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WO 106/886

BRIG-GENL. C. FRY'S. DESPATCH.
COMMANDING SHAIBA

No 1815; dated 21-4-15.

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Report on the Operations

at

SHAIBA

on

11th and 12th April 1915.

by

Major General C. I. FRY, Indian Army,

Commanding at SHAIBA.

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No 1815
CONFIDENTIAL.

Dirhamiyeh,
21st April 1915.

Report on the Operations at SHAIBA

on 11th and 12th April 1915.

From Major General C.I. FRY,
Commanding at Shaiba.
To Major
Brigadier General, General Staff,
Indian Expeditionary Force "D".

Sir,

I have the honour to submit this report which deals with the first portion of the operations at SHAIBA and covers the period during which I was in command of the Garrison.

- 11th April 1915
7 a.m. E. The first indication of the advance of the Turkish Forces from NAKHAILA was a message received from my normal protective Cavalry reconnaissance at 7 a.m. to the effect that BORJISIYEH WOOD and SHWEBDA (Appendices C and) were occupied by hostile cavalry and that further troops were advancing on the latter place from the North West.
- 9 a.m. The Protective Cavalry were reinforced by the 33rd Cavalry and at 9 a.m. information was received that a large body of the enemy's cavalry had been located in BORJISIYEH WOOD, another body behind it, a large body of arabs to the N.W. of SHWEBDA and a large column of regular infantry estimated at 4000 men was advancing on SHWEBDA from the direction of NAKHAILA. No guns could be distinguished and there were no signs of enemy in other directions.
- 3-30 p.m. Except for the approach of the columns on SHWEBDA, the situation remained unchanged till about 3-30 p.m. when our advanced patrols were ~~driven~~ driven back by hostile Cavalry.
- 4 p.m. At 4 p.m. the 6th Cavalry Brigade under Brigadier General H. KENNEDY moved out supported by a small mixed column always held in readiness for the occasion. The enemy however retired into BORJISIYEH WOOD and by 7 p.m. all was quiet.
- 7 p.m.

3. My intelligence this evening pointed to an attack during during the later portion of the night by a force of some 12,000 regulars (mostly Kurds).

12 Field Guns.

10,000 tribesmen.

The plan of attack was said to be

- (a) An attack by the Turkish Regulars direct on the Fort
- (b) SAIYID ~~YEZDI~~ and his following was to attack from ~~THE~~ ANA's Tomb the North of our position
- (c) AJAIMI's tribesmen on the South of SHAIBA from ZUBAIR
- (d) YUSUF with the ^{bed} malick attacking from OLD BUSRA.

All tents were struck and troops occupied their alarm posts. The distributi~~on~~ of the Garrison, which varied only slightly during the ensuing day, is given in Appendix (D).

12th April
1915
5 a.m.

4. The expected attack was actually made at 5 a.m. on 12th April 1915, and turned out to be very much on the above plan. Heavy fire was opened on the FORT Section of the defences from the West and South West just as it was becoming light, our 2 piquets in this direction making the enemy disclose themselves and retiring without loss.

The enemy's advanced line reached to about 900 yards of the position and were then checked.

5-45 a.m.

At 5-45 a.m. enemy's gun fire was opened on the fort from 2 guns to the Westward and these were engaged by our Field Artillery.

6-10 a.m.

A determined advance of the Turkish Infantry was made at 6-10 a.m. supported by heavy rifle fire mainly against South ~~Sx~~ SALIENT but their attacking line was extend~~ed~~ around the West of the FORT up to KILN POST.

6-30 a.m.

Large bodies of enemy's infantry were seen advancing over the horizon to the westward and masses were also seen occupying the ridge of hills immediately North of OLD BUSRA.

7 a.m. By 7 a.m. the enemy were definitely repulsed and retired leaving small parties in observation who entrenched themselves about 1700 yards from the West and South West of our position. The attack against CAIRN POST was not very determined and

8 a.m. broke up about 8 a.m. considerable numbers however collecting in the Tamarisk Wood to the South of that Post.

5. Hitherto on the Northern face of the position all had been quiet and the defences at KILN POST and WEST WORK had not been seriously engaged, but at 9 a.m. a large force of irregulars with 6 standards occupied NORTH MOUND and houses in the vicinity - Here they remained all day and the subsequent night making various attempts to advance on our position but they were easily checked by rifle and machine gun fire.

