations are necessary. The experience at Jasin shows you are not well informed of the strength of the enemy ... you should concentrate your forces and give up risky expeditions...in East Africa, where we cannot reinforce you sufficiently to be sure of success."<sup>40</sup> In light of this directive General Wapshare decided to abandon the unhealthy parts of the border region and all troops were removed to Mombasa except for a small force to remain in the area of Gazi and Msambweni. According to the Official History this consisted of four companies of 2nd Kashmir Rifles, four companies of 3rd KAR and four machine guns, all under the command of Captain Ernle Money, 4th Gurkha Rifles and SSO Kashmir Rifles.<sup>41</sup> However, the 2nd Kashmir Rifles war diary is clear that, having remained in Umba Camp until the end of January, half the battalion embarked on H.T. *Barala* on 1 February, the other half on 2 February, and that all sailed for Mombasa on 4 February where they were immediately put on a train to Voi. It was, in fact, 3rd Kashmir Rifles who provided the Gazi/Msambweni garrison.<sup>42</sup> They had been serving in the Voi area but, on being relieved by the Rampur Infantry, were placed at General Tighe's disposal, transferred to Mombasa on 21 January and then to Umba Camp on 25 January. Until 8 February, when the last of the departing troops had been embarked, 3rd Kashmirs were involved in revolving post exchanges with KAR and Jind Infantry. They then covered the retirement of the left section of the Msambweni Column before moving on to Ramisis and Mukurumuji, where they remained until mid-March, laying down defensive positions and patrolling towards Ramisi and Makwembi. On 12 March they too sailed for Mombasa and then on by train to Voi.

With the exception of one of the IST infantry regiments kept at Msambweni at any time – they rotated with each other on a monthly basis – and 3rd Gwalior Infantry still in Zanzibar on garrison duty, all IST units in East Africa were now concentrated in the Voi/Tsavo/Taveta area and the focus of the infantry, as with those from the KAR and locally raised volunteer units, was the protection of the Uganda Railway.

40 Hordern, *Official History*, p.127, f/n 3.

41 Hordern, *Official History*, p.127, f/n 4.

42 TNA: WO 95 5369 12: War Diary 3rd Kashmir Rifles.

For the Rampur Infantry, which had experienced a rocky start due to poor leadership,<sup>43</sup> the war diary noted at the beginning of March, 'Regiment now performing all the duties and taking part in the daily mixed patrols,'<sup>44</sup> though on one of its first deployments when acting as the duty unit at Msambweni, it ran into an enemy patrol and one of its soldiers, 692 Sepoy Iman Jam Khan was taken prisoner.<sup>45</sup>

Duties were often described by all units as 'very heavy' and included patrols, picquets, escorts, entrenching and fatigues with, on one occasion, 3rd Kashmir Rifles being required to provide two firing squads for Indian soldiers sentenced to death by courts martial. There were occasional skirmishes with German patrols, and casualties were sustained. In January 2nd Kashmir Rifles had been ordered to Loosoito to replace an insubordinate Somali Scouts unit detailed to protect the Masai tribe from German raids. Shortly afterwards Major Lyall re-located his base to Epiron, not featured on any maps at the time. On 10 March a 40-man patrol of 2nd Kashmir Rifles under command of Major Lyall encountered a German patrol of 60 askaris at Laitokitok. Mr Scott, an intelligence agent accompanying the patrol, was taken prisoner and the regiment lost 11 soldiers killed and missing. Once Epiron's isolated location was identified Major Lyall was ordered to abandon the position and return to Loosoito. On 24 March information was received of a 200-man enemy patrol with machine guns gathering at Rombo and preparing to attack Loosoito. Captain Money and two companies of 3rd Kashmir Rifles, recently arrived from Msambweni, was ordered to Mzima to support Major Lyall while one company of 130th Baluchis and one company of 1st KAR engaged the enemy near Salaita on 29 March, sustaining casualties in doing so. In retiring from the action the 130th Baluchis were forced to leave their machine guns when their African porters bolted under heavy enemy fire. At the same time, and lacking adequate transport away from his area, Major Lyall abandoned 40,000 rounds of SAA, 20 Martini Henry rifles, 15 days' supplies and some kit, most of it subsequently recovered by a patrol comprising E Company 1st KAR, 100 rifles 3rd Kashmir Rifles and a number of porters.

On 12 April Major Walker, OC Troops Tsavo-Mzima line decided to accompany Intelligence Agent Chitty on a patrol from Mzima to establish a series of runners from Signal Hill Lower Spur to the Mamba Hills. He asked for, and was given, an escort of one NCO and six rifles of 3rd Kashmir Rifles under Havildar Khazan

<sup>43</sup> See Chapter 3, f/n 30.

<sup>44</sup> TNA: WO 95 /5370 6: War Diary Rampur Infantry.

<sup>45</sup> BL/IOLR/L/MIL/17/5/3187: Casualty appendix to War Diary, AHQ, IEF 'B', Vol. 9, Appx. 69/6, in which he was posted as missing in action. BL/IOLR/L/MIL/17/5/3191: Casualty appendix to War Diary, AHQ, IEF 'B', Vol. 13, Appx. 31 repeated BL/IOLR/L/MIL/17/5/3192: Casualty appendix to War Diary, AHQ, IEF 'B', Vol. 14, Appx. 13, both dated August 1915, reported that a Court of Inquiry had confirmed him as killed in action. However, a year later, in BL/IOLR/17/5/3207: Casualty appendix to War Diary, AHQ, IEF 'B', Vol. 25, Appx. 118, he was reported as having re-joined from a prisoner of war camp on 20/08/1916. Name also seen as Mian Jan Khan.

Singh. The round trip was expected to last about eight hours but on the way out Major Walker fired at a water buck, thereby drawing attention to the patrol's presence.<sup>46</sup> Shortly afterwards Mr Chitty spotted signs of a large enemy patrol and suggested withdrawing, but Major Walker decided to go further and the patrol was ambushed. Mr Chitty and at least one of the escort escaped but Major Walker, Havildar Khazan Singh and Sepoy Mahant Singh of 3rd Kashmir Rifles, and at least one porter were killed, their bodies being badly mutilated.

A few days after this incident, though totally unconnected with it, Major General Wapshare was ordered to Mesopotamia and handed over command in East Africa to T/Major General Tighe.

In May the Rampur Infantry was relieved at Msambweni by the Bharatpur Infantry. The Rampurs moved to Kajiado and spent the rest of the year on railway defence duties covering a number of bridges and sentry posts. The loss of their commanding officer in July because of unsatisfactory reports on his performance has already been covered,<sup>47</sup> and the only other factor of note in an otherwise unremarkable year was the departure in August of Lieutenant Colonel Walter Douglas, 3rd Brahmans, who as a Major had accompanied the Rampur Infantry to East Africa in 1914 as their SSO. Captain St Vincent Hammick, 13th Rajputs, joined them as SSO in October but was then transferred to the Bharatpur Infantry in December, his place being taken by 2/ Lieutenant William Money, IARO.

There were contacts in July near Msambweni and Mwele Mdogo involving the Bharatpur Infantry; and near Mzima involving 2nd Kashmir Rifles. At the very end of July reports were received of the enemy having occupied one of the bridges over the Umba River. A patrol of two Indian officers (Captain Narayan Singh and Subadar Balbir Singh) and 40 rifles of the Bharatpur Infantry, under Lieutenant Wilfrid Windeler, 63rd PLI and SSO Bharatpur, was despatched in an attempt to mount a surprise attack on German sentries. Instead they came across a German patrol just about to leave for British-held territory, mounted an attack and inflicted casualties. Subadar Balbir Singh<sup>48</sup> and Havildar Harmukh Singh<sup>49</sup> were brought to notice for their 'calmness and efficiency in handling their men'. In total the men marched 70 miles in 40 hours and on the final day, 2 August, 45 miles in 16 hours.

46 This sort of behaviour clearly became something of a problem in East Africa since, in July 1916, it was felt necessary to order 'All firing from trains on the railway at game, or when halted at stations, also on the march without special permission, is strictly forbidden'. TNA: WO 123 288: Est African General Routine Orders (EA GRO) No. 625 dated 12 July 1916; and again in August when indiscriminate firing at guinea fowl from the centre of Dakawa Camp had been reported – TNA: WO 123 288: EA GRO No 62 dated 20 August 1916.

47 See f/n 43 above and Chapter 3, f/n 30.

48 Later in the war awarded IOM 2nd Class and Italian Silver Medal for Military Valour – see Appendix III

49 Later promoted Jemadar and awarded the IDSM – see Appendix III



Officers and men of the Kapurthala I.S. Infantry with Bakshi Pooran Singh (centre), on active service in East Africa, 1915. (Brigadier Sukhjit Singh MVC)

In August, the Kapurthala Infantry, now the duty IST unit in situ at Msambweni, responded to reports of 12 askaris being seen in the area of the Ramisi River by sending a 70-man patrol under Captain Nihal Singh across to assist refugees from villages that had been raided by the enemy. On 26 August<sup>50</sup> a firefight ensued near Mrima<sup>51</sup> which lasted for two hours and cost the Kapurthala Infantry one officer, 14 NCOs and men and one interpreter killed in action, five NCOs and men wounded, one of whom subsequently died of his wounds. One white German and 24 askaris were reportedly killed. The action is commemorated in, and forms the basis of the Captain Jhaggar Singh War Memorial, Kapurthala.<sup>52</sup> The incident attracted some criticism in the Official History, "... The health of the Kapurthala Infantry had already suffered, and some stiffening was clearly required"<sup>53</sup> but it served to identify just how weak was the

50 Hordern, *Official History*, p.161 refers to 27 August but both the unit war diary and HQ Mombasa Area war diaries are clear that the incident occurred on 26th.

51 Hordern, *Official History*, refers to Mzima but this is in the Tembo-Tsavo area and a very long way from Msambweni. TNA: WO 95 5370: War Diary Kapurthala Infantry and TNA: WO 95 5360 5: War Diary L of C Mombasa Area both clearly name Mrima.

52 See Chapter 10.

53 Hordern, *Official History*, p. 161.

position in the coastal area. Unfortunately the reputation of the Kapurthala Infantry was not immediately helped by another incident in October 1915. At midnight on 14/15 October two villagers reported a large contingent of enemy had crossed the Ramisi River the previous evening intent on attacking Msambweni. A large patrol of 4th KAR had already left the post and so the officer commanding the post, Captain Ivan Gordon, 56th Punjab Rifles (FF) and SSO Kapurthala Infantry, sent messages to the KAR patrol and to Headquarters at Mombasa. At 1400 hours on 15 October the Havildar commanding the Kapurthala picquet south of the Mkurumuji River, sent a signal saying that he was being attacked by 'a large force'. Picquets fell back exchanging shots with the enemy estimated at 40 strong. Later that evening intelligence scouts reported advancing enemy and all roads picqueted by enemy patrols. The KAR patrol did see about 40 enemies, but in view of other reports from Msambweni suggesting a larger number in the area did not engage with them. There were concerns of a large attack against Msambweni being planned and so reinforcements were sent from Voi and three Royal Navy warships were despatched to the coastal area. A subsequent investigation by Brigadier General Malleson, GOC Mombasa Area, concluded that no large force had ever crossed the Ramisi, and that Captain Gordon had failed to verify the information being given to him before relaying it up the chain of command.<sup>54</sup> This was put down to "A lack of confidence in the Kapurthala Infantry which form some 80% of the garrison ... he [Gordon] thought they would do well from behind the walls of the post, he had no confidence in them in the open."<sup>55</sup> The failure was not all of the Kapurthala's making; there was obviously some doubt about the veracity of the original attack report from the Havildar, there was clearly criticism of Captain Gordon's failure to verify his information before relaying it further up the chain of command, and there was a signal failure in the intelligence operation mounted by others, so it does seem unfair to pin all the blame on the Kapurthala Infantry.

