

DESPATCHES

RELATIVE TO THE

OPERATIONS OF THE SOMALILAND FIELD FORCE.

Presented to Parliament by Command of His Majesty.

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Despatches relative to the Operations of the Somaliland Field Force.

No. 1.

*From Brigadier-General W. H. Manning, Commanding Somaliland Field Force,
to the Secretary of State for War.*

Berbera,
23rd December, 1902.

Sir,

I received your telegram No. 1 of the 18th instant at Berbera on the morning of the 19th instant. I left Berbera by H.M. Ship "Pomone" on the evening of the 19th instant and proceeded to Aden in order to endeavour to obtain sea transport for the Obbia Force, and arrived at Aden at 9 a.m. the 20th instant.

I was fortunate in finding the ss. "Haidari," one of the Haji Kasin line of steamers, in Aden, and leaving for Bombay that evening in ballast. I therefore arranged with the Senior Naval Officer (Captain Bethell, R.N.) to inspect the ship as to her fitness for transport work. She was found suited in every way, being a ship used for the pilgrim traffic to Jeddah from Bombay.

I asked the agent to wire to India that I would charter the steamer for the voyage to Obbia, allowing 1 day to load at Berbera and 4 days to unload at Obbia. A reply was received that evening from Bombay saying that the owners would accept 15,000 rupees (1,000*l.*) for the voyage; with this offer I closed. The charge is very moderate. I left Aden in H.M. Ship "Naiad" at 9 a.m. on the 20th instant, and arrived at Berbera on the morning of the 21st instant. The "Haidari" arrived at 4 o'clock on the evening of the 21st instant, and commenced loading from dhows at once, the dhows having been loaded up during the day. Six months' rations, ammunition, guns, and all stores were put on board by noon on the 22nd, and the whole of the troops were embarked at 1 p.m. the same day. The "Haidari" sailed at 5 p.m. for Obbia, which place she should reach by daylight on the 26th December, 1902.

The work of embarkation under difficult conditions in such a short space of time is due to the invaluable help rendered by Captain Bethell, R.N., and the Officers and men of H.M. Ship "Naiad," who took in hand all the arrangements.

At Aden, two lighters have been taken up for disembarkation work at Obbia. These lighters left Aden, in tow of H.M. Ship "Pomone," for Obbia on the evening of the 21st instant, and should reach Obbia the same day as the "Haidari."

I have had a further three lighters prepared in case of necessity at Aden, and H.M. Ship "Speedy" will tow these down to Obbia if they are required.

The Senior Naval Officer, Aden, has wired to the Persian Gulf asking the British Resident there to send to Obbia six large dhows, and I have wired to the Commissioner, Mombasa, asking him to send up the two lighters at Kismayu in tow of the "Juba," and also 12 dhows from the East Coast to assist in disembarkation. This should be sufficient to deal with everything arriving later at Obbia.

I have already telegraphed my movements. H.M. Ship "Speedy's" return from Obbia will enable it to be decided as to whether further disembarkation facilities are required at Obbia, and since I shall await her return in Aden, I shall be able to arrange these matters before leaving for Obbia.

The base at Obbia will be ready to land troops by the 7th January.

I have, &c.,
W. H. MANNING, *Brigadier-General,*
Commanding Somaliland Field Force.

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No. 2.

*From Brigadier-General W. H. Manning, Commanding Somaliland Field Force,
to the Secretary of State for War.*

Obbia,
10th January, 1903.

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that I arrived at this place on the evening of the 4th instant, and landed on the following morning.

The ss. "Haidari," with the troops from Berbera, arrived at Obbia on the morning of the 26th December, 1902, at 7 o'clock, in company of H.M. Ship "Pomone."

The landing at Obbia is not good. The reports of H.M. Ship "Pomone" were made during the lull between the two monsoons, and consequently during the present north-east monsoon the conditions are different.

For the landing of the "Haidari" troops, three surf boats, the property of Yusuf Ali were available, and the boats from H.M. Ship "Pomone," and later from H.M. Ship "Perseus."

At the time of the arrival of the "Haidari" the monsoon was very strong, for 2 days little or no work was possible.

The troops and stores were however cleared from the "Haidari" by the evening of the 2nd January.

I had agreed with the owners of the "Haidari" that 4 days was to be allowed for landing, and for each day's demurrage after, the sum of 50*l.* (fifty pounds sterling) should be paid.

Consequently 3 days demurrage will have to be paid to the "Haidari," which will bring the cost of her voyage to 1,150*l.*, which I think is reasonable. That is to say, 1,000*l.* (one thousand pounds) for the charter of the "Haidari," and 150*l.* (one hundred and fifty pounds) for demurrage.

Very few stores were lost or damaged, and the landing was very efficiently carried out by the Officers and men of the Royal Navy.

The landing place has been greatly improved, and work is now considerably easier.

Further, two surf boats have been brought by H.M. Ship "Naiad," from a port south of Obbia, El Hur, making a total of five surf boats in all.

On the morning of the 8th instant, the transports "Nowshera" and "Canning" arrived from Bombay.

The troops, baggage, and a considerable quantity of stores, were landed from these steamers by the evening of the 8th instant.

The mules and remaining stores will be landed from the "Nowshera" by the evening of to-day, the 10th instant, and from the "Canning" by the evening of the 12th instant. Since only ships' boats and surf boats can be used, this is a creditable performance, and is due to the good work of the Officers of H.M. Navy.

H.M. Ship "Perseus" has proceeded to Aden, for the purpose of picking up and bringing down with her more surf boats. This should improve matters very considerably.

The camp at Obbia is situated at a distance of 1,000 yards from the sea shore, on sandy soil, with short grass. The country beyond is open rolling downs for some 9 miles. Water supply is plentiful and good from wells. The climate is very pleasant and cool. Supplies of cattle, sheep, and firewood are, so far, sufficient for our requirements.

The Italian officers, Count Lovatelli and Captain Finzi, have assisted me in every way in negotiations with the Sultan of Obbia, Yusuf Ali.

The greatest tact and patience are necessary in dealing with Yusuf Ali. So far matters have proceeded smoothly, and since we are entirely in his hands as regards the supply of meat and firewood, this has been necessary. Exorbitant prices for such commodities are, however, charged. Yusuf Ali has given orders that all supplies are to pass through his hands, and that there is to be no open market. Since, however, supplies are sufficient for our requirements, I have not made any objection to this arrangement.

I have telegraphed that the supply of camels reported in the reconnaissances of H.M. Ship "Pomone" is not available. This is quite clear—that is to say—

the camels under the control of Yusuf Ali do not reach the figure I estimated from the reports of Captain Jones, R.N. and Captain Blair, I.S.C., and since tribes further in the interior will not submit their camels for sale through Yusuf Ali, that source of supply is closed to us. I consider it advisable, therefore, to make use of the transports otherwise not employed to proceed to Berbera and to bring down from that place camels which have already been purchased up to 1,000 (one thousand) in number. Camels are obtainable in Berbera in numbers, and those taken can be soon replaced. Yusuf Ali has promised to supply 500 camels by the end of the current month, and with 1,000 from Berbera I shall be able to move forward by the end of January, and I expect to obtain further supplies of camels upon reaching the interior.

The Italian representatives and myself are doing all that can be done to work through Yusuf Ali and to smooth over difficulties—so far with success. It may, however, be necessary to temporarily remove Yusuf Ali to Aden should he become impracticable. The Italian representatives would, of course, decide upon this measure, and will themselves carry it out. His removal would at once facilitate matters, and supplies would become abundant, both of camels and provisions.

From the information of spies I have been able to gather that the Mullah is north of Galkayu, and it is becoming, I think, evident that he will not attempt to proceed south.

