

column was the Senior Political Officer of British Somaliland. Moving by way of Durukhsi and Bohodle, the column reached Garoe on 24th April where the post was handed over by the Italian Residente. The column reached Gardo on the 28th April and found it evacuated by the Italians.

The arrival of the column at Gardo, combined with the movement of a police patrol from Burao to Erigavo and Buran, did little, however, to stop the raiding instigated by dispersed Italian Banda, which was being carried on in the Mijertein and into British territory as far as Adad, and it was not until a detachment of the resuscitated Somaliland Camel Corps engaged a party of raiders at Karamam Plain on 7th May, that the raiders began to show signs of withdrawing from British Somaliland.

67. The column left Gardo on 2nd May and at Laso Dawao, on 4th May, was joined by a flight of Vincent aircraft from Aden.

It was known that there was a small Italian force at Bender Cassim, and opposition was anticipated in a narrow defile at Carin. In order to induce the Italians to surrender a message was dropped from the air over Bender Cassim on 5th May calling for an envoy to be sent to Carin on 6th May. As the aircraft performing this task met no opposition, a second aircraft landed and immediate negotiations were made with the Residente for the surrender of the post. The column reached Bender Cassim on 6th May, and 67 Italians, of whom 50 were naval military or government employees, were collected together with their arms.

68. After Bender Cassim had been taken over by a detachment of police, the column left on 11th May for Dante.

Dante is virtually an island, and to capture it the assistance of the navy was sought; but when the column reached Sousciuban on 13th May, reports were received that the Dante garrison was waiting to surrender. The Residente was met 12 miles from Hordic and, after discussions, the Italians agreed not to destroy the oil-tanks and wireless (which had been prepared for demolition) on the condition that they should not be used for military purposes. Dante was occupied on 16th May, with the assistance of boats provided by the Navy, and the 167 Italians were evacuated by sea.

69. The next objective of the column was Cape Guardafui, which it was decided to take by landing from the sea. On 18th May, the ships arrived off Cape Guardafui and under cover of pom-pom fire the troops were landed. The progress of our troops was slow owing to the extreme heat, high winds and soft sandhills. Any attack on the Tohen wadi, where the enemy was reported to be had to be postponed to the following day. Meanwhile a detachment had been despatched to capture the lighthouse, which it achieved successfully, and the lighthouse was put into use at dusk that day.

On 19th May, the enemy in Tohen Wadi surrendered without opposition, and 19 officers and 61 Italian O.R.s were embarked and evacuated to Aden.

70. On the 21st May, a platoon was sent round by sea to Alula, where 4 Italian officers and 35 O.R.s were evacuated without incident to Aden.

71. The success of these small operations, which entailed a march of 800 miles and the

maintenance by hired transport of a small column 630 miles from its base, reflects great credit on all those who carried them out. Close co-operation between the column, the Navy and the Royal Air Force accounted for the fact that no effective resistance was offered by the enemy.

#### *E. Operations for the Occupation of Maji by 25th E.A. Infantry Brigade*

(8th April—20th April, 1941)

72. In accordance with the policy stated in my previous report, I decided to send the 25th E.A. Infantry Brigade north from Kalam to occupy Maji, to get in touch with the Sedan Equatorial Corps which was operating westwards from the Sudan, and to hand over this area to them.

73. The advance from Kalam commenced on 8th April, the 2/3 K.A.R. providing the advanced guard. Washa-Waha, 75 miles to the north, was reached without incident on 9th April. During this period it rained almost continuously and movement of M.T. was only possible through the continuous efforts of the section of the South African engineers attached to the force.

The 2/4 K.A.R. reached Washa Waha on 12th April after further delay owing to floods.

The native chief of Maji district reported to our troops at Washa Waha that the Italians were evacuating Maji and burning buildings and that he was anxious that we should occupy the town.

Owing to the administrative limitations imposed by the state of the roads the 2/3 K.A.R. remained at Washa Waha and only the 2/4 K.A.R. proceeded to Maji.

Slow progress was made owing to rain, land mines and road demolitions. In all 134 land mines were removed from five separate mine-fields and three effective road-blocks were cleared.

74. Maji was entered by our advance troops on 20th April without opposition. The following day contact was made by W/T with the patrol of the Equatorial Corps approaching from the north-west.

Our troops pushed forward to Masci, six miles north of Maji and met the company of the Equatorial Corps there on 28th April.

On the same day a company of the 2/4 K.A.R. with attached troops set out north from Masci to clear the road to Baciama, 58 miles to the north.

75. Approaching Giamo, 30 miles north of Masci, the force encountered and routed a small enemy patrol. Giamo was occupied without further incident.

Pushing on from Giamo, an enemy force, consisting of some 25 Italians and 200 banda, was found occupying a defensive position on a ridge overlooking the road.

Our patrol attacked the position, inflicting considerable casualties on the enemy with mortar and L.M.G. fire, but was unable before nightfall to clear the whole position.

The following morning, however, reconnaissance revealed that the enemy had withdrawn during the night.

76. Once this district had been handed over to the Equatorial Corps, I had intended to withdraw the brigade to the area Lokitaung-Kalam, but owing to the rains and floods the