October 1915 also saw the return of 3rd Gwalior Infantry to the mainland from Zanzibar where it had provided a garrison force since the end of the Tanga operation. Once at Mombasa it furnished guards for the Mukuba Bridge and for a prisoner of war camp at Lamu.

Throughout the year there were frequent attacks on the Uganda and Maktau railway lines. There was also at least one recorded incident of a man being eaten by a lion while on patrol,<sup>56</sup> and, of course, there were numerous incidents that did not involve Imperial Service Troops such as Shirari Hill (17 January), Mbuyuni (14 July), Kasigau (12 August), Maktau (3 September and again on 14 September), Bura (29 September), the fall of Kasigau (6 December).

54 Although Captain Gordon remained with the Kapurthala Infantry, and was later promoted to Major, he was found shot dead by the Sanja River on 2 September 1917, his own pistol lying beside his body. A Court of Inquiry returned a verdict of accidental death.

55 TNA: WO 95 5360 7: War Diary L of C Mombasa Area, Report No 103/106 dated 19 October 1915, GOC Mombasa Area to General Staff, Command HQ, Nairobi.

56 Lance Naik Hazara Singh, 3rd Kashmir Rifles – see Appendix II

Byron Farwell is scathing in his criticism of the Imperial Service Troops:

Most bridge guards, found by Imperial Service troops, were regarded by the British as worse than useless. Ill-trained and undisciplined, they lounged about unarmed in unfortified camps. Often neglecting to clear fields of fire, they were easy targets for German patrols. Except for the Gurkhas in the Kashmiri Rifles and the Jats in the Bhurtpore infantry, the Imperial Service troops – from Jhind, Kaparthala (sic), Fardkot (sic), Gwalior, and Ranpur (sic) – were despised. There were many tales of their unreliability. A picket of one such unit, brigaded with the EAMR, reported back in camp at Namanga<sup>57</sup> (therefore Kapurthala) one evening that they had been driven back by an enemy force advancing from the heights above. All ranks stood to arms through the night and British units on either side were alerted. There was no attack. Patrols sent out next morning found everything peaceful, except for a troop of hostile baboons. On 20 April a German patrol attacked the bridge at Milepost 218 on the Uganda Railway. It was guarded by elements of the 98th Indian Infantry from Hyderabad, who were inattentive and walking about unarmed when the German patrol struck. Offering no resistance, they were quickly rounded up and disarmed by the Germans, who were then free to blow up the bridge at their leisure. When the patrol departed it carried off the sepoys' rifles and ammunition, but left its prisoners unharmed, doubtless thinking it better to have such troops as enemies. Indians of all classes suffered from the low repute of the Imperial Service troops.<sup>58</sup>

While the infantry was quite heavily engaged at different times throughout the year, the other focus for IST activity in this period rests with the Faridkot Sappers who came directly under the orders of 1st East African Division as Divisional troops. As previously discussed, they had been sent to Tanga as part of IEF 'B' but did not disembark and so then moved via Mombasa to Voi River camp with one section at Tsavo and then later at Msambweni, and the drivers and mules at Nairobi. For the HQ and three sections at Voi River camp the early months of 1915 were spent in enhancing the existing Voi-Maktau track to be able to carry vehicular traffic and this included building a suspension bridge with a 128 ft span intended to carry infantry in file, or motors with a total weight of five tons. It had originally been intended that the work would be finished by the end of January 1915 but delays were incurred by the late arrival of tools and so it was not until 22 February that the bridge was opened to

57 By inference this would have been Kapurthala Infantry.

58 Farwell, *The Great War in East Africa*, p. 213. Leaving aside his inaccurate spelling of three of the States, there were frequent occasions of reports of enemy forces leading to troops standing to arms; he implies that 98th Indian Infantry was an IST unit because it came from Hyderabad – it was a regular Indian Army unit; he offers no sources for these attacks and he ignores, for example, the fighting achievement of the Jind Infantry at both Tanga and Jasin.

traffic. Another suspension bridge was then built at Mwatake while the section that had been sent to Msambweni had been employed in doing ground work, bridging and erecting mounts for four-inch guns. In January the Faridkot Sappers were joined by another SSO, Lieutenant Chetwode Evill,<sup>59</sup> IARO, who was to remain with them throughout the rest of the war. Meanwhile General Wapshare had obtained approval from London to build a railway line between Voi and Maktau with the intention eventually of taking it on to Taveta. This work fell to 25th and 26th (Railway) Companies, Indian Army Sappers and Miners but with some Faridkot personnel attached, as well as 61st (KGO) Pioneers, Indian railway labourers and local African labourers. The Faridkot Sappers were engaged on associated work with reconstruction of railway bridge defences, including improvements to fields of fire,<sup>60</sup> and various construction or demolition tasks on storage sheds, offices and blockhouses prior to the first troop train running on the line on 11 May 1915.

In mid-June a half company of the Faridkots was detailed to support the limited operation allowed by London against Bukoba on the southern Uganda border, the role of the Sappers, in conjunction with the Bombay Sappers, to retrieve useful instruments



Lieutenant Colonel *Sardar* Nand Singh, OBI, IOM, Faridkot Sappers. He commanded the regiment throughout most of the war in East Africa. He had previously served in 1st King George V's Own (Bengal) Sappers and Miners. In addition to his OBI and IOM, both awarded with the Faridkot Sappers, he wears around his neck the Durand Medal, awarded annually to the best Indian officer, NCO or Sapper of the Sappers & Miners. He also wears the Delhi Durbar medal for 1911, IGS 1854 clasp Waziristan 1894-95, India Medal 1896 clasp Punjab Frontier 1897-98, and the Royal Victoria Medal in silver awarded while still with 1st KGO Sappers & Miners for King George V's visit to India for the Durbar, awarded 21 January 1912. This image is captioned 'Commandant Depot Faridkot I.S. Sappers' and therefore dates after his return from East Africa but before his First World War trio of medals had been awarded.  
(Imperial War Museum: HU 58655)

- 59 An Assistant Engineer with the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway prior to the war, he was commissioned into the IARO for service with the Faridkot Sappers in 1915. He died in July 1918 of disease contracted while in East Africa but after his return to India.
- 60 So much for Farwell's accusation of the Imperial Service Troops neglecting this important duty.

from the wireless station before destroying radio masts and various buildings in the town. All was achieved without incident or Faridkot casualties, though some other units suffered a few casualties. July saw the whole company re-united for the first time since April, and only for the second time since December 1914, when it was back to bridge building and associated defence structures over the Tsavo River on the Tsavo-Mzima road. This lasted until late August when the right half company entrained for Mombasa to undertake defensive work on the Mombasa-Msambweni railway line while the headquarters and remaining half company stayed on in Voi to complete various defence works and complete a hospital, work that was to see them through to the end of the year. In October they were joined by another SSO, Lieutenant Robert Sneyd, IARO.

The seemingly increasing capability of the German forces, reinforced by arms brought in by sea via Tanga, and the salvaging of some of the guns from the German cruiser *Königsberg* in the Rufiji River delta, was the cause of much concern in both Nairobi and London, but given events in other theatres of the war there seemed little that London could offer until, having now defeated the German forces in German South West Africa, the Union of South Africa was able to offer additional support for the East Africa theatre. Nevertheless, it was at this point that London decided that the campaign in East Africa should come under the overall direction of the War Office and to this end General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien was appointed to the command.

By the end of the year the enemy occupied large areas of British East Africa; an entrenched camp at Taveta with an advanced position at Salaita, an entrenched camp at Serengeti with an outpost at Mbuyuni, and a garrison at Kasigau – a combined force estimated at some 2,000 white soldiers and about 14,000 askaris and other local forces with approximately 60 guns and 80 machine guns.<sup>61</sup> Major General Tighe, in consultation with General Smith-Dorrien, who was still in London, had begun to turn his thoughts towards not only driving the German forces out of British East Africa, but also to invading their territory in the area of Kilimanjaro before the rainy season of 1916 started.<sup>62</sup>

## 1916

The beginning of 1916 saw the Imperial Service Troops distributed as follows:

- 2nd Kashmir Rifles – one company at Crater Hill, two companies at Tembo, one company at Tsavo

<sup>61</sup> LG: Supplement to London Gazette No. 29630 dated 20 June 1916: Despatch by Lieutenant General The Hon. J.C. Smuts dated 30 April 1916.

<sup>62</sup> General Smith-Dorrien fell ill on the sea voyage to South Africa and resigned his command before he had set foot in East Africa.

- 3rd Kashmir Rifles – Tsavo
- Bharatpur Infantry – HQ less 200 rifles at Samburu, 200 rifles at Mackinnon Road. As previously noted, Captain St Vincent Hammick transferred from Rampur Infantry to the Bharatpur Infantry as ASSO and joined at the beginning of January.<sup>63</sup>
- Jind Infantry – Msambweni
- 3rd Gwalior Infantry – one company at Mombasa, one company at Lamu
- Rampur Infantry – moved from Kajiado to Olekunoni in mid-January. Before leaving Kajiado the regiment earned what was to be the first of several plaudits, although on this occasion given unofficially in a private note to the OC by Colonel (later Lord) Kitchener as he left the post; “Before leaving the station I wish to place on record my appreciation of the soldier-like manner in which the officers and men of the Rampur Infantry have performed their duties under somewhat trying circumstances while under my command.”<sup>64</sup> Nevertheless, despite the unofficial nature of the note a copy found its way back to Rampur and was quoted in the State’s Annual Administrative Report
- Kapurthala Infantry – Sultan Hamid
- Faridkot Sappers – Lieutenant Colonel Harnam Singh had been invalided to India in December 1915 and command passed to Major Nand Singh, Assistant Commandant, whose place was taken by Subadar Bishan Singh on promotion to Major.<sup>65</sup>

In early January 1916 a German column of about 500 rifles had defeated a body of Arab levies at Ngurangani fort. A British column was mounted from Samburu comprising 240 rifles of the 2nd North Lancashires, a section of 28th Mountain Battery with two guns, and 95 rifles of D Company, Bharatpur Infantry, with Captain Ayscough, Lieutenant Graham Rose and Captain Narain Singh. At Mlunguni they joined up with 300 rifles of 25th Royal Fusiliers and a further 60 rifles of Bharatpur Infantry. The whole column was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Graham, KAR. On arrival at Mlunguni on 10 January the Bharatpur Infantry assumed the role of advance guard and went into action at 1700 hours, the action lasting until dark. The Bharatpur Infantry lost three killed and four wounded. Subadar Balbir Singh was awarded the IOM 2nd Class.<sup>66</sup>

Major General Tighe had organised what spare infantry he could muster into two brigades, though they were referred to as divisions, and on 15 January ordered 1st East African Division under Major General Stewart to occupy Longido, followed on 22 January by 2nd East African Division under Brigadier General Malleson to

<sup>63</sup> TNA: WO 123 288: EA GRO 362 dated 12 May 1916, AMS 319 dated 5 May 1916.

<sup>64</sup> NAI: F&P Proceedings Internal 1917: F&P-Intl-May-6-7-Part B.

<sup>65</sup> TNA: WO 123 288: EA GRO 193, AMS 16 dated 29 March 1916.

<sup>66</sup> See Appendix III.

advance via Maktau and Mbuyuni to seize Serengeti and then, in early February, Salaita. That attack failed but many lessons were learnt. No Imperial Service Troops were involved in these actions except for the Faridkot Sappers. In February 1916 Lieutenant General Jan Smuts was appointed to replace the invalidated General Smith-Dorrien in command of the forces in East Africa and arrived at Mombasa on 19th. He immediately set about implementing Major General Tighe's proposed plan of action for the Kilimanjaro area, but with some minor modifications, including the transfer of 1 South African Mounted Brigade (Brigadier General van Deventer) from 1st Division to operate under his direct orders as a flanking force, and the creation of a Force Reserve, all South African units, under Brigadier General Beves. Preparations had been completed by the beginning of March. These included the creation of a composite battalion of Kashmir Rifles formed of four companies from each of the two regiments, to be brigaded with 1 East Africa Brigade (Brigadier General Malleson), a part of 2nd Division (Major General Tighe). Also attached to each of the two Divisions was a half company of the Faridkot Sappers whose work was cut out making drifts<sup>67</sup> for guns and transport across rivers, in building bridges, or in trying to create water supplies for the force troops. The remaining four companies of 2nd Kashmir Rifles not included in the composite battalion were concentrated at Tsavo to become Lines of Communication troops.