As soon as transport is available I shall reconnoitre the road from this place towards the Kine Wells shown on Wellby's map. This route, if practicable, will keep the Mullah to the north of this force.

The Mullah's following is reported to be large, and intends to resist our advance.

The health of Officers and men is excellent.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your most obedient Servant,

W. H. MANNING, *Brigadier-General,
Commanding Somaliland Field Force.*

No. 3.

*From Brigadier-General W. H. Manning, Commanding Somaliland Field Force,
to the Secretary of State for War.*

Obbia,
14th January, 1903.

Sir,

I have the honour to enclose a copy of a letter addressed by me to Count Lovatelli, the Italian Officer at Obbia, through whom I conduct negotiations with Yusuf Ali, Sultan of Obbia.

I have recommended the temporary deportation of Yusuf Ali, and in this view Count Lovatelli agrees with me, and has so advised his Government.

I feel that when communications from the Italian representatives here reach Rome a satisfactory situation will be evolved. At present, however, I am beginning to fear that the delay may cause my advance to be postponed till after the end of this month.

I shall, however, make every exertion possible to push on advance supply posts directly the practicability of the route I have selected is ascertained. A reconnaissance with this object in view leaves here to-day. This is possible, since sufficient mule transport is available from that landed from the ss. "Canning," "Nowshera," and "Mhona." Camel transport is not available. The formation of advanced posts will probably result in the tribes

from the interior bringing in to these posts camels and supplies for sale; and should this be the case, I do not think the advance from Obbia will be delayed, and I shall be able to move out by the end of this month.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your most obedient Servant,

W. H. MANNING, *Brigadier-General,*
Commanding Somaliland Field Force.

(Copy.)

*From Brigadier-General W. H. Manning, Commanding Somaliland Field Force,
to Count Lovatelli, R.I.N.*

Obbia,
12th January, 1903.

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you, that I consider, that the state of affairs here will result in my being unable to move my force from Obbia by the end of the current month, since I was given to understand, both from Yusuf Ali, through M. Sola, and from his son, Ali Yusuf, through the Officers who made the reconnaissance at Obbia in November last, that a supply of from 3,000 to 6,000 camels was available. Up to to-day 4 (four) sound camels, fit for work, have been produced for sale. I have agreed to pay Rs. 60 to Rs. 70 for camels according to class. This price, compared to prices in Berbera, is very high and ample.

In Berbera camels are obtainable for Rs. 40 to Rs. 45 with herios and ropes, for the latter Yusuf Ali asks Rs. 8, in addition to the price of the camel, making the cost here Rs. 68 to Rs. 78, against Rs. 40 to Rs. 45 in Berbera. I think you must agree that the price offered is ample.

Obstacles and difficulties as regards the purchase of supplies are placed in my way, everything passing through Yusuf Ali's hands, and the cost of supplies being very high, and at the same time limited, according to the caprice of Yusuf Ali.

I have endeavoured to work without friction with Yusuf Ali, and successfully, but it is quite evident that it is not his intention to allow this force transport sufficient to move from Obbia, and since he will not permit any outside tribes to bring their camels in for sale, I have considered it advisable to send to Berbera for camels. The cost of this course is very large.

I am personally of opinion that he himself does not control over more than 500 camels, but that, were an open market formed, a very large number could be bought. Since Yusuf Ali will not permit this, I must ask you whether, in view of the great urgency of the case, it would not be advisable to remove Yusuf Ali to Aden until the month of May, when the expedition will have left Obbia, and all stores will have been removed from this place.

I am afraid, unless such steps are taken, I shall be compelled to abandon the idea of an advance from this side to be commenced in the last week of January, which will cause all plans for the British expedition to be upset. I further consider that it is very advisable that the Italian Officer, who is in chief political charge, should be the Officer who is eventually to accompany the expedition to the interior, a change of control over the natives at the moment of advance would be most inadvisable.

I must, at the same time, express to you my sincere thanks for the very cordial manner in which you have assisted so far in all negotiations, and for the way in which you have endeavoured to make Yusuf Ali keep his promises.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your most obedient Servant,

W. H. MANNING, *Brigadier-General,*
Commanding Somaliland Field Force.

No. 4.

*From Brigadier-General W. H. Manning, Commanding Somaliland Field Force,
to the Secretary of State for War.*

Obbia,

19th January, 1903.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit the following report as to progress here since my despatch of the 10th instant.

On the morning of the 12th instant, the transport "Ikhona," from Bombay arrived and was cleared of troops, animals and stores, by the evening of the 14th instant, with the exception of a small quantity of compressed hay which I decided to land at Berbera for a reserve there.

The "Ikhona" left at noon, 15th instant, for Aden to await instructions to proceed to Berbera for camels.

The transport "Ranee" arrived on the 16th instant at 3 p.m. Owing to very heavy weather no work was possible on this or the following day (17th); work, however, was commenced on the 18th instant, and is now continuing satisfactorily. The landing of camels of the Bikanir Corps is difficult, but by careful management is proceeding very satisfactorily.

The total number of transport mules landed up to date is 367, of which two only have been drowned.

On the completion of the landing operations I will cause a report to be made of the means used in landing animals in a rough sea which have been found to work so satisfactorily here.

On the 14th instant I despatched a reconnaissance under the command of Lieut.-Colonel Cobbe for the purpose of reconnoitring routes as far as the Kine Wells. Strength of force 500 rifles and five Maxims. Mule transport only was taken as no camel transport was available. Should this route be practicable it is my intention to advance by it, since it places us upon the probable line of retreat of the Mullah should he decide to fly to the south.

As soon as the practicability of the route has been proved I intend to establish advanced posts and to commence to push up supplies.

Yusuf Ali has maintained a decidedly obstructive attitude, and the supply of camels has been small, 160 have been purchased up to date; promises of further supplies, though made, have not yet been fulfilled. To-day, however, Yusuf Ali has changed his behaviour, having received from the Italian Consul at Aden a communication threatening him with the loss of his Sultanate unless he gave every assistance in his power to the force. He is now full of promises of good behaviour which may or may not be fulfilled.

The arrival of 1,000 camels from Berbera will, however, enable me to get away on the date I propose, namely, by the 31st instant.

On the 17th instant news of a raid by the Mullah upon Yusuf Ali's camels was brought in, this news reached me at 2 a.m. The place where the raid was alleged to have taken place was Goonda, close to El Lahelia, and consequently about 30 miles from Obbia. Since I had no ponies available to mount a force to proceed to the assistance of the tribesmen, I asked Yusuf Ali to lend me fifty ponies, and said that I would send off fifty Punjab Mounted Infantry at once. This he would not do, saying that his own mounted men were of more use than ours. Later enquiries and information leads me to suspect that no raid took place, and that the occurrence of a raid within a few miles of the reconnoitring force was most unlikely. I have been able to obtain no confirmation of the raid, and I am of opinion that the reason of such a report from Yusuf Ali was to enable him to give an excuse for not supplying camels, which he did not fail to do.

The Italian representative on shore, Count Lovatelli, has given me every assistance in dealing with Yusuf Ali.

The feeling that the expedition may not accomplish its object is at the bottom of the proceedings of Yusuf Ali, the prestige of the Mullah is very high, and I have heard from more than one source that the general opinion is against our success. It is therefore only natural that the natives should not desire to be implicated in an affair which may, according to their views, fail in its objective, in which case they would be left to the mercy of the Mullah, whom

they look upon as invincible. Our advance upon the Mullah will alter this opinion, and I believe the natives will then willingly assist us. In the meantime, the position is a trying one, and requires much patience and tact.

On the 18th instant I despatched a force of sappers and miners to a place called Dabarwein, 10 miles north-west of Obbia, where good grazing for camels is obtainable, and where there are indications of water. Wells will be sunk here, and if water is obtained this will form an advanced post on the line to the Kine Wells and will bridge over a march of 30 miles without water otherwise.