6. Meanwhile further enemy's guns had opened on the position till it was estimated that they had 2 heavy 4.5", 6 Field and 4 mountain guns dispersed mostly in pairs in an arc extending from West to the South.

Their heavy guns kept up a good and accurate fire but never exactly located our Batteries which were under cover, while their other guns did little harm their shells in most cases bursting too high. Our Artillery observing officers on KILN POST located the flashes of the enemy's artillery and in most cases their detachments were driven off and 6 guns were completely silenced - these guns were withdrawn in the middle of the day while the mirage rendered their position invisible. 2 guns of 23rd Mountain Battery which had been placed for the night immediately S. of the Fort were withdrawn about 11 a.m. without difficulty.

11 a.m. 7. Preparations had been made for the despatch of a column of all arms towards OLD BUSRA to cover the landing of the 30th Brigade and a Mountain Battery which were known to have left Busra. This however was not put into effect as that force was

recalled to Busra.

2-15 p.m. 8. The enemy resumed their attack at 2-15 p.m. mainly directed as before on the South Salient, and to prevent them establishing themselves on the western portion of the Dorset Position I sent $\frac{1}{2}$ Battn.2/Norfolk Regt from the Reserve to occupy this place, replacing them in my General Reserve by $\frac{1}{2}$ Battn.2/Dorset Regt from 16th Brigade.

2-30 p.m. 9. Up to this time nothing of note had occurred on the Eastern defence works beyond some sniping but at 2-30 p.m. as they had become troublesome to the Artillery observation Post Major Wheeler, 7th Lancers, volunteered to take his Squadron and clear them. The movement was made at the gallop but the original objective was covered by enemy's irregulars in a hidden position - these were ridden over and many lanced while "S" Battery R.H.A. and machine guns repelled an attempted counterattack by hostile horsemen. The manoeuvre was very effective and the squadron was admirably led with great dash by Major Wheeler, and who lost only one man and 3 horses wounded. (See Appendix B).

3 p.m. 10. At 3 p.m. the attack died away and sniping tactics were resorted to - and soon afterwards about 3-25 p.m. further enemy's guns opened fire from a southerly direction, and at 4 p.m. the enemy's artillery appeared to be registering ranges on various portions of the position with percussion fuze without doing much damage.

4 pm.
Night Arrangements. 11. For the ensuing night I reinforced CAIRN Post with a D.C. 120th Infantry from the Southern portion of East Work their place being taken by a D.C. 110th L.I. The $\frac{1}{2}$ Battn.2/Norfolk Regt was withdrawn from Dorset Position to their original position and the $\frac{1}{2}$ Battn.2/Dorset Regt. rejoined the 16th Bde. To increase my reserve however I asked General Delamain for $\frac{1}{2}$ Battn. from 16th Brigade and this, furnished by the 117th Infy

was placed centrally between the 2 portions of Piquet ^{HILL} House Works. During the earlier part of the night the 24th Punjabis arrived in Bellams from Busra and bivouacked near the Cavalry Camp.

5 p.m.

12. About 5 p.m. a ~~distinct~~ distinct rearward movement was noticed in front of our north defensive line and 14 big bellams were seen going off in a northerly direction filled with Arabs from North Mound vicinity.

6-45 p.m.

13. At dusk a furious attack was made from the western extremity of Dorset Position and supported by fire from S.W. and West, heavy rifle and machine gun fire being brought to bear on the South Salient and ground immediately East and West of the Fort, but they made no progress and the attack died away to intermittent firing. The machine gun in South Salient was out of action from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. but was replaced by one from the 48th Pioneers during this time and the searchlight here too was put out of action 15 minutes after it had opened up by rifle fire.

7 p.m.

14. Throughout the night intermittent firing with occasional heavy bursts with machine gun fire, especially on S. Salient ^{took place to cover bold attempts to cut our wire entanglements,} and where the enemy's main efforts were concentrated, though these attacks extended to the north end of the fort on our right and to CAIRN POST on the left. The brunt of these attacks fell on the 48th Pioneers and 17 Coy. 3rd S. & M. which units with ceaseless vigilance repelled ~~every~~ every effort of the enemy. During the heavier periods of attack the Star Shell fired by Field and Mountain Artillery greatly assisted in the defence. The machine gun of the 2/Norfolk Regt at the southern extremity of South Salient did most excellent service throughout the day and night in a very exposed position. The 120th Infantry and portion of the 110th L.I. in East Work and Cairn Post were less heavily engaged but frequently repelled the

48th Pioneers.
17 Coy. (3rd S. & M.)