Smuts' three-pronged attack was designed:

- to push 1st Division across the bush between Longido and the Engare Nanjuki River and then, passing between Kilimanjaro and Meru, on to Kahe to cut the Usambara Railway
- to send 1 South African Mounted Brigade and 3 South African Infantry Brigade to seize the high ground around Lake Chala before turning towards Taveta
- to push 2nd Division to advance against Salaita

1st Division was to start moving on 5 March, 1 South African Brigade on 7th and 2nd Division on 8th. 1st Division reached Geraragua on 8th but progress was slowed by the heavy rains and its impact on the limited roads. The Faridkot Sappers detachment did much during this phase to improve the roads, lay in a water supply for the Division at Nanjuki swamp, and build a drift to enable guns and transport to cross the Nanjuki river.

The Kashmir composite battalion left Serengeti at 0400 hours on 8th and acted as Divisional Reserve, protecting the divisional artillery during its bombardment of Salaita and then acting as Divisional rear guard. Salaita was taken on 9 March without opposition, the enemy having evacuated the place, and the Kashmir battalion was left to garrison it while the rest of the Division marched on to Taveta. Half

67 A river crossing in which the river bottom had been raised so that the river was passable on a reasonably level surface without a bridge having to be built.

the Kashmir battalion under Captain Money followed to Taveta on 12th, the other half under Major Lyall<sup>68</sup> following on 13th having been relieved at Salaita by the Bharatpur Infantry. Meanwhile the rest of 1 East African Brigade had mounted an offensive against the Latema-Reata nek during which Brigadier General Malleson had been taken ill and relieved in the field by Major General Tighe. The operation, which involved no Imperial Service Troops apart from the Faridkot Sappers, was successful, though for the loss of about 270 men. These included Major Bertie Mainprise RE, SSO with the Faridkot Sappers, though he was acting as Brigade Major at the time and that is how he is recorded in the official despatch of the engagement.<sup>69</sup> This action brought to a close the first phase of the battle for Kilimanjaro. Arriving on the scene after the battle, the Kashmir battalion remained at Taveta for just over a week mounting picquets at Mission Hills, Lumi Bridge and on the Latema-Reata outpost line. Elsewhere Brigadier General van Deventer's flanking force and Brigadier General Stewart's 1st Division had met their objectives and joined up on the Sanja River on the night of 12th/13th. On 18 March Smuts ordered a general advance towards the Ruvu and between then and 21st several actions were fought at Kahe Hill and in the areas of the Soko Nassai and Defu rivers, but no Imperial Service infantry were involved. Meanwhile, Smuts had lost confidence in Stewart and the latter resigned on 20 March, returning to India, his place being taken by Brigadier General S H Sheppard. It was not until 21 March, as the actions were being completed, that the Kashmir battalion left Taveta for Kanguranga with a view to intercepting any enemy attempting to retreat from the Kahe district via the Lower Ruwu Bridge. Kanguranga hill overlooking the bridge, as well as the bridge block-houses, were found to be occupied. The bridge itself had been destroyed, as had all others in the area, but the enemy had withdrawn and a temporary light bridge was constructed over the river at the site of the original bridge. The composite battalion then returned to Taveta leaving a picquet behind at the bridge. The enemy had now been driven out of the Ruwu River area, Aruscha had been taken and the conquest of the Kilimanjaro-Meru area completed. Force Headquarters was established at Moshi with outposts along the line of the Ruwu.

68 TNA: WO 123/288: EA GRO 132, AMS 34 dated 16 March 1916. Lyall was promoted local/Lieutenant Colonel while commanding the Composite Battalion.

69 LG: Supplement No 29630 to London Gazette dated 20 June 1916, p.6130, Despatch by Lieutenant General The Hon J C Smuts dated 30 April 1916. The death of Major Mainprise is not recorded in the Faridkot Sappers war diary, nor is the appointment of his replacement as SSO, Captain Elliot Tillard, RE, who had come to East Africa in command of a Bridging Train (Sandes, *The Indian Sappers and Miners*, p.548.) Tillard's appointment as SSO is recorded in TNA: WO 123 288: EA GRO 338 dated 8 May 1916, effective from 1 February 1916, while his promotion to Major is noted in EA GRO 776, effective 30 April 1916.

General Tighe was recalled to India and handed over command of 1st Division to Major General Arthur Hoskins.<sup>70</sup> The timing coincided with yet another reorganisation, this time into three divisions. 1 (Brigadier General Sheppard) and 2 (Brigadier General Hannington) East Africa Brigades remained in 1st Division along with some artillery units. The other two divisions were comprised solely of South African troops, both eventually to consist of both mounted and infantry brigades.

Smuts deployed his forces wherever possible on high ground at Moshi, Himo and Mbuyuni and it was to this last place that the Kashmir composite battalion was sent on 29 March.

General Van Deventer's 2nd Division had been ordered to Kondoa Irangi while the remainder of the East Africa Force had been ordered to remain in situ until the seasonal rains had abated. They were of such ferocity that the rivers flooded and swept away almost all the bridges that had been built, including those built by the Faridkot Sappers, and roads that had been made good were once more turned into impassable quagmires. For the Kashmir battalion the time was taken up with fatigues, inspections, patrols, escorts and training, with some leave being allowed, until 18 May. It was at this time that Smuts again reorganised his force, re-distributing the two divisions into three columns – River (Brigadier General Sheppard), Centre (Brigadier General Hannington) and Eastern (Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Fitzgerald), with a Force Reserve of two South African battalions under Brigadier General Beves. The composite battalion of Kashmir Rifles remained with Sheppard in the River Column, the other half battalion of 2nd Kashmir Rifles was with Hannington in Centre Column. There were no Imperial Service Troops with Fitzgerald in Eastern Column. Smuts then started his move further into German East Africa with the initial aim of clearing the Pare and Usambara mountains before then heading south towards the Central Railway. On 18 May he deployed Fitzgerald's column of KAR from Mbuyuni to the Ngulu Gap, and two days later General Hannington's column from Ruvu along the railway while the column under Sheppard and the Force Reserve under Beves moved down the Pangani river. The Kashmir composite battalion formed part of General Sheppard's column but it was only on 29th, when acting as Advance Guard on the approach to Mabroni, that they came under fire. No casualties were sustained. The following day they formed part of a column which crossed the railway and cut a path through the bush to the open slopes of the Pare hills where, once again, they came under fire from enemy guns, though without sustaining casualties. The first week of June was spent in road cutting, the men of the battalion, as with all others in the force, operating on half rations because of the difficulties in transporting relief supplies. On 3 June orders were received for the half of the composite battalion

<sup>70</sup> Former Inspector General of the King's African Rifles, General Hoskins had served in France and then, in early 1916, been selected by General Smuts to be his principal staff officer. On arrival, however, he found that role taken by Brigadier General J J Collyer while he had been earmarked to take over 1st Division.

formed by 3rd Kashmir Rifles to rejoin General Hannyngton's column at Mkomazi, while the half battalion of 2nd Kashmir Rifles left out of the composite battalion would rejoin their own unit within Sheppard's column, the complete battalion then being re-designated 2nd Kashmir Rifles again.

On 9 June a smaller column under Lieutenant Colonel Dyke consisting of 130th Baluchis and 29th Punjabis moved ahead of the Brigade towards Mkalamo, the remainder of the Brigade following behind with 2nd Kashmir Rifles forming the main body and rear guard. Colonel Dyke's column became heavily engaged with the enemy and then the whole Brigade became involved. The Kashmirs were held in reserve with the exception of No 8 Company under Subadar Hakim supporting the section of 27th Mountain Battery on the right, and No 2 Company under Subadar Pershad Singh with 2/Lieutenant Wilshaw sent to reinforce 29th Punjabis. At about 1515 the Germans counter-attacked but Sheppard 'sent in a company [of 2nd Kashmirs] which repulsed the German counter-attack'<sup>71</sup> before being ordered to dig in for the night. The regiment lost two killed in action and two wounded. The following morning a battalion patrol found the enemy position and reported it evacuated so the Brigade moved straight to Mkalamo, all still on half rations. Here the Faridkot Sappers were called forward to build yet another bridge and then reconstruct a German trolley line destroyed by the retreating enemy. The absence of water continued to be a major problem and the Kashmir Rifles found themselves digging for water at Kihengere while en route to Handeni which was reached on 18 June.

Meanwhile Hannyngton's Centre Column, with 3rd Kashmir Rifles, moved to Mombo via Mkumbala and Mazinde, facing slight opposition on the way but sustaining no casualties. Having occupied Mombo on 9 June the column moved out to the Vuruni River on 11th, leaving a small garrison behind under the command of Major Tyndall, SSO 3rd Kashmir Rifles. The column then moved towards Korogwe and then on to Handeni which they reached on 19 June where 3rd Kashmir Rifles was employed on guard duties, picquets, refitting and road repair work. Brigadier General Hannyngton now received orders to clear up the situation east of Handeni-Korogwe and a column, under the command of Major Money,<sup>72</sup> was sent to occupy Mgambo Kadodo which was completed on 21 July, the enemy having vacated the place the previous evening. Some prisoners were taken but there were no casualties among 3rd Kashmirs. Four days later the majority of the unit was sent to Mumbwe, leaving a small garrison behind until relieved by Jind Infantry, before they then moved to Handeni at the end of the month.

Back with the River Column 2nd Kashmir Rifles were soon in action again. On 20 June they formed part of a reconnaissance to Mjimbo but a detachment under Lieutenant Colonel Lyall consisting of 2nd Kashmirs, one section of 27th Mountain

71 Hordern, *Official History*, p. 297.

72 TNA: WO 123 288: EA GRO 786 dated 28 August 1916. He had been promoted on 20 July 1916.

Battery, one squadron of 17th Cavalry and two armoured cars was detached to support South African units of General Beves' Force Reserve approaching Kangata. They joined forces on 21 June and a couple of days were then spent digging for water. On 23 June the battalion joined a special mobile column under Major General Hoskins charged with attacking the enemy now known to be in force in the area of the Lukigura river, 13 miles beyond Kangata, 2nd Kashmir Rifles provided the advance guard under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Haidar Ali Khan with Captain Kerr as SSO. They carried with them as much cooked food as possible since no cooking pots or followers were allowed with the column. On approaching the Kwa Derema ridge on 24 June enemy picquets were spotted and Captain Kerr was ordered to take the ridge with the advance guard. They reached the crest without a shot being fired but then came under heavy rifle and machine gun fire, as well as from a pom-pom gun and mortar. Supported by 25th Royal Fusiliers and machine guns of the 2nd North Lancashires, the troops mounted a bayonet charge, something that proved difficult to control given the thick nature of the bush. The charge swept over at least two enemy maxim guns and the pom-pom, all of which were captured intact, the enemy being driven in disorder off the ridge and into the valley below. General Hoskins expressed the view that 2nd Kashmirs had done 'very well indeed' and gave the regiment one of the captured German machine guns<sup>73</sup> while General Smuts' despatch noted "The Fusiliers and Kashmirs specially distinguished themselves in this action, in which only the dense bush enabled the enemy force to escape from complete capture."<sup>74</sup> The regiment lost three killed in action, seven severely wounded and one slightly wounded. One of those killed, 841 Havildar Atta Ullah, was subsequently awarded an IOM 2nd Class, effective date of admission 21 November 1916. The notifications of the award<sup>75</sup> give no details except 'For gallantry and devotion to duty in the field', so it is not confirmed that the award was for this action at Kwa Derema, but it is possible. The regiment had marched 25 miles, chiefly by night, and the men had been on their feet for 17 hours before the action started, with very little food and only whatever water they could carry. The difficulties under which all were operating were noted by Smuts, "Our transport had reached the utmost radius of its capacity, and the troops had been on half rations for some time. They also required rest and reorganisation. Several units were reduced to 30 per cent of their original effectives, owing to the ravages of malaria, and the difficulties of evacuating the sick were as

73 TNA: WO 95 5339: War Diary Kashmir Composite Battalion.

74 LG: Second Supplement No 29906 dated 17 January 1917 to London Gazette dated 16 January 1917, p. 692. Despatch by Lieutenant General The Hon J C Smuts dated 27 October 1916.

