

shortly afterwards our troops took possession of the town. The railway and all railway installations up to the Turkish frontier had been captured intact as well as several bridges which had been prepared for demolition.

On 8th July, a column was sent to capture Hassatche, the seat of the local Government in the Bec du Canard. Here the French decided not to fight and the town and fort were occupied without opposition.

On 9th July Ras el Ain was found to be clear of French troops. Lack of motor transport made further advance impossible. 5th Battalion 13th Frontier Force Rifles therefore remained in occupation of the Bec du Canard covering the railway and the remainder of the column returned to Mosul on 14th July.

26. On return of the Headquarters of 17th Indian Infantry Brigade to Mosul, the Headquarters of the 20th Indian Infantry Brigade moved to Baghdad, being better placed there to control its detachments dispersed in the oilfields and on the Kirkuk-Haifa pipe line.

The 10th Indian Division (less 20th Indian Infantry Brigade) remained in Syria until released for operations in Iran, it reverted to command of the General Officer Commanding Troops in Iraq on 10th August. It was maintained throughout from Iraq and this strained to the utmost the very limited resources in motor transport.

Reversion of Command to India and issue of Revised Directive.

27. Meanwhile, in view of the collapse of the Rashid Ali regime and the improved situation in Iraq, His Majesty's Government considered that control of the operations should revert to India as soon as possible as she had a greater interest and stake in them. It was therefore decided that the Commander-in-Chief, India, should take over control of all land forces in Iraq as soon as he was able to meet the administrative commitment.

At 0300 hrs. on 18th June the control of operations in Iraq passed back to the Commander-in-Chief, India, and Lieut.-General Quinan took over command of all the land forces in that area.

On 5th July, General Sir Claude Auchinleck, who until then had been Commander-in-Chief, India, became Commander-in-Chief, Middle East Forces, in succession to General Sir Archibald Wavell, who took up the appointment of Commander-in-Chief, India, on 11th July.

28. The outbreak of war between Germany and Russia and the conclusion of operations in Syria resulted in a changed situation in Iraq. A revised directive was therefore issued to Lt. General Quinan on 29th July. The instructions contained in this directive were to the following effect:—

(i) Lt. General Quinan was instructed that his object in general was to hold Northern Iraq against any enemy attack developing through Turkey and/or Iran, and to develop facilities for the maintenance and employment in Iraq of a force which might in certain circumstances amount to ten divisions (some armoured) and thirty squadrons Royal Air Force.

(ii) The operational boundary of British Air Force in Iraq was extended to include the area in Syria East of a line adjoining

Eamichliye to a point where the road Mosul-Deir-ez-Zor crosses the Iraq-Syria frontier.

(iii) Lt. General Quinan was to submit his plans for holding the Northern Frontier of Iraq against hostile advance through Anatolia or Iran. The construction of permanent defences in this area was to be confined to denying, where possible, the main lines of approach by armoured fighting vehicles into Iraq from Turkey or Iran with the object of slowing up an advance and forcing it into unsuitable country. Plans in detail were also to be prepared for an advance into Turkish or Iranian territory in order to seize defiles suitable for delaying action and to carry out extensive demolitions.

(iv) A suitable force was to be held in readiness to enable the occupation of Abadan and Naft-i-Shah to be carried out at short notice.

(v) Basra base was to be developed to maintain ten divisions and thirty squadrons Royal Air Force. Um Qasr and Koweit were to be developed as subsidiary ports.

Situation in Iran.

29. The policy to be adopted in view of the unsatisfactory attitude of the Iranian Government to the representations made regarding the expulsion of Axis nationals from Iran had been under consideration by His Majesty's Government and the Soviet Government during the early weeks of July and on 22nd July Lt. General Quinan was instructed to be prepared to occupy Abadan and Naft-i-Shah and at a later date the oilfields in South West Iran. On 24th July intimation was received that His Majesty's Government had approved of the proposals for the application of Anglo-Soviet diplomatic pressure backed by a show of force on the Iranian Government in order to secure the expulsion of Axis nationals from their country; should diplomatic pressure fail force was to be used.

Instructions were therefore issued to Lt. General Quinan to make preliminary arrangements for:—

(i) The concentration of a striking force on the Iranian Frontier in the Basra Area of:—

One Indian Infantry Division.

One mechanized cavalry brigade.

Two Indian Armoured Regiments.

To be supported by one Army Co-operation squadron R.A.F.

The object of this force was to occupy the oilfields and refinery at Abadan.

(ii) The assembly of a naval/military force at the head of the Persian Gulf consisting of three or four sloops and two companies of infantry, to occupy Bandar Shahpur and seize the port and shipping.

Lt. General Quinan was informed that the above forces were to be ready to move into Iran in the second week in August but that troops were not to be concentrated in the Basra area until further orders were issued. He was further instructed to be prepared to send a small force to seize the Naft-i-Shah oilfields and to detail one infantry battalion for the occupation of Bushire.

For the purpose of this operation the 4th Cavalry Brigade (later renamed 9th Armoured Brigade) from Palestine had been placed at