At the same time I sent out all available camels under a strong guard to graze at Garabwein, as grazing here is becoming scarce.

The health of the force remains excellent.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your most obedient Servant,

W. H. MANNING, *Brigadier-General,*
Commanding Somaliland Field Force.

No. 5.

*From Brigadier-General W. H. Manning, Commanding Somaliland Field Force,
to the Secretary of State for War.*

Sir,

Obbia,
29th January, 1903.

I have already in my despatches, dated the 10th and 19th January, referred to the unsatisfactory state of affairs in regard to Yusuf Ali with which I have had to contend.

I have treated him with all possible consideration and patience, and the Italian representatives have done everything in their power to bring him to reason; I have from the commencement entertained serious doubts as to his loyalty, and there is strong circumstantial evidence that emissaries of the Mullah have passed freely in and out of Obbia. He has amassed a large number of rupees by his system of ordering the tribes to bring all their supplies to him for sale, and charging the expedition with their cost at exorbitant rates, and by giving the actual owners a very small sum. This money he, no doubt, would have converted into rifles and ammunition to further extend his territory and authority.

His attitude throughout has been obstructive; he has circulated the information among his people that he has not been able to pay for supplies since he cannot obtain payment from us, whereas payment has been regularly made for everything taken.

The "Nowshera" arrived yesterday, the 28th instant, bringing the Italian Consul-General for this Protectorate (Chevalier F. Sola) from Aden.

The Consul-General paid me a visit yesterday, and after consultation with the Italian representatives on shore, it was decided to deport Yusuf Ali and his son Ali Yusuf on board the Italian man-of-war this morning.

This was carried out without any disorder this morning, the town of Obbia was disarmed; the property of Yusuf Ali has been seized, and an inventory of it made to be handed over to the Italian representatives. An acting headman has been appointed, pending a decision as to who shall be placed in charge of the natives here. This step is an entirely popular one, since I have had many complaints of the tyranny and exactions of Yusuf Ali.

I have now given orders that all supplies are to be paid for direct to those who bring them in—this will establish an open market, and in a very short time this news will reach the interior and supplies of all kinds will be abundant. The tribesmen have already gone off to bring in their camels for sale, and I expect no further delay in pushing forward will be encountered.

I regret that difficulties of communication have so long delayed the action which has been taken to-day. The failure of the man-of-war's arrival from Aden on the 22nd instant has been the reason.

Things, however, appear now quite satisfactory, and I apprehend no further difficulties.

The attitude of the Italian representatives has been throughout most helpful.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your most obedient Servant,

W. H. MANNING, *Brigadier-General,*
Commanding Somaliland Field Force.

No. 6.

*From Brigadier-General W. H. Manning, General Officer Commanding
Somaliland Field Force, to the Secretary of State for War.*

Obbia,
6th February, 1903.

Sir,

I have the honour to report progress made since my last despatch of the 29th January.

The results of the deportation of Yusuf Ali have so far been satisfactory. The Hawiya, Marehan and Mijjarten tribes have sent in their representations and have promised their assistance in procuring camels without payment.

The near relations and headmen of Yusuf Ali have, however, continued the exactions practised by Yusuf Ali, and the Italian representatives decided that the only course open was to seize these individuals, and detain them as hostages for the good behaviour of the people, and to deport them, if necessary.

This has been carried out. The relations and headmen of Yusuf Ali, who had formed themselves into a council, were seized and placed in custody, and, at the request of the Italians, are being sent to Berbera for safe custody.

The camels and cattle, the property of Yusuf Ali, have been driven into Obbia, and will be kept here pending a decision by the Italians as to their disposal, since the surrounding tribes had attempted to steal the stock of Yusuf Ali on hearing of his deportation.

For the purpose of collecting all the available burden camels, the property of Yusuf Ali, and of preventing them being stolen, I obtained the permission of the Italians to send a force to El Hur and Harardera to the south of this place, where Yusuf Ali's stock is said to be collected. I accordingly despatched a force of 75 Mounted Infantry, 75 Bikanir Camel Corps, and 160 Infantry, with mule transport, to endeavour to find and bring in the burden camels said to be at the above places.

The rightful owners will be paid for the camels taken, in accordance with an agreement made with the Italian representatives.

El Lahelai has been abandoned in favour of Lodabal, 4 miles to the east. The following posts have been occupied:—

	Longitude.	Latitude.	Miles from Obbia.
Lodabal	48·17	5·35	23
El Dibir	48·22	5·50	41½
Dibit	48·10	6·0	56¾

At each of these places good wells exist, and advanced posts have been formed. Supplies for 1 month for the whole force are being pushed up.

From Dibit reconnaissances towards the west and towards Galkayu will be made in order to decide the route which must eventually be taken to Galkayu.

At Garabwein, 10 miles from Obbia, water has been found at 36 feet, and this will prove a great advantage, both for the final advance and for convoys. A small post is established at Garabwein.

From Intelligence reports the route, *via* Badho, would appear to be impracticable, but if time and opportunity offer, and transport is available, a further reconnaissance will be made in that direction.

From the 1st to 5th February very high wind prevailed, and a heavy sea was running which prevented all work at disembarkation. Both the "Newark Castle" and the "Ikhona" (which arrived on the 2nd February) have been consequently detained: work, however, is now proceeding, and both steamers should be cleared in 3 days, and should proceed on their voyage.

The "Ikhona," which brought 593 camels from Berbera, should be cleared by the 8th instant, and the camels should be fit for work by the 14th instant. I propose then to advance on the 15th with the whole force, having previously reconnoitred the routes north of Dibit, and to occupy Galkayu on or about the 22nd instant.

Accurate intelligence of the Mullah's movements is difficult to obtain at this distance, and until we are actually in touch with the Mullah's forces, will continue difficult.

The Mullah, however, is said to be still north of Galkayu in the Galadi district.

I regret the delay in the advance from this place, but exceptional difficulties have been encountered, and difficulties such as the stoppage of the work of disembarkation, owing to heavy weather, have been beyond my control.

Matters now should proceed smoothly, and I anticipate no further delays.

Chevalier F. Sola, Italian Consul-General at Aden, who has been unable to land from the "Caprera" for the last 6 days owing to the heavy sea, came on shore to-day; he is most anxious to do all that he can to assist us, and he has assumed political control here.

The health of Officers and men is good, and the horses and transport animals are now in good working condition.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your obedient Servant,

W. H. MANNING, *Brigadier-General,*
Commanding Somaliland Field Force.

No. 7.

*From Brigadier-General W. H. Manning, Commanding Somaliland Field Force,
to the Secretary of State for War.*

Head-quarters, Somaliland Field Force,
Obbia, 16th February, 1903.

Sir,

I have the honour to forward a memorandum embodying the arrangements which I propose to make for the removal of the base at Obbia to Berbera.

In the event of a transport being required, I shall telegraph to that effect from Aden not later than the 15th March, 1903.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your obedient Servant,

W. H. MANNING, *Brigadier-General,*
Commanding Somaliland Field Force.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE REMOVAL OF THE BASE OBBLIA.

1. The R.I.M.S. "Hardinge" will remain at Obbia, and surplus baggage and stores will be placed upon her as opportunity offers, and as weather permits.

2. When the accommodation for stores, &c., on the "Hardinge" has been filled, she will proceed to Berbera and discharge there these stores, returning to Obbia. Should a second trip be necessary the same procedure will be carried out, provided that none of these trips shall interfere with her duties, which are primarily those of a hospital ship.

3. The R.I.M.S. "Hardinge" must, however, be in Obbia by the 31st March, and will remain in Obbia thenceforward until it is considered advisable, on account of the near approach of the South-West Monsoon, to remove the base from Obbia.