Machine Gun
2/Norfolk Regt.

120th Inf. + portion
of 110th Inf.

the efforts of wire cutters and were throughout alert for developments.

11 p.m. 15. At 11 p.m. the enemy were ^{heard} digging off South Salient and a $\frac{1}{2}$ D.C. 48th Pioneers were held in readiness to meet any penetration by the enemy while I held 1 D.C.2/Norfolk Regt. ready for particular support in this direction.

15th April 16. The night thus passed with occasional lulls till 3-30 a.m. when the final attempt was made, small parties were seen close up to the entanglements, (one party was heard to call out in the ^{HINDUSTANI} distance "Do not fire"). After this no further attacks were made and all became quiet.

30 a.m. 17. From 4-30 a.m. Major General Melliss, V.C., C.B., who had arrived late the previous evening with the 6th Divisional Staff, and not being 'au fait' with the defence arrangements, had ^{but} left the conduct of the operations for the night to me, took over command of the garrison and my report on subsequent operations has been submitted to him.

18. The casualties during this action were comparatively slight and were approximately, British Officers, wounded 4, rank and file killed 5, wounded 62.

19. The artillery expended some ¹⁴⁹⁵ ~~2000~~ Shrapnel and 15 Star Shell during the above period of the action.

1 Sqn. 7th Lancers
S Bty. R.H.A.

20. The 6th Cavalry Brigade were not employed during the day except one squadron 7th Lancers and "S" Battery R.H.A. under Lt.Col.C.A.Sykes, R.H.A. which did good work in cooperation with the Infantry and other Artillery; they however came in for many casualties among their horses as unfortunately their camp was situated directly behind the Fort Section of the ~~def~~ defence and in line with the main hostile attacks. I wish to mention

① — Major G.G.M.Wheeler, 7th Lancers, for the gallant and admirable leading of his Squadron in the charge against a body of the enemy South of Picquet Works, who had been causing much

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annoyance to our artillery observation post, with a most successful and effective result.

21. The Artillery afforded, as has been my experience throughout the campaign, a magnificent support and their rapid location of the enemy's guns was followed by a slackening and

② - in many cases a cessation of their fire. Mt. Col. E.S. Cleeve ②
R.F.A. most efficiently directed the artillery during the defence as my C.R.A. and I would also mention

③ - Major E.V. SARSON, R.F.A.)	for their clever handling of
④ - " H. Brooke Smith, R.F.A.)	their batteries and accuracy
⑤ - " E.E. Edlmann, R.G.A.)	of fire in silencing the
)	enemy's guns and repelling
)	his attack.

22. The 16th Infantry Brigade were not seriously engaged during the day or night and the General Officer Commanding has no recommendations to make. I would like however to pay

⑥ - tribute to Brigadier General W.S. Delamain, C.B., D.S.O., and his Brigade who ~~of~~ originally constructed the defences which the 18th Infantry Brigade were occupying.

23. I wish to bring forward to special notice the very gallant defence made by the 48th Pioneers and 17th Coy. 3rd S. & M who bore the brunt of the enemy's attacks. All ranks behaved with great steadiness and their vigilance and good shooting repelled all attempts of the Turkish forces to break through the defences. This Section of the defence was admirably

⑦ - Commanded by Lt. Col. A.J.N. Harward, 48th Pioneers,
The following further names are brought forward for recognition.-

✓ No. 565 NAIK HUKMI, 48th Pioneers, when at dawn No. 7 Picquet retired refused to leave the picquet until the last man had got away safely under a heavy fire.

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2 ✓ No. 345 Havildar HARCHAND, 48th Pioneers, commanded No. 7 Piquet and withdrew his men with skill and coolness so well that the enemy continued to fire into the piquet position ~~at~~ after its evacuation.

3 ✓ No. 1686 Sepoy CHANDA SINGH) 48th Pioneers stretcher bearers
4 ✓ No. 1406 Sepoy NARAIN SINGH)
brought in a dangerously wounded man to the aid post for 100 yards under very heavy enfilade fire.

24. The 17th Coy. 3rd S. & M. (with 48th Pioneers) withstood all the shocks of the Turkish attacks, being in occupation of the South Salient, with utmost coolness and steadiness and were
8 - ably commanded by Captain E. J. Loring, R.E. I would mention
1 ✓ No. 31125 Sapper Wells, R.E., Searchlight Section, who did excellent work under heavy fire till his light was put out of action.