75 LG: 5th Supplement 29981 dated 12 March 1917 to London Gazette dated 9 March 1917 and GGO 676 dated 5 May 1917. Another two IOMs 2nd Class to 2nd Kashmir Rifles appear in the same references – 1157 Sepoy Hafiz Ali and 1467 Sepoy Rahim Ali but, again, without details of the action(s) for which awarded (see Appendix III).

great as those of forwarding supplies and reinforcements.”<sup>76</sup> The Kashmiris stayed out for a couple of days after the Kwa Derema action recovering German equipment and searching the bush before re-joining General Sheppard’s brigade at Makindu<sup>77</sup> on 29 June. Here there was a much needed pause to rest and recuperate, including the change of SSO with 2/Lieutenant Gerald Cooke, IARO, replacing Captain Alec Kerr who had been invalidated. Meanwhile, other events were taking place elsewhere in German East Africa.

Throughout the period of these forward operations most of the other Imperial Service Troops in East Africa had remained under the lines of communications organisation commanded by Brigadier General William Edwards, Inspector General Communications. For many, at least half of the year was spent in British East Africa but gradually they were brought forward into German East Africa, often to provide garrison troops for positions seized by the advancing operational columns.

The Bharatpur Infantry had started the year with half based at Mackinnon Road and half at Voi. On 9 January D Company (95 rifles) under the command of Captain Narain Singh deployed with the 2nd North Lancashires and 28th Mountain Battery as part of the Samburun Column. Captain Ayscough and Lieutenant Rose accompanied as SSOs. At Mlunguni the column joined up with 300 rifles of 25th Royal Fusiliers and a further 60 rifles of the Bharatpur Infantry, the whole coming under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Graham of the King’s Africa Rifles. On 10 January the regiment formed the advance guard and engaged the enemy near Mlunguni, losing three killed and four wounded, of whom one later died of his wounds. On 11 January the regiment furnished 100 rifles towards a larger patrol which then deployed around Ngurangami.<sup>78</sup> February saw them based at Bura, still in British East Africa, with some at Bibi providing escorts for railway working gangs, and the following month at Mbuyuni. They were then ordered to Serengeti and on to Salaita to relieve 2nd Kashmir Rifles prior to their move into German East Africa, and then further moves to Ndareda and Tungobesch. By September they had moved to Kilimantinde to join General van Deventer’s 2nd Division where they formed a permanent garrison.

The Jind Infantry had started the year at Msambweni as part of the Coastal force and continued to have contact with enemy patrols, losing one killed and one missing in action. On 24 January Captain George Denton, 12th Pioneers, joined for duty as SSO, transferring from 3rd Gwalior Infantry. 2/Lieutenant William Ritchie, IARO, also joined for duty as Assistant SSO. During February daily patrols were mounted without incident until 9th when a 20 man patrol under Jemadar Bahal Singh made contact with a 60-strong enemy patrol between Sadani and Kikoneni. One sepoy

76 LG: Second Supplement No 29906 dated 17 January 1917 to London Gazette dated 16 January 1917, p. 692. Despatch by Lieutenant General The Hon J C Smuts dated 27 October 1916.

77 Also referred to as Msiba.

78 Captain Ayscough was subsequently awarded a Military Cross and Lance Naik Sanwalia Singh an IDSM for this action.

and one bugler were reported missing, the latter returning on the following day, but 2011 Sepoy Jiwan Singh was believed wounded and a prisoner.<sup>79</sup> On 12 March a 100-strong patrol under Lieutenant Philip Gurdon, 14th KGO Sikhs and ASSO, 2/Lieutenant Ritchie and Captain Bihara Singh mounted a patrol to Umba camp. There was contact with an unseen enemy and Sepoy Lal Singh was killed in action. The scout of intelligence agent King Magee lost his way and could not find water holes, so it became a difficult patrol covering 60 miles in 54 hours, at one point being on the move for 15 out of 18 hours, with practically no water and a fight in the middle of it. At the end of March the regiment was transferred to Voi, but immediately on arrival a detachment was sent to Kasigau to relieve 40th Pathans, including on the armoured train *UNDAUNTED*. Subadar Kishen Singh was forced to retire on injury pension in April, his place being taken on promotion by Jemadar Bishen Singh.<sup>80</sup> The regiment remained based at Voi until June when they were relieved by 3rd Gwalior Infantry and were then sent to Taveta and across into German East Africa where they relieved the Cape Corps at Kahe Bridge, Same and Tanda. At the end of June they marched to Korogwe where they relieved a detachment from the 2nd Column who then went on to Handeni.

For the Kapurthala Infantry the first six months of the year were spent on railway protection duties on the Mombasa-Nairobi railway. There was little to report of their duties apart from the occasional accidental death associated with working close to working trains. Captain Nihal Singh was promoted to Major and Assistant Commandant on 24 June 1916.<sup>81</sup> In July, following the capture of Tanga, they were moved into German East Africa leaving behind a small guard on seven of the most important railway bridges.

As previously noted, the Rampur Infantry started the year in Kajiado but soon moved to Olekunoni where they provided a garrison. There is little of note in their war diary except the daily movements of convoys passing through their base. In May they were transferred to Longido and then Arusha where they relieved 17th Loyal Regiment, providing detachments at Bajiado, Kedougai, Lougido, Kampfontein and Kumbulum. In September they swapped their duties with 63rd Palmacottah Light Infantry and moved to Moshi, with detachments at Mbuyuni, Tavela, Sanja, Weru, Kahi Bridge, Kumasi and Mombo. In October 692 Sepoy Mian Jan Khan, who had been taken prisoner near Msambweni in March 1915, was reported in the war diary as having escaped and re-joined the force.

3rd Gwalior Infantry remained in the Mombasa area until June 1916 when it was relieved by 101st Grenadiers and proceeded to Voi where they relieved the Bharatpur Infantry. One company was sent to Nairobi for a couple of months but by August the regiment was back in Mombasa. Captain Herbert Norman, 102nd Grenadiers,

79 He was never found and is commemorated on the Nairobi British and Indian Memorial.

80 TNA: WO 123 288: EA GRO 415 dated 24 May 1916, AMS 460 dated 19 May 1916.

81 TNA: WO 123 288: EA GRO 784 (v) dated 28 August 1916.

replaced Captain James Bean, 101st Grenadiers from 5 March 1916 as SSO and was joined by 2/Lieutenant Edwin Jacob, 17th Infantry, as ASSO, on 16 June.<sup>82</sup> 2/Lieutenant Osmond Eliot IARO joined in July vice Captain George Proctor, 83rd Wallajahbad Light Infantry, who had been invalidated. In November the regiment moved into German East Africa and relieved the Bharatpur Infantry again, this time taking over defence posts on the Central Railway.

On the forward operational front, General Van Deventer's 2nd Division had occupied the Central Railway from Kilimatinde to Dodoma though no Imperial Service Troops were involved in the action. Similarly, there were none involved in the coastal seizure of Tanga on 7 July though troops from Kapurthala Infantry were soon on the ground afterwards providing garrison units at Longwe, Ngomeni and Mukuza and a further five locations shortly afterwards, eventually basing its headquarters at Amani. Troops from the Line of Communications, including Jind Infantry, were sent from Korogwe to Muhesa and then to Pangani on the coast. On 13 July a picquet was fired upon at the sisal factory in Korogwe, the Jind Infantry losing one man killed while two British soldiers were also killed. A follow up column under Lieutenant Colonel Charles Wilkinson, DSO, RE, consisting of Railway Sappers and Miners<sup>83</sup> and the Jind Infantry, was sent from Korogwe down the Pangani River to take an enemy force at Segera Hills. They arrived there on 15th, took the enemy by surprise and captured a Hotchkiss gun in good working order. On the following day the column marched towards Hale with Jind Infantry as advance guard. The enemy opened fire from across the River Ruvu and one Jind soldier was seriously wounded. From there the column moved to Kwa Mugwe where again a Jind soldier was seriously wounded before the column returned to Korogwe. On the western front, Belgian forces advanced up to Kigoma and Ujiji, thereby occupying a considerable amount of territory on the west of German East Africa.

It was now time for the 1st and 3rd Divisions to move forward from Msipa and advance through the Nguru Mountains towards the Central Railway. The enemy had laid numerous ambushes along the main road running alongside the Nguru and Kanga mountains. Smuts ordered 1 Brigade, including 2nd Kashmir Rifles, to make a feint attack against the main enemy position at Ruhungu while moving the bulk of the force on the left flank to reach the Russongo river six miles behind the Ruhungu entrenchments. Movement started on 5 August but the chosen route quickly became impassable for vehicular traffic and it was ordered back to Lukigura, as had been 1st Division HQ and its reserve battalions. Sheppard found that his intended route on

82 TNA: WO 123 288: EA GRO No. 738 dated 14 August 1916.

83 Hordern, *Official History*, p.326, Note II, criticised this decision on the grounds that the 25th and 26th Railway Companies were engaged in vital repair work so that the railways could be used to bring in much needed supplies. Although fighting troops, their use in an infantry role when infantry were sitting unemployed elsewhere risked taking casualties that could have affected future repair operations.

Ruhungu was also impassable and he returned to Msiha on 8 August, a decision that was later to be blamed for the failure of this part of the Smuts strategy.<sup>84</sup>

Similarly Hannington's 2 Brigade, including 3rd Kashmir Rifles, had a difficult time because of re-supply problems and, leaving 3rd Kashmir Rifles to hold Fagiri Hill which they had reached on 7th, he sent the remainder of his troops back to the Mjonga River to await supplies, a decision that cost 2 days. Meanwhile the Kashmirs came into contact with the enemy on 8 August at Matamondo<sup>85</sup> and suffered a few men slightly wounded and then engaged with them again at the same place the following day, though took no casualties on this occasion.

Sheppard's Brigade eventually left Msiha and by 13 August the force had reached the Wami River, the reserve units left at Msiha being called forward. Given the absence of war diaries for 2nd Kashmir Rifles for this period it is difficult to determine what role it played in the Brigade deployment. Of an action by 1 Brigade at Dakawa (Wami River) on 17 August the official history refers to Sheppard's Brigade "Now reduced to little more than two weak battalions (29th Punjabis, 2nd Kashmir Rifles, one company 2nd Rhodesia Regiment with four machine guns, one squadron of 17 Cavalry, and 5th Battery South African Field Artillery)."<sup>86</sup> 29th Punjabis and the company of Rhodesians were deployed initially in the morning but made little headway. They were relieved by 2nd Kashmir Rifles mid-afternoon but soon afterwards the enemy's fire had died down and later that afternoon scouts reported the German position abandoned. No fatal casualties are recorded against 2nd Kashmir Rifles for this date though 29th Punjabis, 2nd Rhodesia Regiment and 130th Baluchis which had been sent to reinforce 29th Punjabis all suffered casualties.

On arrival at the Wami River, where 1 Brigade was joined by Hannington's 2 Brigade, it was found that all bridges and crossings had been destroyed by the retreating Germans and several days were needed to effect repairs, thus preventing any immediate follow-up of the retreating Germans.