During this time all stores which it is evident cannot be forwarded to, or are not required at the front, will be gradually placed on the "Hardinge," and only the troops with their baggage, which form the base, will eventually remain to be removed.

This should be the condition of the base before the 15th of April, as before or about that time it is possible that the South-West Monsoon may begin to be felt on the coast.

4. The posts at Lodabal, El Dibir, Dibit, will then proceed to Galkayu, or wherever the head-quarters of the force shall have been established, using the mule transport for their carriage forward. The remainder of the remounts will proceed with this force to the front, unless the Remount Department shall have been previously broken up.

5. There will be at the base at Obbia a coolie corps of 100 Arab coolies, for duty there in reshipping stores on the R.I.M.S. "Hardinge," and for such other duties as may be necessary.

6. The foregoing arrangements, in so far as they affect the R.I.M.S. "Hardinge," are however likely to be upset, should it be found impossible for the "Hardinge" to undertake the number of trips necessary to clear the base at Obbia before the end of March (the number of trips to Berbera, it is estimated, will be two, that is to say, one trip by the 7th March, and a second trip about the 21st March, returning at the end of March.)

In such a case the War Office must be asked to arrange for a transport to call at Obbia at the end of March, and this transport must remain at Obbia until, owing to the bursting of the monsoon appearing imminent, the removal of the base becomes necessary.

Similar arrangements will be made as regards this transport, all stores, baggage, &c., which it is evident are not required at Obbia, will be gradually shipped on the transport, so that in case the monsoon seems about to burst, the removal of the troop and remaining baggage will be easily accomplished in a few days.

7. Upon the break up of the base, the Officers at the base will proceed as follows:—

- Major Rycroft to England on completion of his duties.
- Major Hoskins, to Galkayu, in charge of the troops forming the posts in advance of Obbia on the Lines of Communication.
- Base Supply Officer, under instructions of Chief of Staff and Transport Officer.
- Base Transport Officer, with transport to Galkayu.
- General hospital to Berbera, and thence to Bombay
- Base Post Office to Berbera.
- Field Paymaster to Berbera.
- Ordnance Department Officers to Berbera.

Upon the removal of the base to Berbera, the Marine Transport Officer with his establishment will proceed to Berbera, and there undertake the duties of Marine Transport Officer, Somaliland Field Force.

W. H. MANNING, *Brigadier-General,*
Commanding Somaliland Field Force.

MEMORANDUM.

Head-quarters,
Somaliland Field Force.

1. The base at Obbia will be closed about the 15th April; by that time all rations, &c., intended for the use of the expedition at the front must have left Obbia, and must be on the way to the front and stored in the various posts, but need not necessarily have reached Galkayu.
2. Directly the base at Obbia is closed, Lodabal will be cleared of rations, &c., and when clear will be closed, and the garrison will move on to El Dibir.
3. Similarly, El Dibir will be closed when all rations have gone forward, and the garrison will move on to Dibir.
And so on until the Lines of Communication are closed up to Galkayu.
4. Any remounts remaining will be sent forward to Galkayu as the Lines of Communication move up. This will economise the carriage of grain for their feed.
5. As soon as the Lines of Communication are closed up to Galkayu, and communication with Bohotle having been in the meantime opened, the remaining remounts and the mule transport will cross the Haud to Bohotle, and will proceed as follows:—

Remounts to Upper Sheikh or Lower Sheikh.

Mule transport on the Line between Bihendula and Upper Sheikh or Dubbur.

The European assistants with the Remount Department will leave with the troops forming the Obbia base and will be discharged at Berbera, being given free passage to England according to their agreements.

G. FORESTIER-WALKER,
Chief Staff Officer.

No. 8.

*From Brigadier-General W. H. Manning, Commanding Somaliland Field Force,
to the Secretary of State for War.*

Head-quarters, Somaliland Field Force,
Obbia, 18th February, 1903.

Sir,
I have the honour to forward a copy of a memorandum which I have this day sent to the Officer Commanding the Berbera—Bohotle Force, in which I have given instructions as to the general nature and extent of the co-operation which I expect from that force.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your obedient Servant,

W. H. MANNING, *Brigadier-General,*
Commanding Somaliland Field Force.

MEMORANDUM.

Head-quarters, Somaliland Field Force,
Obbia, 17th February, 1903.

1. The Obbia force will advance to Galkayu as follows:—
A flying column leaving Obbia on the 22nd February, arriving at Galkayu on or about the 3rd March.
A column carrying rations will leave Obbia on the 4th March, reaching Galkayu 13th March.
On the 13th March the whole force will be concentrated at Galkayu.
2. The Mullah's forces are said to be in the neighbourhood of Galadi.
As soon as possible after the concentration of troops at Galkayu a force will move out against the Mullah's force at Galadi, this will probably be about the 16th March.
This force will be able to proceed about 5 days' from Galkayu, towards Galadi, in pursuit of the Mullah. This will be a distance of about 80 miles, in case no water found, but considerably further should water be discovered on the way.
3. The troops of the flying column at Bohotle must move down and occupy Damot, provided that water can be obtained there. For the purpose of ascertaining this, a party, with sappers and miners and pioneers, will move down at once to Damot, carrying water with them to that place, and will there form a strongly entrenched and zaribaed post, and dig a well. Water is to be sent down regularly from Bohotle for this party. (It has been found here that men employed on such labour require at least one gallon of water per diem.)
Should water be discovered, the Bohotle Flying Column (or as many men as the water will supply) will occupy Damot.
4. Should water not be discovered at Damot it may still be possible to occupy Damot by forming tanks of sailcloth, in which water can be stored, and convoys of camels running regularly will keep up the supply. These tanks work well on this side, and, when covered in, little water is lost by evaporation.
5. Messengers, both foot and mounted, will be despatched from Damot, to endeavour to open up communication between that place and Galkayu.
Similarly, messengers will be despatched from Galkayu for the same purpose to Bohotle.
Every endeavour must also be made to obtain communication by wireless telegraphy.
Messengers sent out, both from Damot and Galkayu, will have a distinguishing mark. If mounted, a piece of white cloth will be tied round the neck of the pony, if dismounted a piece of white cloth will be fastened to the spear. This will enable messengers to be recognised.
Messengers need only carry this mark when approaching a post.
6. From native information it is believed that many of the Dulbhanta flocks have been driven into the Nogal, and that the tribesmen are collected with the Mullah in the neighbourhood of Galadi, and are bent on fighting. It is also understood that a number of Mijjarten and other tribes are in the neighbourhood of the Amai wells with their flocks.
The occupation of Galkayu and Damot will bring both forces within 80 miles of one another, and interposed between the two forces of the Mullah.
It is intended to drive off the enemy in the neighbourhood of the Amai Wells as soon as Galkayu is occupied. The Mijjarten will probably proceed west towards Jeriban, and the operations undertaken on the 16th March towards Galadi will probably have the effect of driving the Mullah east. In this event the line between Damot and Galkayu will probably be free of the enemy in any numbers.

7. Should water, therefore, be found in Damot, and should the Bohotle Flying Column be able to occupy that place by the 16th March, and should communication with Galkayu have been opened up, it would be advisable to push out a strong reconnaissance towards Galkayu.

The date of this reconnaissance should not be earlier than the 30th March.

A similar reconnaissance would be pushed out from Galkayu towards Damot to meet the force coming from that place. The opening up of communications will, however, enable the exact date to be fixed, and every endeavour must, therefore, be made to accomplish this.

8. When messengers are sent through, the latest information of the movements of the Mullah, and all news of importance, must be included in despatches.

Despatches should be duplicated, and sent by different messengers, and numbered consecutively.

