

hrs. on 25th August. As it was then too late to clear up Abadan town or Bawarda that day, a cordon was formed round the refineries and the troops bivouacked. The following day was spent in clearing up Abadan island.

36. 18th Indian Infantry Brigade (less one battalion) which had with it one battalion of the 24th Indian Infantry Brigade, a squadron of the Guides Cavalry and a battery of Field Artillery, and 25th Indian Infantry Brigade, with 13th Lancers under command, met with little opposition.

18th Indian Infantry Brigade advanced from Tanumah on the night 24th/25th August, and, moving across the desert to the North of the various water obstacles and defensive positions, came in on Khurramshahr at 0410 hrs. Mopping-up operations were delayed by a considerable number of Arabs who joined in the fighting from the palm groves. On 26th August a ferry was established on the river Karun, and 18th Brigade with a Troop Carrying Motor Transport Company completed the crossing on the afternoon of 27th August advancing beyond Dorquain Pumping Station to a point half way to Ahwaz.

25th Indian Infantry Brigade moved from Tanumah and captured Qasr Shaikh by midday on 25th August, from where it protected the Northern flank of 18th Indian Infantry Brigade. On 26th and 27th August, 25th Brigade carried out reconnaissances towards Ahwaz, and on 27th August it moved forward along the west bank of the river Karun to within 25 miles of Ahwaz.

37. The advance on Ahwaz by the 18th and 25th Brigade Groups, East and West respectively of the Karun river, began in the early hours of 28th August. Some resistance was encountered, but as our troops were approaching Ahwaz news of the Shah's "cease fire" order was received from an Iranian envoy. The Iranian General ordered his troops to return to barracks in Ahwaz.

38. One Company of Infantry in six Valentia aircraft landed at 0700 hours on 25th August at Haft Kel to protect the oilfields there and to escort the British and Indian women and children from the main fields at Masjid-i-Suleiman to Haft Kel. Two of the Valentias crashed on landing but there were no casualties.

39. The Bandar Shahpur operation was carried out most successfully on 25th August. The naval force* including two companies of the 3rd Battalion 10th Baluch Regiment (under Major W. E. Maxwell) on board the Armed Merchant Cruiser H.M.S. "Kanimbla" (Captain W. L. G. Adams, R.N.) had sailed from Basra on the night 11th-12th August. She cruised in the Persian Gulf until 24th August and approached Bandar Shahpur harbour in the early hours of 25th August.

One Company was landed at 0715 hours and had secured Bandar Shahpur, meeting only slight opposition, by 0830 hours by which time the second company had landed.

40. Meanwhile operations had been proceeding in the Naft-i-Shah-Pai Tak Pass area. The Iranian troops in the latter area were reported to have been heavily reinforced. The 9th Armoured Brigade arrived at Khaniqin from

Kirkuk on 22nd August and came under the orders of Brigadier Aizlewood in command of a column known as Hazel Force, consisting of the 2nd Indian Armoured Brigade Group (less two regiments), the 9th Armoured Brigade (all in trucks, no armour) and the 1st Battalion 5th Royal Gurkha Rifles and the 2nd Battalion 7th Gurkha Rifles.

41. On 23rd August Major General Slim, 10th Indian Division, now available on return from Syria, was placed in command of operations in West Iran. The 21st Indian Infantry Brigade (less one battalion) and 157 Field Regiment at Habbaniya were placed at his disposal and ordered to move to Khaniqin.

Major General Slim, who arrived at Khaniqin on the evening of 24th August with a detachment of his Headquarters, decided to make no change in Brigadier Aizlewood's plan for the capture of Naft-i-Shah and the advance on Shahabad via Gilan. He decided to employ the 21st Indian Infantry Brigade Group against the Pai Tak Pass position in co-operation with the turning movement via Gilan.

42. Naft-i-Shah oilfields were secured against slight opposition in the early hours of 25th August.

Qasr-i-Shirin was cut off from the North West, North and East by 0445 hours on 25th August by the 14/20th Hussars after a difficult night march, and was captured later during the morning by a column advancing from the South. This column continued the advance and reached Sari Pul Zuhab, five miles West of the Pai Tak Pass, by 1530 hours on 25th August.

Meanwhile another column left Khaniqin direct for Gilan meeting with no opposition until it reached the Eastern outskirts of Gilan where it was held up until nightfall by rifle, machine-gun and anti-tank fire. Three attempts to get forward with light tanks before dark on 25th August failed.

The Iranian troops remained in position East of Gilan during the night covering an anti-tank obstacle, but were forced to withdraw by midday on 26th August. The advance from Gilan towards Shahabad continued on 26th August, a number of road blocks were encountered but no opposition although the route provided a series of good defensive positions.

Shahabad was occupied at 0700 hours on 27th August.

43. Meanwhile the Pai Tak Pass position, which was reported to be strongly held was bombed by the R.A.F. on the evening of 26th August. The 21st Indian Infantry Brigade (less one battalion) reached Sari Pul Zuhab during the night 25th-26th August and reconnoitred the approaches to the Pai Tak Pass on 26th August. The Iranian troops abandoned the Pass hurriedly during the night 26th-27th August and the 21st Brigade advanced without opposition on 27th August to Karind where they met patrols sent from Shahabad from the 9th Armoured Brigade during the afternoon.

44. Reconnaissance from Shahabad on 27th August found the Iranian troops holding the high ground overlooking the village of Zibiri on the road Shahabad-Kermanshah. From this position Iranian artillery shelled the road West of Zibiri accurately on the morning of 28th August. An attack on the position was

* H.M. Ships Enterprise and Hermes and R.F.A. Pearlleaf.