While this advance was being made the Faridkot Sappers had been working on the Korogwe to Handeni road, by this time ankle deep in dust and pitted to a depth of a foot or more. A fresh track was cut where possible in the bush alongside and the repair left to the labour corps which was now arriving. This work continued until mid-August when they were detailed to take a pontoon bridge to the Wami River to help relieve 1st Division, but the convoy of lorries laden with pontoons did not arrive until 18 August. The journey to Turiani, near the Wami River, took two days because of

<sup>84</sup> Hordern, *Official History*, p. 342.

<sup>85</sup> TNA: WO 95 5332 18: War Diary 3rd Kashmir Rifles Nov 1916–Feb 1917. One IDSM was awarded for this action to Jemadar Bambahadur, and a bar to the MC of Captain H L Lewis, SSO.

<sup>86</sup> Hordern, *Official History*, p.344. 3rd Kashmir Rifles, however, seemed to be doing better, for all that they were only half a battalion anyway. TNA: WO 95 5339 5: War Diary 3rd Kashmir Rifles April – October 1916 records an active strength on 1 August of three British Officers, 15 Indian Officers and 339 rank & file.

mechanical breakdowns, only to be told on arrival that the pontoons were no longer required. The Company therefore set to work on the Turiani-Quedi-Hombo track. After three days they re-located to Morogoro where they carried out repair work on bridges and roads in the town before moving on again on 13 September to join 1st Division. They were again engaged in road making and other heavy work, all the time their strength being reduced by sickness, though replacement drafts were arriving from India.

Intelligence suggested that the enemy had congregated at Morogoro and this became the next focus of activity with the forces crossing the Wami on 23 August. Given the already severe impact of malnutrition and lack of water on the troops and animals, coupled with the nature of the country to be crossed 'the march for that and the following day proved one of the most trying of the whole campaign'<sup>87</sup> but by the night of 24 August they had reached the Ngerengere river. After a day's rest Hannington's Brigade was ordered to proceed to Mikesse station, 20 miles east of Morogoro, while the brigades of Sheppard and Beves moved directly on Morogoro. Both places were found to have been vacated and so Smuts ordered the pursuit to continue, General Sheppard's 1 Brigade occupying Kiroka on 26th and Hannington's 2 Brigade continuing to pursue across country, being faced by constant rearguard actions.

The war diary of 3rd Kashmir Rifles, operating with Hannington's 2 Brigade, records that they left Dakawa on 23rd for the Ngerengere River where they stayed until 27th mounting various patrols. They then moved on to Minesse and then the MSSambissi River with 3rd Kashmir Rifles as the main body of the column. Acting as advance guard towards Mkuyuri and Pugu, they reached Kotwe on the 29th, 2½ miles from Pugu, when enemy guns opened up, the enemy force strength estimated at five companies with a number of artillery pieces. Although the Kashmirs suffered no casualties the Brigade as a whole suffered about 28 killed, mostly among porters and stretcher bearers. The following day 3rd KAR gained possession of the whole ridge and by 30 August 1st Division had driven the enemy across the Ruvu River. Other battalions of 2 Brigade led the way for the first week of September but on 7 September 3rd Kashmir Rifles, acting as advance guard again, came under sniper fire on the approach to Kabessear, losing two men killed in action with a further one lost on 9 September. On 10 September, at Nkesse, the Kashmir advance guard dispersed an enemy picquet of one officer and three other ranks, captured a German telegraph operator and killed or wounded eight askaris for the loss of one killed and two wounded.<sup>88</sup> Another heavy

87 LG: Second Supplement No 29906 dated 17 January 1917 to London Gazette dated 16 January 1917, p. 698. Despatch by Lieutenant General The Hon J C Smuts dated 27 October 1916.

88 TNA: WO 95 5332 18: War Diary 3rd Kashmir Rifles Nov 1916-Feb 1917. An IOM 2nd Class was awarded to 1131 Lance Naik Devi Singh, an IDSM to 82 Havildar Harku, and a 20 shilling reward to machine gun porter Neapara Moosa for this action.

engagement on 12th led to the loss of two killed<sup>89</sup> and six wounded. A total of 15,597 rounds of SAA had been expended over the four days of operations. On 17 September the battalion was sent to support General Enslin's 2 South African Mounted Brigade operating in the area of Kisaki where, on 25 September, Lance Havildar Manbir of C Company was killed in action.<sup>90</sup> The regiment returned to 2 Brigade on 1 October and from then until the end of the year time passed relatively quietly.

The port of Bagamoyo had been taken by the Royal Navy on 15 August and so a force drawn from the Lines of Communication troops under General Edwards was assembled there to prepare for the seizure of Dar-es-Salaam. Operating under the command of Colonel Price, the force was divided into three columns. 'A' Column, provided by 40th Pathans and the Jind Infantry, was to gain possession of the Central Railway line linking Morogoro to Dar-es-Salaam, 40th Pathans being detailed to secure the railway bridge over the Kingani river at Ruvu station, and the Jind Infantry to march on Ngerengere station about 40 miles west of Ruvu. The bulk of the force, divided into 'B' and 'C' Columns, was to seize Dar-es-Salaam; 'B' Column, comprising 2nd Loyal North Lancashire Regiment and a combined battalion formed of 129th Baluchis and 5th Light Infantry and 'C' Column comprising 2nd West India Regiment, a detachment of South African Infantry and the Zanzibar Rifles. All objectives were achieved, the Jind Infantry having reached Ngerengere on 3 September, meeting little opposition. After mounting a few local patrols they returned to Bagamoyo on 9 September, embarked on HMS *Hyacinth* for Dar-es-Salaam and on arrival took over various picquet duties. Shortly afterwards other sea ports of Kilwa Kiwindje, Kilwa Kissiwani and Mikindani were occupied. Meanwhile the Belgians had taken Tabora and Brigadier General Northey's Nyasaland-Rhodesia Field Force had taken Lupembe near the upper Rufiji River.

It was at this time that General Smuts again reorganised his forces. His despatch to London of 28 February 1917<sup>91</sup> noted:

It was clear that white troops who had repeated attacks of malaria or dysentery would in the further prosecution of the campaign in those extremely unhealthy areas be more of an encumbrance than a help. I therefore decided to abolish the Third Division under Major General C J Brits, including the Second Mounted Brigade under Brigadier General Enslin, and to return these officers with their staffs to South Africa; to incorporate into the First Mounted Brigade, under Brigadier General Nussey, all fit men belonging to the Second Mounted Brigade, and finally to evacuate from East Africa all white troops declared to be medically unfit by special medical boards. My forces, therefore, again became organised

<sup>89</sup> Though the casualty appendix for that day only lists one.

<sup>90</sup> He was subsequently awarded a posthumous IOM 2nd Class – see Appendix III.

<sup>91</sup> LG: Fourth Supplement Number 30026 dated 18 April 1917 to London Gazette dated 17 April 1917, p. 3,723.

into two divisions, under Major Generals Hoskins and Van Deventer respectively, while Brigadier General Beves' infantry brigade again became a force reserve under my immediate control. As a result of these steps close on 12,000 white troops were evacuated from East Africa between the middle of October and the end of December 1916, and their places to some extent taken by the new King's African Rifles battalions, which I was forming and training with the sanction of the War Office, as well as by the Nigerian Brigade under Brigadier General F H B Cunliffe CB CMG, which reached Dar-es-Salam in the second and third weeks of December.<sup>92</sup>

While recognising the impact of the appalling conditions in East Africa on the white troops, this policy did little to address the similar impact on those from India, including the Imperial Service Troops, some of whom had been in theatre far longer than those brought up from South Africa. Indeed, further reinforcements were arriving from India at this time, including 57th Wilde's Rifles, 30th Punjabis, two more Railway Companies of engineers, two Indian Army mountain batteries<sup>93</sup> and, from the Imperial Service Troops, 1st Kashmir Mountain Battery which had only been re-equipped with 10-pounder breech loading guns earlier in the year, replacing its somewhat ancient rifled 7-pounder guns. The Battery arrived at the beginning of December 1916 under the command of Major Dharam Singh with Major Arthur Cole RGA as SSO. By 23 December had reached Dakawa where it joined Brigadier Sheppard's 1 Brigade but was immediately transferred on to Brigadier General Beves' Force Reserve at Kisaki and then Karengwe where Lieutenant A H Gray, Special Reserve RGA, joined as an additional SSO.

General Smuts acknowledged the impact of disease when he recounted the delay imposed on the forward advance.<sup>94</sup> Large numbers of men were totally unfit, mechanical transport was in a seriously damaged condition because of the state of the roads, animals had died in their thousands (and)... "The strain upon all ranks of all units and services due to the steadily increasing effect of disease had reached the limit which was endurable."

For 2nd Kashmir Rifles, operating with Sheppard's 1 Brigade, October, November and the early part of December were spent based at Duthumi, on the Mgeta front, where they were engaged in manning the picquet lines or on road making. There was a regular exchange of rifle fire and artillery shelling between the opposing positions,

92 The return of such emaciated troops to South Africa, along with their harrowing tales of conditions under which they had operated, put a serious dent in the reputation of General Smuts.

93 S D Pradhan, *Indian Army in East Africa 1914-1918* (New Delhi: National Book Organisation, 1991), p. 132 claims 22nd and 24th Mountain Batteries were Kashmir IST but they were actually Indian Army.

94 LG: Fourth Supplement Number 30026 dated 18 April 1917 to London Gazette dated 17 April 1917, p. 3,723. Despatch by General Smuts dated 28 February 1917.

with the occasional serious casualty for 2nd Kashmirs. The war diary also recorded that 50 per cent of all ranks were unfit at this time.<sup>95</sup> Come mid-December it was thought that the heavy rains of the night of 13th/14th might have caused the enemy to abandon the trenches on the north bank but a patrol of 100 rifles under Lieutenant Cooke and Major Hoshiar Singh investigated and found them to be strongly held, the patrol escaping with two minor wounds only. Relieved by the Cape Corps on the Duthumi picquet line, a detachment of 350 rifles under Major Hoshiar Singh and Lieutenant Colonel Lyall marched towards Tulo on 23 December, the remainder of the regiment under Lieutenant Colonel Haidar Ali Khan, who was in indifferent health, remaining at Duthumi. On reaching Tulo the detachment became a part of the Kiruru column, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Lyall and coming under direct orders of GHQ. A first attempt to cross the Mgeta River was made on 26 December but the operation was postponed and the column returned to Tulo, exhausted because of bad conditions caused by heavy rain.

Jind Infantry, which had relieved the Kashmir Infantry at Ngambo at the beginning of August, was again in action at the beginning of October when information was received of a German position at Kissangire, 40 miles south of Ruvu Railway station. Suspecting it was designed to interfere with the operation of the railway, Jind Infantry was detailed to dislodge the enemy and gain possession. They left Dar-es-Salaam on 4 October with their headquarters and 240 rifles and marched via Kisserawe and Maneromango, arriving at Kissangire on the morning of 9 October. Major Denton and Lieutenant Howard conducted a reconnaissance before putting three companies and both maxim guns into the firing line, leaving one company in reserve. Two companies were detailed to attack from the south west and came under fire at the foot of a hill. The enemy's snipers were pushed back, the first line of enemy trenches taken and the second line of trenches captured with a bayonet charge. The enemy retired to a stone house and started enfilading the trenches from the upper windows, causing many casualties. Lieutenant Gurdon, one of the SSOs, was killed and four men under Subadar Surmukh Singh who tried to recover his body were either killed or wounded, as was the whole of the Maxim gun team. The trench was temporarily abandoned but re-taken once reinforced by the reserve company. Meanwhile the company advancing from the west was held up by very heavy machine gun fire. Major Denton was killed in action. In addition to Major Denton, Lieutenant Gurdon and Subadar Surmukh Singh, eight sepoys were posted as wounded and believed killed, a further eight were posted as wounded and missing, 28 sepoys were wounded, of whom two subsequently died of their wounds,<sup>96</sup> and one African porter was also wounded. The regiment retired without achieving its objective and at a very high cost for a unit operating as a half

95 TNA: WO 95 5332: War Diary 2nd Kashmir Rifles. The diary also records the award of the Order of St Stanislaus, 3rd Class, to Lieutenant Colonel Haidar Ali Khan.