By Order,

G. FORESTIER-WALKER,
Chief Staff Officer,
Somaliland Field Force.

The Officer Commanding,
Berbera—Bohotle Force,
Berbera.

No. 9.

From Brigadier-General W. H. Manning, Commanding Somaliland Field Force,
to the Secretary of State for War.

Obbia,
20th February, 1903.

Sir,

I have the honour to report progress made since my last despatch.

The attitude of the surrounding tribes has been very friendly, and they have sent in camels and supplies for sale freely. Over 500 camels have been obtained during the past 3 weeks, since the deportation of Yusuf Ali.

Rations for the force have been sent forward steadily, and the advance post (Dibit) has now a sufficient stock to permit of the force advancing.

I have telegraphed that reconnaissances towards Galkayu have been made in two directions, one to Killadebha and another to Wargallo.

I have selected the latter route, as it fulfils more the conditions for our advance as desired by the Italian Government, and is also a better watered route, at any rate as far as Wargallo.

Native information states that the Mullah has filled in the wells in the Mudug region.

I do not anticipate, however, that the clearing out of these wells will be a very difficult operation.

Wargallo will be occupied as an advanced post on the 27th instant, and the wells *en route* will be cleaned and made fit for use by the Advanced Force.

I leave on the 22nd instant, with the troops forming a Flying Column, to occupy Galkayu, the centre of the Mudug region. This place will be occupied on the 3rd March.

The remainder of the force, conveying 1 month's rations for the entire force, will march from Obbia on the 6th March, and will reach Galkayu on the 15th March, on which date the whole force will be concentrated at Galkayu.

I have sent instructions to the Officer Commanding, Bohotle Force, to occupy Damot as soon as possible, to dig wells there, and to endeavour to open communication, by messengers and by wireless telegraphy, with Galkayu.

I regret, however, that the Marconi system, up to date, has not produced any definite results in the way of messages from Lodabal (where one section is located) to the Base. The Naval Officer in charge is, however, very confident of success.

I anticipate that some opposition may be encountered in the occupation of Galkayu, but I consider that the Mullah will remain with his main body in the thick bush in the neighbourhood of Galadi and Dudub, where it will eventually be necessary to attack him.

Information received from the Benadir coast is to the effect that the Mullah himself is near Hiran, a swamp of that name situated on Long. 45° 15', Lat. 5° 35', but that the majority of his following is at Galadi.

The reports of sickness among the Mullah's following are confirmed from several sources. It appears that dysentery of a virulent type has been prevalent, and that many deaths have occurred.

The reports also definitely state that an alliance has been in force for some time between Yusuf Ali and the Mullah. Of this alliance I feel there can be no doubt, as I have on more than one occasion stated.

I have, in another despatch, referred to the means by which I propose to remove the Base at Obbia, and which I think will prove effective.

The health of the force, both Officers and men, remains excellent.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your obedient Servant,

W. H. MANNING, Brigadier-General,
Commanding Somaliland Field Force.

No. 10.

From Brigadier-General W. H. Manning, Commanding Somaliland Field Force,
to the Secretary of State for War.

Galkayu,
6th March, 1903.

Sir,

I have already telegraphed the information of our march from Obbia to Galkayu, and the situation as at present. In the course of the next few days I hope to be able to locate the position of the Mullah's force which I believe to be in the neighbourhood of this place. Native spies reported the vicinity of a number of men and animals on the morning of the day of our arrival in camp; this would appear to have been a party who had come down to some neighbouring wells for the purpose of watering animals. I sent out spies a few hours after my arrival here to track these people, and held a force of mounted troops and Infantry in readiness to march out at night, if news of their still being close at hand was received during the night. These spies, however, have not yet returned, and it is therefore evident that the Mullah's people have moved off on hearing of our arrival. The occupation of these wells will compel the Mullah's force to break up since the watering difficulties will be very great. The capture of some of the enemy's men by our spies will enable us to discover where the Mullah has fixed his headquarters; at present we have no information on this point whatever, though it is evident that he is at no great distance from this place.

To-morrow, the 7th instant, as most of the transport animals return to Dibit to bring up supplies with the main column, we shall be left with a small number of transport animals until the 17th instant. The interval will, however, be utilized to thoroughly reconnoitre the country round, so that upon the arrival of the main column, an advance will be made at once on any collection of the enemy within striking distance.

I have been obliged to ask for more Supply Officers, as the peculiar nature of operations in this country, and the long lines of communication to be

kept open to Obbia, render it very necessary that this department should be thoroughly well supplied with a staff, and the move of the Flying Column to Galkayu has disclosed the fact that the staff of the Supply Department is quite inadequate, so much so, that on the march up here, I experienced much difficulty in carrying out the proper supply duties of the force.

I have addressed a communication to the Italian Representative accompanying the force, asking him to inform me without delay as to the date on which he intends to take over the occupation of this place, in order that he may notify to his Government the occupation of Mudug.

The marches up here have been extremely hot and trying, but the troops have borne them well. The mounted troops particularly have had an arduous time, but Major Kenna's good management has so far resulted in the loss of only one Mounted Infantry horse.

The route of our advance is fairly well watered, but considerable organization is necessary at each watering place to make the utmost use of the wells possible.

I shall at once endeavour to obtain communication with Bohotle, *via* Damot, which place I hope has been occupied by the Flying Column from Bohotle.

The health of both Officers and men remains excellent.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

W. H. MANNING, *Brigadier-General,*
Commanding Somaliland Field Force.

No. 11.

*From Brigadier-General W. H. Manning, Commanding Somaliland Field Force,
to the Secretary of State for War.*

Sir,

Galkayu,
14th March, 1903.

I have the honour to forward a copy of a letter I have addressed to Count Lovatelli who has been the Representative of the Italian Government with this force.

Count Lovatelli has been most loyal in his co-operation, and it is with great regret that I have heard of his recall.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

W. H. MANNING, *Brigadier-General,*
Commanding Somaliland Field Force.

*From Brigadier-General W. H. Manning, Commanding Somaliland Field Force,
to Count G. Lovatelli, Royal Italian Navy.*

Sir,

Galkayu,
14th March, 1903.

It is with much regret that I understand that you are leaving for the coast under orders from your Government.

I cannot allow you to depart without placing upon record my great appreciation of the assistance at all times rendered by you to the Somaliland Field Force from its landing up till now, and especially during the time at Obbia when great difficulties were experienced in endeavouring to work

smoothly with Yusuf Ali. I am much indebted to you for the loyal co-operation given by you in all dealings with Yusuf Ali, and for the attempts made by you to bring him to reason.

Two points appear to me to require to be made clear, concerning which some misapprehension appears to have arisen.

Since the arrival of British troops at Obbia on the 26th December, the village of Obbia has never been surrounded by troops in the sense that any attempt was made to prevent egress by the inhabitants.

Military Police were employed on the outskirts of the village to prevent Somali followers of the force, and others, from entering the village, against whom complaints had been made by Yusuf Ali, and to enforce the order which placed the village of Obbia out of bounds to troops and followers.

As you are aware, Yusuf Ali had at no time complained of the surrounding of his village, and he had been informed that soldiers had been stationed near the few huts forming the village in order to prevent any possibility of trouble arising from Somali followers, or others, entering these huts and causing disturbance.

The house of Yusuf Ali after his deportation was placed under a guard to prevent its being looted by Somalis or others, since it was known that property of value was in the house.

The whole of his property was thus saved, and has been taken possession of by the Italian officials.

About Rs. 30,000 were found in Yusuf Ali's house.

Had a guard not been posted it is probable that this money would have been stolen.

Some time elapsed before the step of placing this guard on the house was taken, awaiting a guard from the Italian man-of-war "Caprera," which, however, was not sent.

In complying with your request for this guard, I considered that you were acting in the best interests of your Government, and I fully concurred in its necessity.