5 ✓ Jemadar MOHAMMED DIN No. 17th Coy. 3rd S. & M. for his coolness under heavy fire and the able way in which he directed the fire of his men under trying circumstances in a particularly exposed part of the defences.

9 - 25. The 120th Rajputana Infantry under Major P. F. Pocock, though not very seriously attacked during the day, were frequently assailed at night in attempts of the enemy to cut their wire entanglements - They occupied a somewhat exposed position at CAIRN POST and behaved very steadily and with great coolness.

26. The 2nd Norfolk Regt and 110th L.I. excepting 1 D.C. of the latter under Lt. Col. BRIETEN, who were engaged during the night in repelling attempts on their obstacles, were not seriously engaged though kept continually on the alert especially at night to meet developments. I mention.-

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10 - Lt. H. S. PAREBROTHER, 2/Norfolk Regt., for his skilful handling of the machine gun at South Salient until seriously wounded.

2 ✓ No. 6592 Lce. Corpl. R. WALLER, 2/Norfolk Regt., was in charge of the machine gun at South Salient after Lt. Parebrother was wounded and handled his gun exceedingly well and assisted largely in keeping off the attack when it was heaviest. Though wounded, he still continued to direct the work of the gun throughout the night 12th/13th. ~~The action of Lt.~~

The action of Lt. Parebrother and Lce Corpl. Waller has also been brought to my notice by Lt. Col. Harward Comdg. the Fort Section in which this machine gun was employed in a very important and exposed position - he reports that the accuracy and intensity of the fire was remarkably good.

27. Medical. I cannot speak too highly of the behaviour of the Medical Department in all its ranks. There was no flinching during the bombardment and perfect steadiness and their work was done in a most efficient manner under the able direction of Lt. Col. J.

11 - Hennessy, R.A.M.C. As I have already noted during this campaign the Army Bearer Corps and Army Hospital Corps behaved excellently. I would particularly bring to notice the good work done by

12 13 - Major T. G. POSTER, R.A.M.C. and Captain R. E. WRIGHT, I.M.S., No. 5 Field Ambulance, who were working in the Fort Section of the defence and most exposed to fire.

28. 34th Divnl. Signal Company. I wish to specially notice the excellent work done by the 18th Brigade Section of this company - Throughout the operations under report they were constantly engaged in the dual capacity of Bde. Signal Section and Divisional Signal Section being the link between me and my whole force. They were consequently exceedingly hard worked and got no rest. I cannot speak too highly of their work and they were ably command-

14 - ed by Capt. H. G. MORRELL who was untiring in his exertions.

I would also bring to favourable notice

- 3 X No. 41 Sergt. R. MURPHY for continuous hard work supervising both telephone and visual signalling.
- 4 X No. 16 Corpl. J. SLEVIN for unremitting assistance in looking after and keeping telephones in working order - He also laid a fresh line to Cairn Piquest under heavy fire when the line was broken.
- 5 X No. 47 Pte. A. CLOUD) for continuous hard and
- 6 X No. 44 Pte. A. BARKER)
- 7 X No. 55 Pte. A. PALMER) willing work requiring care
- 8 X No. 8597 Lce. Cpl. J. ANDERSON,) and great coolness.
Cameron Highrs (attd)

29. Finally I wish to bring to special notice the good work done by my Staff Officers, Captain F. G. DUNN, Royal Irish Rifles, Brigade Major, and Captain W. P. C. GILCHRIST, 52nd Sikhs (P.F.), Staff Captain. They have had on their shoulders the staff work of the Shaiba Force and of the 18th Infantry Brigade up to the time of the arrival of the Dvn. Hd. Qrs. on the night of 12th, and have carried out their duties with untiring zeal and efficiency especially during the enemy's attack on the 12th when their forethought and general good staff work were of the greatest assistance to me.

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I would also mention Major H. Smyth, Cheshire Regt. Intelligence Officer attached to my Staff. The information collected by this officers was wonderfully accurate and was of the greatest assistance to me.

I have the honour to be,

ir,

Your obedient servant

Sgt. C. J. Fry Major General,
Commanding at Shaiba.

Order of Battle Shaiba Garrison. *App. A*
11th & 12th April 1915.