96 One of these, 2238 Sepoy Sadda Singh, was subsequently awarded the IOM 2nd Class – see Appendix III.

battalion. It retired to Maneromango where it was joined by South African infantry reinforcements, and later 57th Rifles.<sup>97</sup> The loss of two SSOs led to a period of short-term appointments – Major Jas. Philips, 28th Punjabis, was immediately appointed as temporary SSO but he was quickly followed by 2/Lieutenant William Ritchie, IARO, who served from 10 October to 7 November in place of Major Denton, and then from 8 to 10 November in place of Lieutenant Gurdon; Captain John Britton, 83rd Infantry attached 63rd Palamcottah Light Infantry, who served from 8 November 1916 to 3 January 1917 in place of Major Denton; Captain Jones,<sup>98</sup> who served from 11 November to 18 December in place of Lieutenant Gurdon, and then from 4 January 1917 in place of Major Denton. On 18 October the regiment joined Major Logan's Column in a march on MSSanga. On arrival, however, it was found that the enemy had retired and this proved to be the case over the next two months with numerous ambush parties being deployed, the occasional contact being made with the enemy, but no casualties. On 15 December a patrol of 57th Rifles was reported to be surrounded by the enemy in the area of Huie and so a 50-man patrol under Captain Niamat Ali Khan was sent to their assistance. Although the unit war diary is very sparse on detail, this officer was subsequently awarded an IOM, the citation specifically mentioning 15 October.<sup>99</sup> On 16 December 150 rifles under Captain Jones were detailed to attack the enemy on the MSSanga-Wissega ridge where the enemy had driven in an outlying picket. The enemy opened fire but were pushed back and the ridge occupied at 1200 hours, for the loss of one sepoy killed and nine wounded. One askari was captured and reported the enemy carrying away 40 wounded as they vacated the position overnight. The Jind Infantry occupied the ridge, where they found the body of a German machine gun officer, and held the position until relieved by 57th Rifles, the ridge being renamed Fulwe Post.<sup>100</sup> This was the last serious engagement of the war for the Jind Infantry. Shortly afterwards Major Fortescue Porter, 17th Infantry, arrived as permanent SSO. Towards the end of December the Jind Infantry was sent to Kongo and conducted various patrols until 30 December when, under command of Major Porter, an attack was launched on the enemy at Mkamba, driving the enemy off.

On a broader theme, by 22 December plans were ready for the next major advance on all fronts, advanced general headquarters having been established at Duthumi. The operations in the west under General van Deventer and Northey did not involve

97 Subadar Bhagwan Singh, who was wounded in the action, was admitted to the IOM 2nd Class with effect from 21 November 1916 (see Appendix III). His citation merely states "For gallantry and devotion to duty in the field." While not specifically linked to the action at Kissangire, given the relatively quiet period for the regiment beforehand it is possible that the two are linked.

98 Not further identified.

99 See Appendix III.

100 The Jind Infantry won another IOM 2nd Class for this action – 2343 Naik Kehar Singh – see Appendix III.

Imperial Service Troops and are not further considered here, though they obviously formed a key part of the overall strategy.

Brigadier General Hannington had given up command of 2 East Africa Brigade at the end of October, his place having been taken by Brigadier General Henry O'Grady, while Hannington had taken command of a coastal force, to become 3 East African Brigade, concentrated at Kilwa. This formed the nucleus of the reorganised 1st Division, still under the command of Major General Hoskins but with the addition of O'Grady's brigade. Brigadier General Sheppard's 1 Brigade, still manning the Mgeta front and still with 2nd Kashmir Rifles forming a part, became an independent brigade under the direct control of General Smuts. 2 South African Infantry Brigade and the Nigerian Brigade also formed a part of the mix.

## 1917

The opening movements of the advance had been scheduled to start on the Mgeta front on 26 December but heavy rain forced a postponement until 31st when the weather improved. The two main aims were the seizure of a crossing over the Rufiji River, and the capture of an enemy force facing General Smuts.

2 South African Brigade under General Beves was detailed to march towards Mkalinso and then reach the junction of the Ruaha and Rufiji rivers and effect a crossing of the Rufiji. 1st Kashmir Mountain Battery joined the advance column under Colonel Morris on the approach to the Rufiji and the whole battery was across the river by 4 January without having fired any shots or sustained any casualties. On 7 January the battery came into action near Pangani Falls as part of a column comprising 6th South African Infantry and the Cape Corps, led by General Beves. Major Cole went forward with the infantry as Forward Observation Officer. A total of 93 rounds were fired after which the infantry went into the enemy positions, to find they had been vacated. While this attack was taking place, and as a distraction, a holding attack was mounted from the positions at Duthumi while at the same time, two flanking operations around the east and west of the enemy positions were mounted. For the flanking operation on the east a column was formed of 2nd Kashmir Rifles, detached for the purpose from 1 Brigade, and reinforced by a battalion from the Nigerian Brigade, all under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Robert Lyall, 2nd Kashmir SSO. He was instructed to reach Kiruru, 12 miles east of Duthumi, on the evening of 31 December and then, on 1 January, to move south and occupy Tshimbe on the Kiderengwa to Beho-Beho road. There they would meet the advancing 1 Brigade who had been entrusted with mounting the more complicated flanking movement on the west.

Of the second main aim of Smuts' advance, on 1 January the main part of Colonel Lyall's column marched to Msanoh, 2nd Kashmir Rifles acting as rear guard while 2nd Nigerians formed the advance guard and, at 1400 hours, crossed the Kiderengwa to Beho-Beho road at Msakoh swamp where they immediately came into action with

an enemy patrol escorting a 4.1-inch howitzer. The gun was captured by 5th Company 2nd Nigerian Regiment under Captain Gardner after a bayonet charge. Realising their line of escape had been blocked the enemy turned away from the Nigerian Brigade to attempt a different route and at 1730 hours Lyall's Column was attacked by 1st, 9th, 23rd and 24th Companies of the enemy with a 7-pounder gun, the attack lasting until 2100 hours during which soldiers of 2nd Kashmir Rifles joined the Nigerians to fill gaps. 2nd Nigerians suffered five rank and file killed, one British Officer and 14 rank and file wounded. 2nd Kashmir Rifles suffered two machine gun porters and one carrier wounded. On the enemy side one white soldier and 14 askaris were buried; three whites, six askaris and 60 porters captured. A large quantity of stores and ammunition was also captured. 2nd Rhodesian Regiment arrived at Kiderengwa and took over the prisoners and captured equipment. The Column was then ordered to occupy a position at Behobeho Kwa Mahindi and carry out a reconnaissance to Behobeho-Tschogowali where the enemy was reported to have camped.

A long and waterless march commenced on 3 January but by this time the Kashmir Rifles were much reduced by sickness. At 1500 hours the advance guard became involved with the enemy in a strong position on the banks of a nullah covering Behobeho Kwa Mahinda. The Column was initially reinforced by two armoured cars from Wiransi but these were later withdrawn from action. Fighting continued until after dark when 1285 Sepoy Menga and 1302 Sepoy Bhagwan Singh, both 2nd Kashmir Rifles, volunteered to conduct a reconnaissance of the enemy position. They successfully crawled through to the firing line and brought back valuable information. 2nd Nigerians lost one officer and eight rank and file killed, two rank and file died of wounds and 32 wounded. 2nd Kashmir Rifles suffered one soldier wounded; Sepoy Indra who was Lieutenant Colonel Lyall's orderly. During the night Lieutenant Colonel Dyke with 130th Baluchis and two field guns arrived and assumed command of operations. On 4 January the enemy was still in position so a flank attack by 130th Baluchis was planned while a frontal attack was launched by 2nd Kashmir Rifles, but at 1100 hours heavy firing was heard to the rear of the enemy position, who quickly abandoned it as Brigadier General Sheppard's brigade came in from their rear. At this juncture 130th Baluchis and 2nd Kashmir Rifles re-joined 1 Brigade. On 5 January they moved to Tschogowali en route to the Rufiji River opposite Kibambawe, 2nd Kashmir Rifles forming the rear guard of the Brigade's second echelon. Lieutenant Colonel Lyall's Kiruru column camped separately and took no part in operations for the crossing of the Rufiji beyond providing patrols on the north bank. 2nd Kashmir Rifles moved into the camp recently occupied by 3rd Kashmir Rifles who had crossed the river, but by now the regiment was reduced by sickness to one British Officer, five Indian Officers, 80 rank and file and one follower. No officer or NCO remained with the machine guns and, owing to the state of health of the detachment, it was ordered to hand over all machine gun ammunition and return to Morogoro. The very sick and weak were taken on lorries but for rest it was to be a long and difficult march without water, at the end of which only two mules survived. They reached Dakawa on 12 January and Duthumi on 13th. Four days later, with 50 rifles having been left at

Duthumi, 20 rifles at the Muhwa Summit and a further seven rifles at Ruvu Bridge, what was left of the regiment marched to MSSambassi and then Morogoro from where they were taken by train to Mikesse.

1st Kashmir Mountain Battery had deployed with another column under Colonel Morris on 10 January with the aim of supporting an attack by General Sheppard's force on the Kibambawe- Mpangas road but on arrival, finding that the enemy had fled, the battery was transferred to General Sheppard's 1 Brigade.

For 2nd Kashmir Rifles the remainder of January saw some 500 men in hospital, the rest worn out by fatigue. In February the headquarters moved to Mikesse Road, Morogoro, with small detachments still at Duthumi, Muhwa Summit and Ruvu Bridge. Additionally, a small guard was posted at a depot in Dar-es-Salaam, but large numbers remained in various hospitals. When the regiment was inspected by a medical board on 8 February almost 90 per cent were found to be unfit. This coincided with 1 Brigade being broken up and so the regiment came under the overall command of OC Troops Morogoro (Brevet Lieutenant Colonel Dyke, 130th Baluchis) where they were employed on road making.

3rd Kashmir Rifles, as previously intimated, did take part in the crossing of the Rufiji. They left camp at Dakawa on 1 January as part a left flanking movement, the bulk of the regiment under Major Money acting as advance guard. Meanwhile 70 rank and file under Subadar Harnam Singh, demonstrated on the north bank of Mgeta River from Main Drift to 29th Drift. While three companies of the enemy were engaged with 130th Baluchis near the enemy porter camp, the Brigade cleared the enemy's picquets of snipers left in their old positions and finally joined up with the Baluchis in the early afternoon. The regiment lost one killed and one wounded in this action. The following day they marched towards Tschogowali which was reached on 4th, the regiment acting as advance guard. On arrival they went into action, 3rd Kashmir Rifles on the left of 25th Royal Fusiliers, and in the short exchange inflicted some losses on the enemy without taking casualties of their own.

They then moved to Kibambawe, their machine guns under Lieutenant Eliot being called on to support the advance by 30th Punjabis on the south bank of the river while a small patrol under Havildar Balu went four miles along the north bank of the river to watch the enemy flank opposite Mpangas village. This action in the Mpangas-Kibambawe area lasted for several weeks and brought into play again two guns of 1st Kashmir Mountain Battery under command of Subadar Alif Khan, with Lieutenant Gray in attendance. On 19 January, this section had joined a column formed by the Cape Corps to move towards Nyakisiki. The enemy opened fire on the column and the battery replied, silencing the enemy machine guns. An attempt by a Cape Corps infantry patrol to approach Nyakisiki came under fire and the battery was able to cover their retreat. At this time the attack was joined by the machine guns of 3rd Kashmir Rifles and rifles from 130th Baluchis and 30th Punjabis and Nyakisiki was occupied on 20 January, a number of German and askari patients in the abandoned hospital being taken prisoner. In the approach to Nyakisiki the enemy were reported to have

lost six killed and 14 wounded, mostly from the effects of the Kashmir Mountain Battery fire.