In a telegram the War Office have asked me to express to you regret that annoyance should have been caused by the publication in the Press of a Reuter's telegram, purporting to come from Obbia but evidently emanating from Aden, in which a distorted and incorrect version of the deportation of Yusuf Ali was given.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

W. H. MANNING, *Brigadier-General,*
Commanding Somaliland Field Force.

No. 12.

*From Brigadier-General Manning, Commanding the Somaliland Field Force, to
the Secretary of State for War.*

Head-quarters, Somaliland Field Force,
Galadi, 3rd April, 1903.

Sir,

1. I have the honour to report the progress of this Force since my last despatch.

2. Owing to water and transport difficulties on the Lines of Communication between Obbia and Galkayu, the Main Column, under Lieut.-Colonel Fasken, 2nd Sikhs, was delayed on arrival at Dibit for 5 days, and did not reach Galkayu until the morning of the 24th March.

3. I had, in the meanwhile, ordered 300 of the 2nd Bn. King's African Rifles, two guns of the Camel Battery, and 50 men of the Somali Mounted Infantry, to cross from Damot to Galkayu. This force arrived on the evening of the 24th March, having marched 105 miles in 4 days, a fine performance.

I have already telegraphed my reasons for this move. The Lines of Communication from Obbia to this place now cover 230 miles, and it is necessary to hold the water on this route, and to store it carefully for consumption by convoys passing through.

4. I regret to report that great mortality has occurred amongst the camel transport.

The camels brought round to Obbia from Berbera suffered considerably, owing to the impossibility of landing them immediately on their arrival, since a heavy sea was running for some days subsequent to the arrival of the transport. The camels, though given 10 days' rest and grazing, have never entirely recovered, and the mortality among them has been very great. Grazing at this time of the year is almost non-existent, the whole country being dried up.

This loss of camels has hampered the transport of rations, &c., on the Lines of Communication, and has compelled me to keep back about 100 Mounted Infantry, 50 Bikanir Camel Corps, and the Mountain Battery Section, on the Lines of Communication between Dibat and Obbia.

I have received 800 camels from the Berbera—Bohotle Force, and I have asked for a further 1,000. The receipt of these camels should improve matters.

The Somali camel is alone fitted for transport work in this country. Indian or Egyptian camels require water every third day, and this is usually impossible to obtain.

5. I have sent 80 Bikanir Camel Corps to Damot, since their rations are a heavy strain on the Supply Department.

The force crossing from Damot brought its own supplies with it.

6. On the arrival of the Main Column I marched to Bera on the 26th March. (This place had been occupied as an advanced post on the 19th March.)

The force with which I advanced was composed as under:—

	Rank and file.
Mounted Infantry	284
Sapper and Miners	20
2nd Sikhs	278
1st Bn. King's African Rifles	149
2nd „ „	300
5th „ „	50
Total ..	1,081 rifles.

I was compelled to halt a day at Bera in order to allow the camels, which had arrived from Damot, to rest and graze.

7. On the evening of the 27th a force of 240 Mounted Infantry, under the command of Major Kenna, started from Bera, with orders to push through to Dudub; but, if unable to advance without being seriously engaged, Major Kenna was directed to fall back on the Infantry Column, which was to leave on the morning of the 28th.

I had expected to encounter severe opposition in the thick belt of bush between Bera and Dudub, and although the Mounted Infantry would probably be able to push through by night, I considered it likely that our large camel convoy would be attacked.

8. I picked up at Bera the detachment of 2nd Sikhs, which had been holding that place since the 19th March, and, after leaving a garrison there of 50 of the 5th Bn. King's African Rifles, and 50 of the 2nd Bn. King's African Rifles, I marched out on the morning of the 28th with a force composed as under:—

	Rank and file.
Sappers and Miners	20
2nd Sikhs	448
1st Bn. King's African Rifles	149
2nd „ „	250
Total ..	867 rifles.

9. The country, for the first 18 miles out of Bera, consists of extremely thick bush growing on a stony and loose sandy soil, and the marching was in consequence very difficult.

The open country beyond the bush was reached on the evening of the 28th March, and the column halted on an open grass plain 19 miles from Bera.

10. I had directed Major Kenna to send me back information as to the distance to Dudub, and the extent of the water supply. This information I had hoped would reach me on the night of the 28th March, but owing to the distance to Dudub being 44 miles, or considerably farther than was expected, Major Kenna was unable to communicate with me until noon on the 29th.

In view, therefore, of the uncertainty of the water supply ahead, I decided, on the early morning of the 29th March, to reduce the force with which I proposed to advance to Galadi, by sending back 338 of the 2nd Sikhs to Bera and Galkayu.

This decision reduced my Infantry to 529 men, a number which I considered to be sufficient to enable me to reach Dudub; the road onwards being reported to be through open country.

11. I had left Bera, carrying 6 days water for the whole force. This reduction in my strength gave me, therefore, another day's water, besides allowing a large margin for loss of water from various causes, the chief of which are leakage and evaporation.

With this increase to my water supply, I had no anxiety as to water difficulties, even if Dudub and Galadi proved to be watering places incapable of providing for the wants of my reduced force.

12. The number of 2nd Sikhs mentioned above returned to Bera, for Galkayu, on the morning of the 29th, and I continued my march towards Dudub, accomplishing 17 miles on that day.

At noon I received a letter from Major Kenna, stating that he had occupied Dudub without opposition on the evening of the 28th, and had captured a few prisoners and camels.

On the evening of the same day, I received a letter from Major Kenna to the effect that information obtained from prisoners led him to believe that a small force of the Mullah was holding Galadi wells, and that he proposed pushing through to Galadi on the night of the 29th, and securing the water supply at that place.

13. On the morning of the 30th March, I reached Dudub, distance 8 miles, the total distance from Bera being 44 miles.

Dudub proved to have an excellent water supply, sufficient for the requirements of a considerable force.

I halted there until 10 a.m., and then pushed on towards Galadi for a distance of 12 miles, halting for the night at 4 p.m.

On that evening I received a message from Major Kenna saying that he had occupied Galadi at 8.30 a.m. the same morning, killing several of the enemy, and capturing a few prisoners and a small number of camels, sheep, and goats.

On the morning of the 31st March I arrived at Galadi at 10 a.m., and camped there.

14. The water supply proves to be fair, and sufficient for a small force.

The country between Dudub and Galadi is for the most part thickly bushed, and eminently adapted to Somali tactics which, when possible, consist in attacking a column when on the march in bush.

15. From information extracted from prisoners it appears, however, that the Mullah evacuated Galadi immediately after our arrival at Galkayu, and retreated in the direction of Walwal, some four or five marches west of Galadi.

16. The march from Bera to Galadi has been very hot and trying, but has been carried out without any casualties from the heat or other causes, the troops being in excellent marching condition.

Major Kenna brought his Mounted Infantry through without the loss of a horse.

17. The grazing in the immediate vicinity of Galadi is very poor, and I have, therefore, sent a portion of the Mounted Infantry and of the transport camels to camp at Yaygallo, 5 miles north of Galadi, where water and better grazing has been found.

18. Prisoners stated that, when the Mullah evacuated Galadi, he directed the greater part of his herds of camels and cattle and of his flocks of sheep to follow after him, but that they have not yet done so, having halted in the district of Gumburu, some 30 miles distant from Galadi.

I accordingly despatched Lieut.-Colonel Plunkett with 170 men of the 2nd Bn. King's African Rifles and 60 men of the 1st Bn. King's African Rifles, with three Maxims, at 2 a.m. on the morning of 1st April, with instructions to endeavour to capture stock in this locality.