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	Commanding.	Major General C.I. FRY, Indian Army.
	A.D.C.	Lieut. Kunwar Pirithal Singh, Indian Land Forces
<u>Staff</u>	Bde. Major	Captain E.S. Dunn, Royal Irish Rifles.
	Staff Captain	Captain W.F.C. Gilchrist, 52nd Sikhs (F.F.)
<u>Attd.</u>	C.R.A.	Lieut-Colonel E.S. Cleeve, R.F.A.
	Special Service	Major H. Smyth, Cheshire Regt.
	Offr. (Intelligence)	
	Asst. Political Officer.	Captain G.E. Leachman, Royal Sussex Regt.
	In charge Signals	Captain H.G. Morrell, 119th Infantry.
	Senior Medical Officer.	Lt-Col. J. Hennessey, R.A.M.C.

TROOPS

6th Cavalry Brigade.	Comdg.	Br. Genl. H. Kennedy, Indian Army.
	Bde. Major.	Major R.E. Ricketts, Xth Lancers.
	Staff Capt.	Capt. F.G. Gillies, 33rd C.V.O. Cavalry.
	Wireless Sqn.	Capt. D.A. Thomson, R.E.
	"S" Bty. R.H.A.	Lt-Col. C.A. Sykes, R.H.A.
	7th Mariana Lancers.	Lt-Col. C.C. Cook.
	16th Cavalry	Lt-Col. C.E. Thornton.
	33rd C.V.O. Lt. Cavalry	Lt Col. A.J. Wogan Browne.
Artillery	Comdg.	Lt-Col. E.S. Cleeve, Comdg. Xth Bde. R.F.A.
	Adj't.	Major O.S. Lloyd, R.F.A.
	63rd Battery	Major H. Brooke Smith, R.F.A.
	76th Battery	Major E.V. Sarson, R.F.A.
	23rd Mn. Bty.	Major E.E. Edlmann, D.S.O.
	1 Sec. 6th Div.	Lieut. B.T. Martin.
	Amun. Column.	
Engineers	17th (Field) Co. 3rd S.M.	Captain E.J. Loring.
	22nd (Field) Co. 3rd S.M.	Captain E.C. Whiteley.
		Searchlight Section.
16th Infantry Brigade.	Comdg.	Br-Genl. W.S. Delamain, C.B., D.S.O., Indian Army.
	Bde. Major	Major R.A. Holdich, 5th Gurkha Rifles.
	Staff Capt.	Capt. J.H. de W. Carruthers, 39th Garhwal R.
	O.C. Bde. Sec.	Capt. C.E. Day.
	34th Divl. Sig. Co.	
	2/Dorset Regt.	Lt. Col. H.E. Rosher.
	104th Wellesley's Rifles.	Lt-Col. G.F.E. Clery.
	117th Mahrattas.	Lt-Col. H.K. Mac George.
	119th Infantry.	Lt-Col. W.W. Chitty.
18th Infantry Brigade.	Comdg.	Major-General C.I. FRY, Indian Army.
	Bde. Major.	Captain E.S. Dunn, Royal Irish Rifles.
	Staff Capt.	Captain W.F.C. Gilchrist, 52nd Sikhs (F.F.)
	O.C. Bde. Sec.	Capt. H.G. Morrell, 119th Infantry.
	34th Divl. Sig. Co.	
	2/Norfolk Regt.	Lt-Col. E.S. Peebles, D.S.O.
	48th Pioneers.	Lt-Col. A.J. Hayward.
	110th Mahrattas.	Lt-Col. G.S. Fraser.
	120th Infantry.	Major R.F. Pocock.
Medical	Comdg.	Lt. Col. J. Hennessey, R.A.M.C.
	No. 2 Fd. Amb.	Lt-Col. J. Hennessey, R.A.M.C.
	No. 3 Fd. Amb.	Major T.S. Foster, R.A.M.C.
	No. 51 Indian Stationary Hosp.	Major E.S. Perry, R.A.M.C.
Supplies	6th Cav. Bde.	Captain E.A.M. Jones.
	Supply Section	

App. A (Contd.)

Supplies contd.

16th Infy. Bde.
Supply Secn.

Capt. W. Kingsmill Cook.

18th Infy. Bde.
Supply Secn.

Captain P. S. Saunders.

Intermediate
Supply Depot

Capt. H. W. Price.

Veterinary

6th Cav. Bde.
Sectn.

Lieut. B. R. Body. A. V. C.

Shaiba

Col. E. C. Dunn, Captain

21st April 1915

Bde. Major,

Shaiba Garrison.