While the left section was in action at Nyakisiki the right section, with Major Cole and Major Dharam Singh, joined the Nigerian Brigade under Brigadier General Cunliffe for an attack on enemy positions at Kibongo, near Mkindu. The Battery having laid down covering fire, the Nigerian Infantry went in to find the enemy had fled. One Kashmir shell was found in the enemy machine gun position and many others in close proximity to the enemy trenches. The Battery was complimented for the accuracy of its fire.

After these actions the whole Battery was again attached to Brigadier General Beves' Force Reserve.

General Smuts handed over command of the East Africa theatre to Lieutenant General Hoskins on 20 January, though the latter only held the post until 30 May.<sup>101</sup> Command of 1st Division, comprising 2 and 3 East African Brigades, passed to Major General Hannington, though Hoskins was soon to embark on yet another reorganisation of his troops, partly driven by the departure of both 2nd and 3rd Divisions to South Africa, partly to enable further forward movement from a number of locations once the rainy season had ended and the ground started to dry up. In the short time that he was in command, however, Hoskins was to note of the Kashmir troops, "The Kashmirs have done consistently well showing endurance and courage, and are especially suitable for this country," the comments being forwarded to the Secretary of State for India.<sup>102</sup>

Prior to his departure Hoskins formed a number of columns which, by the time he handed over command to Lieutenant General Sir Jacob Van Deventer, who had been brought back up from South Africa, consisted of:

- Lindi – one brigade under Brigadier General O'Grady
- Between Kilwa and Mohoro – two columns under Major General Hannington, later referred to as Kilwa Force or, after its commander, Hanforce
- On the Rufiji at Kibambawe – the Nigerian Brigade under Brigadier General Cunliffe
- The equivalent of one brigade pursuing one of the German commanders, Neumann
- Iringa – two battalions under the overall command of Colonel Taylor
- Morogoro – a small reserve
- Between Ubena and Songea – General Northey's force.

<sup>101</sup> He had been left in the invidious position of demanding more troops in order to continue the fight while Smuts had publicly stated that the campaign was all but over.

<sup>102</sup> NAI: F&P Proceedings Internal 1917: F&P-Intl-May-127-128-Pt B.

## General Key for All Maps

### Formation/Unit National Designators

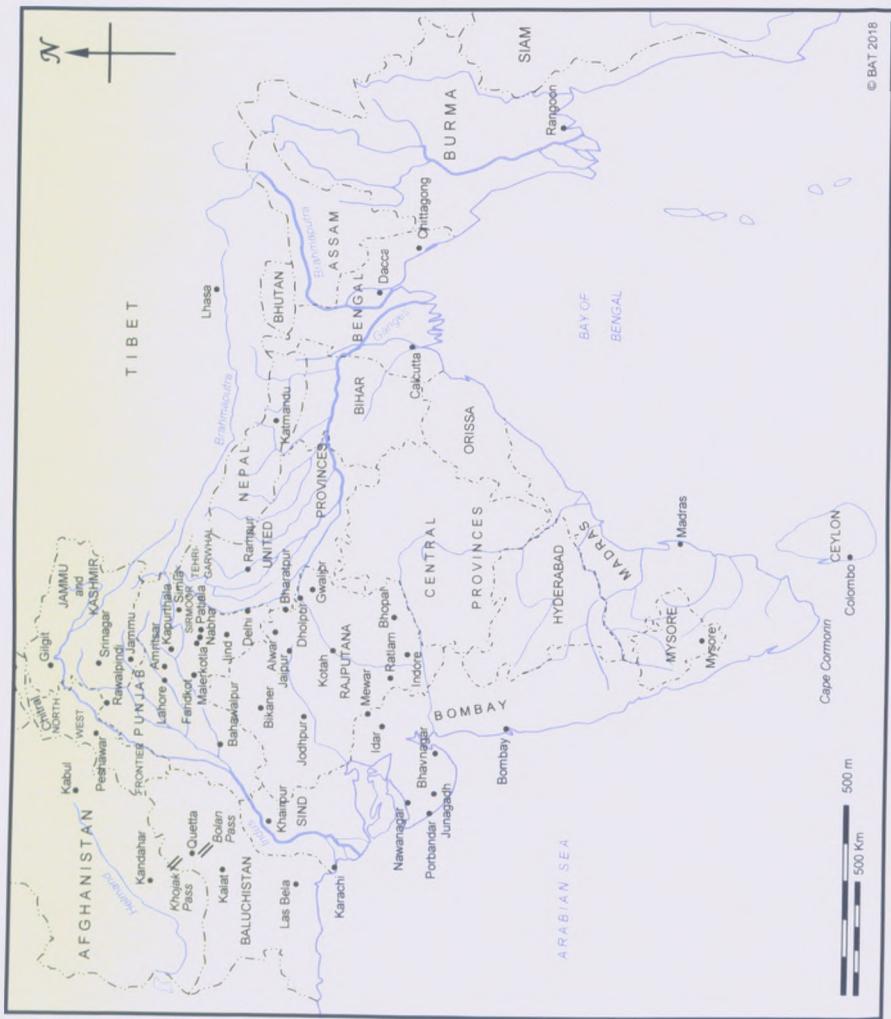
<b>Red</b>	German	<b>IND</b>	Indian
<b>Blue</b>	Allied	<b>MEF</b>	Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force
<b>BE</b>	Belgian	<b>NRFF</b>	Nyasan/Rhodesian Field Force
<b>BEAEF</b>	British East Africa Expeditionary Force	<b>PamForce</b>	Porto Amelia Force
<b>Cauc</b>	Caucasian	<b>PO</b>	Portuguese
<b>Comp</b>	Composite	<b>TUR</b>	Turkish
<b>EEF</b>	Egyptian Expeditionary Force	<b>RUS</b>	Russian
<b>IEF</b>	Indian Expeditionary Force		

### British and Dominion Regiments

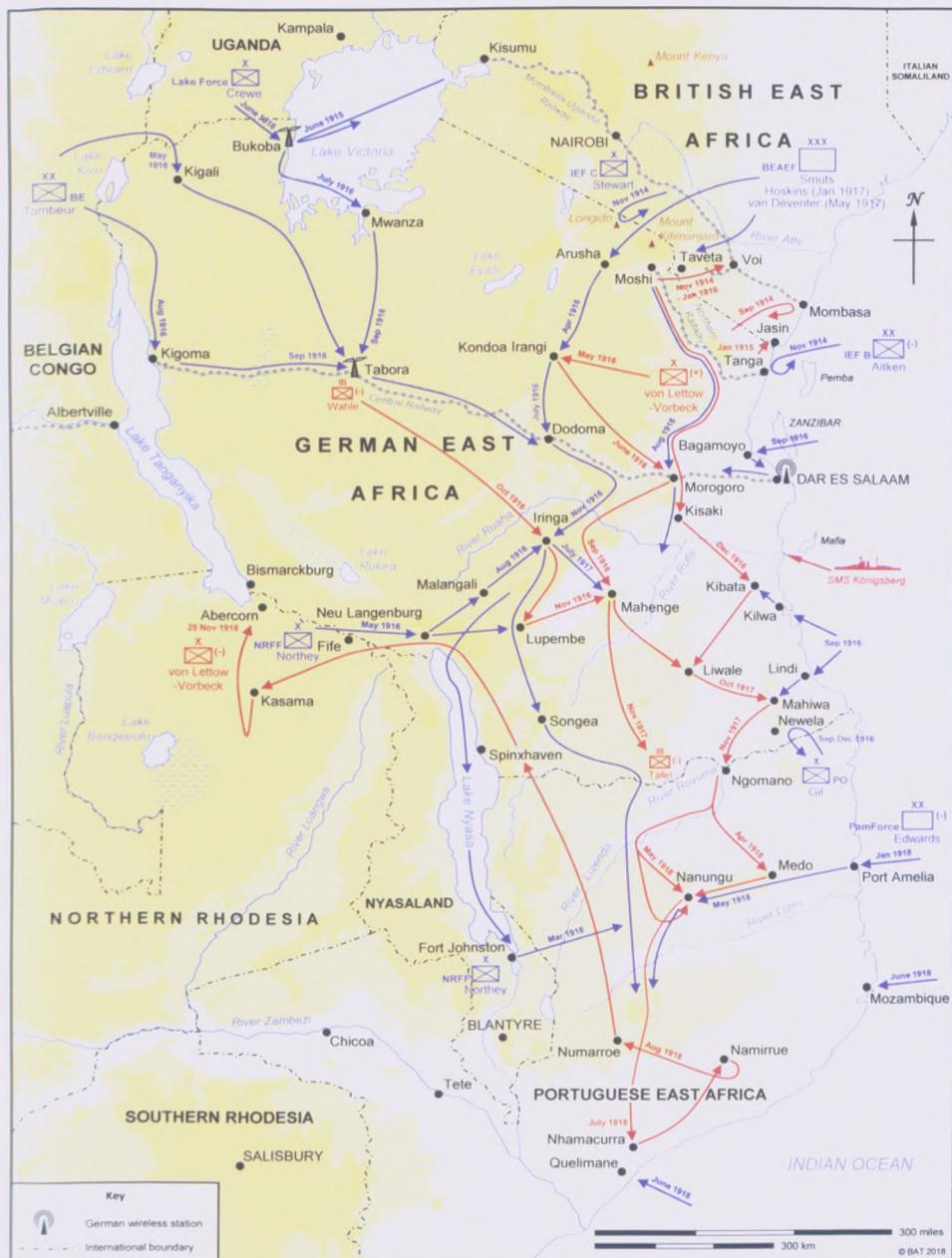
HAC	Honourable Artillery Company
Sher Rang	Sherwood Rangers

	Army Group		Battalion or Regiment (BR only)
	Army		Company
	Corps		Infantry
	Division		Cavalry/mounted
	Brigade		Artillery
	Regiment (German)	(-): (+)	Less troops from unit: With additions from other units

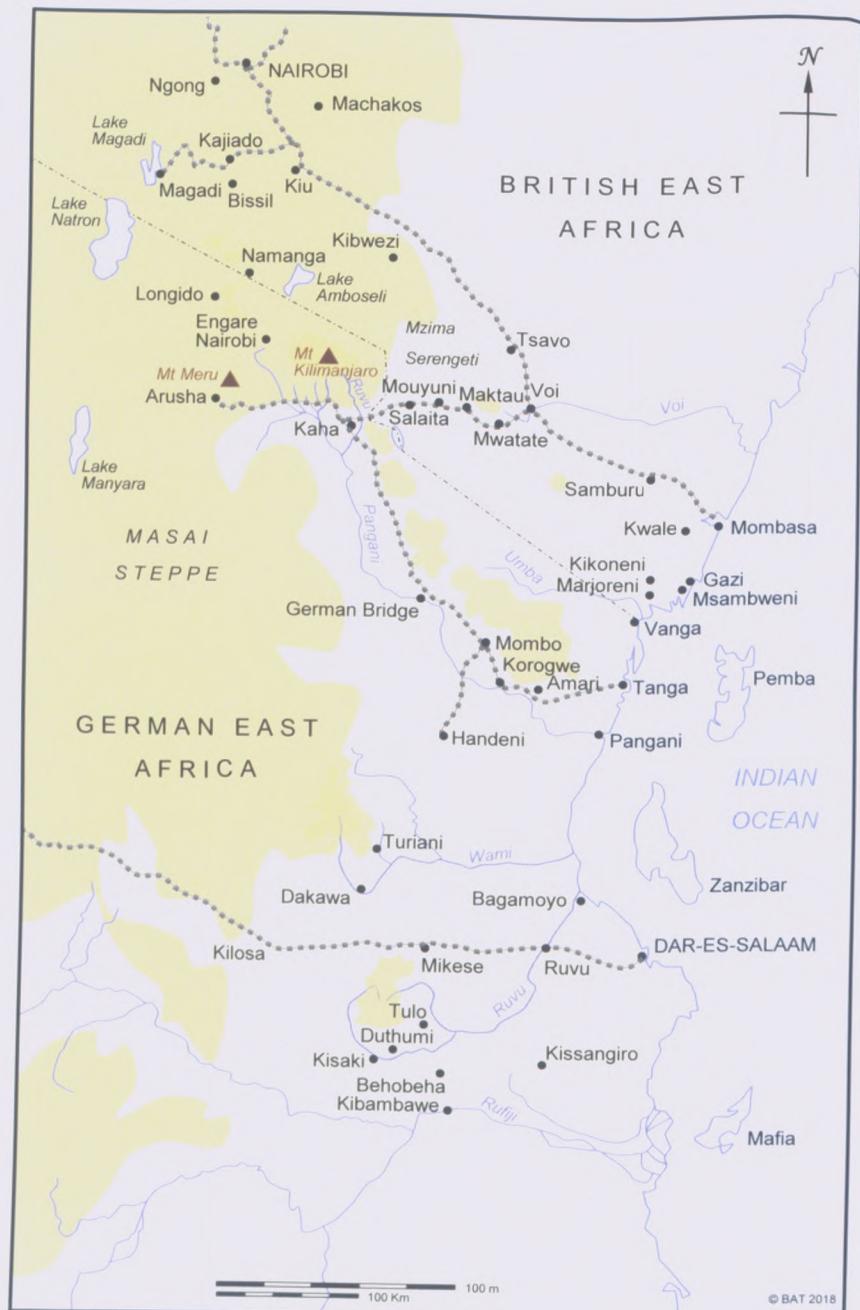
General key.