19. I likewise despatched, on the evening of the 2nd April, a force of 120 men of the 1st and 2nd Bns. King's African Rifles, under Lieut.-Colonel Cobbe, in a southerly direction towards Gilinsor, whence, according to captured spies, a number of camels had been driven off.

20. Walwal and Wardair, towards which places, according to the information in my possession, the Mullah has retired, are estimated to be about 75 miles from Galadi, through a waterless and thickly-bushed country.

I propose, directly I have collected sufficient rations here, to push on to these places and attack the Mullah.

21. In order to overcome the water difficulty, I intend to establish a post 20 miles from here in the direction of Walwal, and to store there 2 days' water supply for the whole force, plus the necessary amount for the garrison.

A similar post will be established at a point some 15 miles further on.

22. As soon as these posts have been established I propose to move out from the furthest post with 5 days' water in tins, and expect to reach Wardair, where the water supply is said to be ample, on the third day.

I think it probable that the Mullah will attack the force *en route*, as the thickly bushed nature of the country will favour his usual tactics.

23. The bulk of the 2nd Sikhs, which returned to Galkayu will be ordered up to take part in this advance.

24. Simultaneously with the advance on Galadi from Galkayu, I had arranged that flying columns, based on Damot and Badwein respectively, should operate in the country between Bohotle, Damot, Badwein and Dudub, to capture stock.

I have not yet heard directly from the Officers Commanding the columns as to the measure of success which has attended these movements, but from the accounts of fugitives who have arrived in Galadi, it would appear that the Damot column, at least, has effected considerable captures of camels and other stock.

25. The health of Officers and men continues to be excellent.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your obedient Servant,

W. H. MANNING, *Brigadier-General,*
Commanding Somaliland Field Force.

No. 13.

*From Brigadier-General W. H. Manning, Commanding Somaliland Field Force,
to the Secretary of State for War.*

Sir,

Galadi,

12th April, 1903.

I have already telegraphed to you the situation up to the 10th instant, and I have stated that I consider that the occupation of Galkayu, in the Mudug district, is quite feasible. I have, however, suggested the employment of 100 Indian troops, that is—

50 Indian Contingent, British Central Africa.
50 5th Bn. King's African Rifles.

These troops can be spared from the British Central Africa and Uganda Protectorates for the 3 months after the close of the expedition, and until the Italians are able again to reoccupy Obbia from the sea.

I have already telegraphed that in my opinion the Italian authorities in Obbia will have left no permanent Government in Obbia, since, as far as I can learn, no definite policy as regards the natives has been pursued. I have not received any direct information as to what arrangements have been made in Obbia, and, on application to the Italian Representatives accompanying this force, they have informed me that no communication from M. Sola, the Consul-General at Obbia, has been received.

I have recommended the employment of Indian troops at Galkayu, since I consider that the employment of the Reserve Battalion (2nd Bn. King's African Rifles) for garrison duty in Somaliland, is most undesirable. This battalion has already had a former experience of service in Somaliland, and suffered greatly in health, the men consequently view garrison service with great disfavour in Somaliland, and one half of the battalion will have served nearly 1 year in the country on the completion of the present operations.

If it is found necessary, after the completion of operations here, to detain the reserve battalion, they could garrison posts in the British Protectorate, where such food as is most suitable to them can be more easily obtained.

Indian troops will do better upon their Indian rations, and are not so liable to scurvy as the Central African natives, whose food in their own country consists more of vegetables.

The operations now in course of being carried out, and those that will be carried out during the next fortnight will, however, enable me to decide as to the provisions necessary in the future for the peace of the Protectorate.

I am hopeful that decisive results may destroy the power of the Mullah for further hostile action.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your obedient Servant,

W. H. MANNING, *Brigadier-General,*
Commanding Somaliland Field Force.

No. 14.

*From Brigadier-General W. H. Manning, Commanding Somaliland Field Force,
to the Secretary of State for War.*

Head-quarters, Somaliland Field Force,

Galkayu, 27th April, 1903.

Sir,

1. I have the honour to report progress since my last despatch.

2. On the 10th instant I decided to utilize the time which must elapse before the arrival of the remainder of the troops and supplies from Galkayu, which were due on the 17th instant, by sending forward a strong reconnaissance to endeavour to discover the road to Wardair, and, if possible, to occupy that place, since, from native information, I gathered that the Mullah had abandoned both Wardair and Walwal and had retired to the west or north-west.

3. In order to make this move, which I had hoped would bring me within striking distance of the Mullah, I had ordered up every available man and all available camels. I felt that this advance was the limit to which I could proceed, since the state of camel transport would not permit of any further prolongation of my lines of communication, and I had hoped, by occupying Wardair, to be able to seize a number of the enemy's camels.

I had arranged for the arrival of 350 of the 2nd Sikhs and 70 3rd Bn. King's African Rifles at Galadi on the 17th instant, so that, on the return of the reconnaissance, I should be able to advance on Wardair with nearly 1,000 men.

4. I ordered Lieut.-Colonel Cobbe with the following troops, taking

6 days' water and supplies, to proceed in the direction of Wardair, starting on the 10th instant:—

	Men.
1st Bn. King's African Rifles	120
2nd Bn. King's African Rifles.. .. .	280
5th Bn. King's African Rifles	50
2 guns	20
Mounted Infantry	50
Total	520

I enclose a copy of the instructions issued to Lieut.-Colonel Cobbe.

5. I heard from Lieut.-Colonel Cobbe on the 13th instant to the effect that he had reached Gumburu, 44 miles distant, without encountering any opposition, but that he believed he was on the wrong road for Wardair, and would endeavour to discover the right road.

On the 14th instant, not having heard from the reconnaissance again, I presumed that Lieut.-Colonel Cobbe had found the right road and had pushed on, or might be retiring. Knowing that his water could only last to the 16th instant, I decided to send after him a water convoy with some extra rations. I, therefore, despatched to him 1,600 gallons of water under an escort of Captain Vesey and 50 rank and file, 2nd Sikhs, to meet him, or, if he had pushed on, to form a water post at Gumburu.

6. I heard again from Lieut.-Colonel Cobbe on the morning of the 16th instant to the effect that he had fallen in with some horsemen of the enemy on the 15th instant, and that some skirmishing between his Mounted Infantry and the horsemen of the enemy had taken place.

During this skirmishing Lieutenant Chichester unfortunately had been killed. Colonel Cobbe also informed me that, rain having fallen, he had collected some water, and was able to remain out some days longer, as he had, up to the time of writing, failed to find the road. He also informed me that the enemy was apparently in some strength in front.

7. I decided to reinforce Colonel Cobbe and to order him to retire, as I considered it would be wiser to advance by a route to the north, which, according to native information, was the direct road to Walwal and then to Wardair. I accordingly detailed a party of Mounted Infantry and Infantry to proceed to Gumburu to join Colonel Cobbe's party, with directions to that Officer to return.

8. Before this reinforcement could leave I received on the night of the 17th instant a despatch from Lieut.-Colonel Cobbe, dated the same morning, informing me that he feared some reverse had occurred to a detachment under Lieut.-Colonel Plunkett who had been sent out to bring in a company of the 2nd Bn. King's African Rifles, who were out reconnoitring.

There were no details in this despatch, and I was not aware of the seriousness of the fighting which had occurred, but I decided at once to move forward to Lieut.-Colonel Cobbe's assistance, taking with me all available troops, and to bring in his column.

9. I left Galadi shortly after midnight, on the 17th—18th instant, taking with me—

320 2nd Sikhs,
60 3rd Bn. King's African Rifles.

and sending on ahead 100 Mounted Infantry, under Major Kenna, with orders to endeavour to push on into Gumburu. With this party I sent instructions to Lieut.-Colonel Cobbe, informing him that I was advancing to Gumburu, and that, if practicable, he should fall back on me on the morning of the 19th instant, by which time I hoped to be within 12 miles of Gumburu.