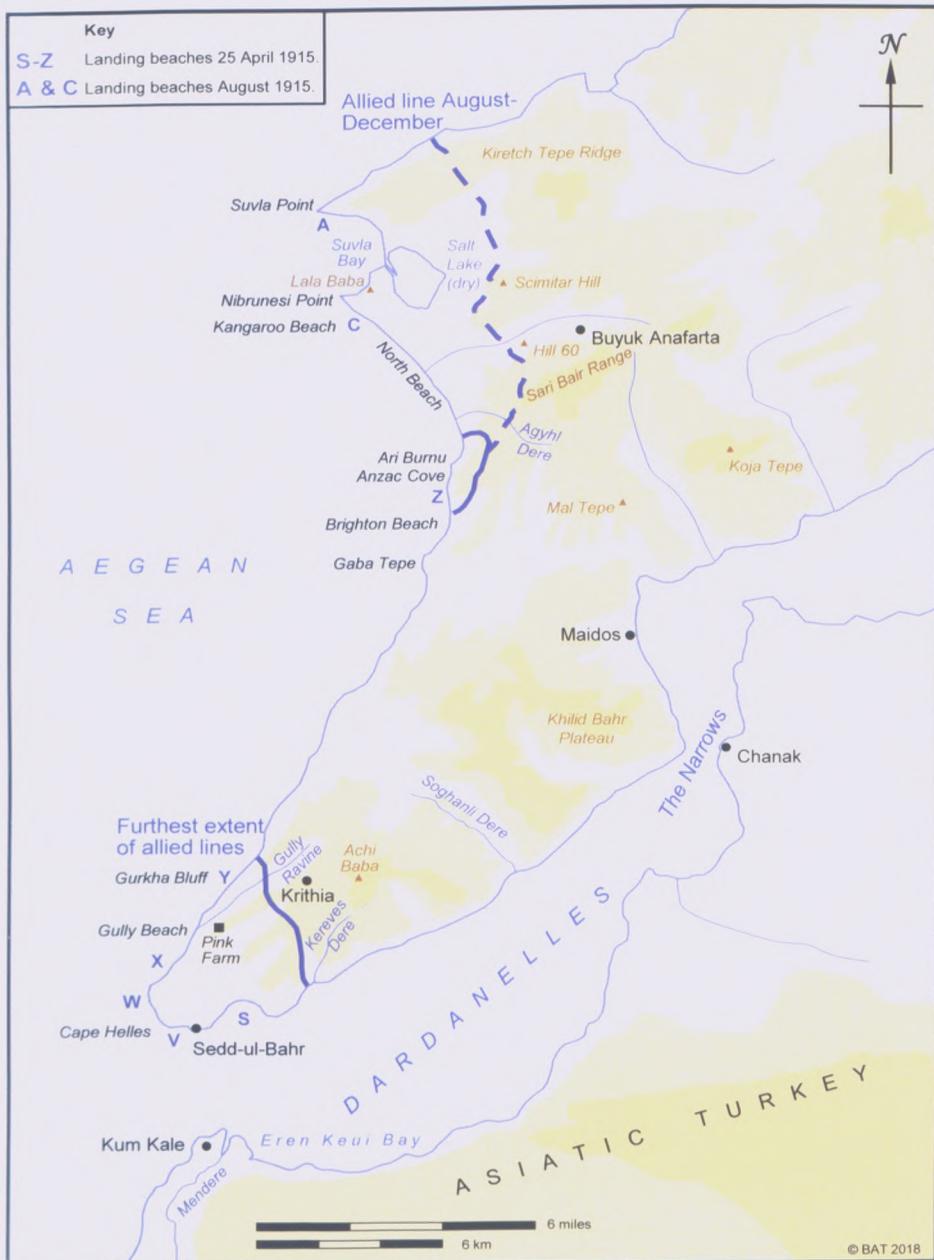
Map 1 India.



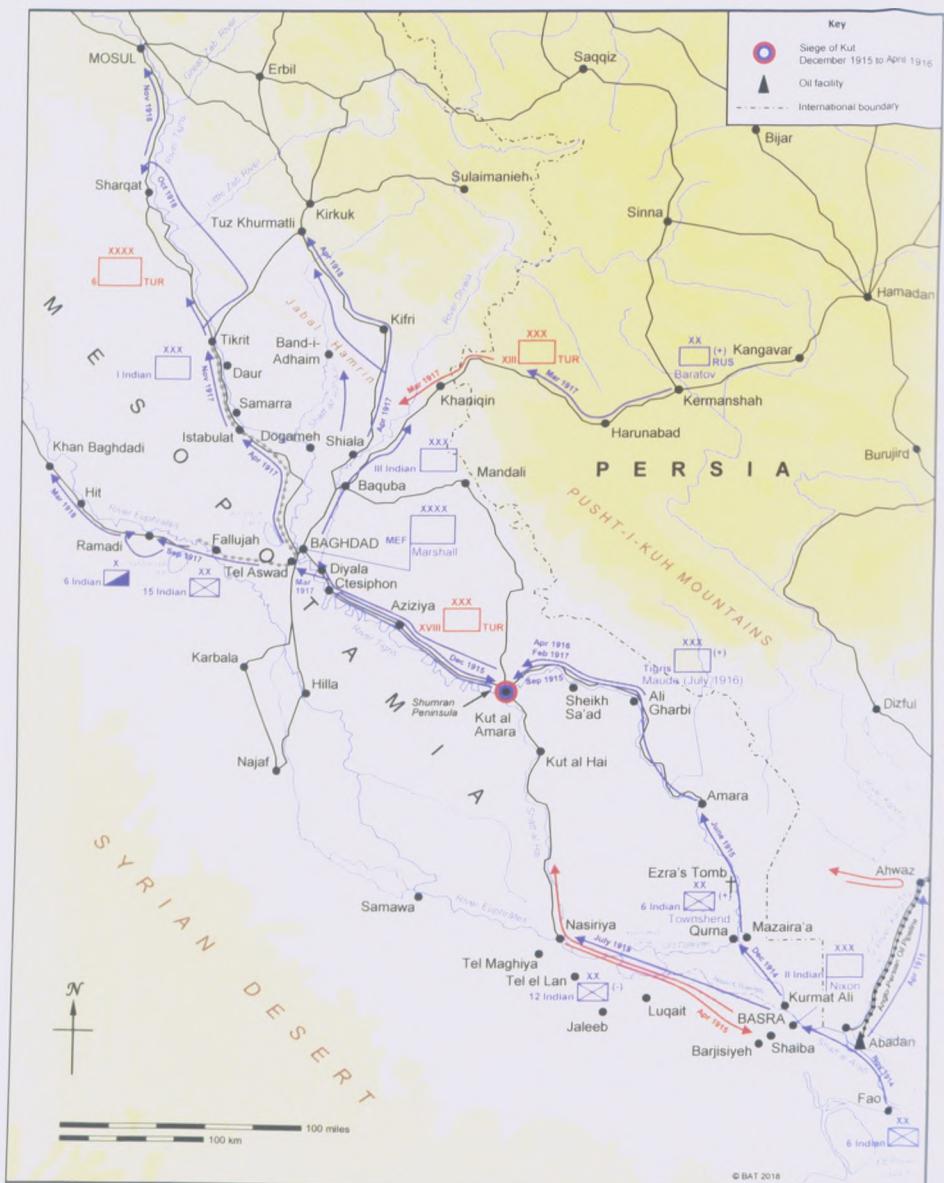
Map 2 German East Africa 1914-18.



Map 3 East Africa.



Map 4 Gallipoli.



In early February 1917 the Bharatpur Infantry had been sent in to relieve 10th South African Infantry, the last of the South African troops that had formed 2nd Division prior to their return to the Union. They occupied a number of small posts along the Ruaha<sup>103</sup> but came under the orders of the Inspector General Communications and did not form part of Colonel Taylor's (later Colonel Harry Tytler's) Iringa Column which was also based in the same area.

Van Deventer was under pressure from London to bring the campaign to a conclusion as quickly as possible, influenced by a number of factors including the need to divert shipping used to supply and maintain the force in East Africa to other theatres, and the difficulty of providing further troops from India given the possibility of further trouble on the North West Frontier. Any increase in his field force, therefore, had to be met by raising new units of the King's African Rifles. His objectives became the enemy troops in the field, rather than specific geographical locations. The only Imperial Service Troops participation in active operations at this time would appear to have involved 1st Kashmir Mountain Battery. The unit war diary is far from complete but, according to Watson,<sup>104</sup> the whole Battery took part in the advance on Nyandote in early March. The war diary then picks up from their subsequent arrival in Morogoro for the first half of April, and then at Dodoma. A section was detached to join General Edwards' force operating against Wintgens but it was not employed and returned to Dodoma where it remained until the end of July. On 30 July it left for Dar-es-Salaam and then joined the Lindi Column for the attack on Lowes Schaethels Farm on 3 August. At this point the war diary ends and so the following is again taken from Watson.<sup>105</sup>

On 10 August it joined General O'Grady's column and was in constant action against the enemy until the end of September...From 1 October onwards the Battery was employed in pursuit of the enemy as far as Mohiwa. Early in November it took part in the attack on the enemy's position in the vicinity of Niangas, being then attached to the Nigerian Brigade.

What is missing from this account, however, is the involvement of the Battery in supporting troops of Brigadier General O'Grady's column on 25 September at Ruko Ridge, near Mtua in the Nurunya valley, as detailed in the citations for two IOMs, awarded on this occasion to Jemadar Sarup Singh and Jemadar Khushal Khan.<sup>106</sup>

The Battery returned to Lindi in January 1918 and sailed for India in February.

On its departure General van Deventer wrote:

<sup>103</sup> TNA: CAB 44 CH 17, p.54, Lieutenant Colonel Charles Hordern, *History of the East African Campaign, 1914-1918*, Vol. 2, unpublished. The posts were Makunga's (75 rifles, one machine gun), Masenga (25 rifles), Kisada (25 rifles, one machine gun), Kikumi (35 rifles).

<sup>104</sup> Watson, *A Short History of the services rendered by the Imperial Service Troops*, p.36

<sup>105</sup> Watson, *A Short History of the services rendered by the Imperial Service Troops*, p. 36.

<sup>106</sup> See Appendix III.