10. Successive messengers, despatched by Lieut.-Colonel Cobbe on the morning and afternoon of the 17th instant, reached me on my way out from Galadi, to the effect that Lieut.-Colonel Plunkett's force had been overwhelmed, and that Lieut.-Colonel Cobbe was holding his zariba with the remainder of his force.

11. I marched 20 miles by the morning of the 18th instant; I halted here for the day, and sent on messengers to Lieut.-Colonel Cobbe.

At 1 a.m. on the 19th instant, I received a message from Lieut.-Colonel Cobbe saying that the Mounted Infantry had reached him at 1 p.m. on the 18th, and that he intended marching out of Gumburu on the morning of the 19th. I therefore decided to send back the whole of my transport, except water, to Galadi, to form a zariba at the camp I was in, and to leaving the water there under strong guard, marching myself towards Lieut.-Colonel Cobbe with 250 of the 2nd Sikhs. In case Lieut.-Colonel Cobbe's retirement should be molested, I would then be unencumbered with transport, and able to be of great assistance in effecting the retirement.

12. I marched 12 miles on the morning of the 19th, and halted about 10 miles from Gumburu, where I received a message from Lieut.-Colonel Cobbe to say that he was on his way and would be up to me shortly.

He arrived about noon with all his transport intact, his retirement from Gumburu having been unmolested.

13. I at once proceeded to return to my camp of the 18th, sending on all transport animals ahead, and covering them with a strong rearguard of Mounted Infantry and Infantry.

I arrived at the camp of the 18th instant at sundown on the 19th instant, and Galadi at sundown on the 20th instant.

14. The camels of Lieut.-Colonel Cobbe's reconnaissance were very weak, having had little or no grazing for 10 days, and no water for that time, but nevertheless reached Galadi. Had this force been in possession of Indian zamels every camel would have died, and the retirement would have been impossible without the loss of all the baggage.

15. From the narrative of survivors of the action, it is evident that the enemy was in overwhelming numbers, and that he fought with a fanatical bravery that he has never displayed before.

It is also evident that the Somalis alone were not engaged in this action, but that Adones from the Webi Shebeli were for the most part employed.

This information has since been confirmed by a telegram I have received from Colonel Rochfort, who states that the Mullah had with him 1,900 Adones.

I had heard from prisoners that the Mullah had with him a number of men who were described to me as "men who would come right up to the troops and take their rifles from their hands."

16. From the report of Lieut.-Colonel Cobbe it is evident that disobedience of orders on the part of Lieut.-Colonel Plunkett, in pushing on to get in to contact with the enemy, resulted in an action occurring, in which a small force has been annihilated. Had Lieut.-Colonel Plunkett contented himself with bringing in Captain Olivey's company, I should have been able to reach Lieut.-Colonel Cobbe on the 19th with reinforcements, when the enemy would either have retired or would have engaged me with probably different results.

17. Lieut.-Colonel Plunkett has paid the penalty of his life for his disobedience of orders, and he, together with all those who were killed at Gumburu, fought with the greatest gallantry in endeavouring to retrieve the day, but were overwhelmed by numbers.

18. The service ammunition, with the present rifle, has little stopping power, and, in a fanatical rush of savages, a heavier bullet, or one with greater stopping power, is very requisite.

19. I deeply regret the loss of life which had occurred. I consider that Lieut.-Colonel Cobbe acted in the best manner that he could in the circumstances.

Lieut.-Colonel Plunkett had marched so far from the zariba in order to come up with the enemy, that to have sent out more men to him in time to assist him would have been impossible, and moreover would have so weakened the garrison of the zariba as to render it liable to be taken up by the enemy; and such a reinforcement would have been, in all probability, attacked and overwhelmed on its way.

20. After the withdrawal to Galadi, a further immediate advance on Wardair or Walwal was now impracticable. The delay caused by the events at Gumburu had in any case too far reduced my available rations and transport, while the knowledge gained of the country to be traversed, and of the military spirit of the enemy, would have necessitated a larger force than I had available at Galadi.

I therefore decided to drop back the bulk of my force to Galkayu

and Bera, and to employ every available camel on the rolling up of the Obbia base.

In order that this movement should be completed without hostile interference, and for the following reasons, I decided to hold Galadi and Dudub with sufficiently strong garrisons.

By so doing I should cover the rolling up of the base, and the Bohotle—Galkayu route, and, in addition, should the Abyssinians come up with and inflict a defeat on the Mullah, I should be able to prevent the latter from falling back on Galadi.

21. I consequently left a garrison of 370 men, under Lieut.-Colonel Cobbe, in Galadi, and 80 men, under Captain Phillips, in Dudub, with a month's rations, and withdrew the rest of my force to Bera and Galkayu, the troops arriving there between the 25th and 27th instant.

I do not think that the enemy will attempt to attack either of the advanced posts, since I believe that the severe punishment which he received in the action of the 17th will prevent his taking the offensive for some time.

In any case the posts are sufficiently strong to prevent any anxiety being felt as to their safety.

22. I have in my telegram, No. 121 of 27th instant, reported very fully on the situation, and have little to add thereto. For reasons which I have therein given, I am of opinion that the force must be withdrawn across the Haud to Bohotle during the next 2 months, and I have given my views, for your decision, as to the retention of a garrison in the Mudug.

23. The possibility of further operations at a later date depends entirely on the capacity of the Protectorate to raise a sufficient number of camels, and on the position of the Mullah at that time.

I am telegraphing to Colonel Swann and Cordeaux, as to the possibility or advisability of making extensive forced requisitions of camels on payment, and as to the measure of success which is likely to be obtained.

24. In any case I fear that some time will elapse before the necessary transport could be collected, but if by that time the Mullah is still in his position, the reoccupation of the places which we now hold will not be a difficult matter, with the knowledge which we possess of the country and the water supply.

25. In the meanwhile I am hoping that, before it becomes necessary to withdraw the garrisons of Dudub and Galadi, the Abyssinians will have been able to drive the Mullah from his present positions.

In such a case I expect to see an immediate *debâcle* of the Ali Gheri and Dulbhanta, who will be driven by stress of water on to Bohotle or Galkayu.

I should then be able to deal with those tribes, and to obtain a large number of transport animals. In such a case the whole situation as regards this force would be changed.

26. There is, however, another situation to be considered, viz., that the Mullah may signally defeat the Abyssinians. As far as we ourselves are concerned, I do not consider that the situation will be very different to what it is at present. We may expect that the Bohotle—Galkayu route may be strong, but so long as Galadi and Dudub are held, no considerable body of the enemy will penetrate so far east. The Mullah cannot, even if he so desired, penetrate northwards into the Protectorate until abundant rains have filled the water holes, and in any case he would fear for his communications. I do not consider it to be likely that he will move in this direction.

27. I enclose—

(a.) A copy of instructions to Lieut.-Colonel Cobbe.

(b.) A report from Lieut.-Colonel Cobbe, enclosing a list of casualties.

(c.) A consecutive narrative of the events of the action on the 17th, compiled from the evidence of the survivors, as taken by a Committee of Enquiry.

28. The recommendations which Colonel Cobbe and Captain Shakerley have made, will be forwarded by me in a despatch at the conclusion of the operations.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your obedient servant,

W. H. MANNING, *Brigadier-General,*
Commanding Somaliland Field Force.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR LIEUT.-COLONEL COBBE, V.C., D.S.O., COMMANDING COLUMN
DETAILED IN FORCE ORDERS OF 8TH INSTANT.

1. All information lately received tends to the belief that Mullah's forces are now in the area of country roughly enclosed within the boundaries Wardair, Suryu, Danop.

The Mullah himself, with his personal bodyguard, is believed to be at a spot called Illig, some 18 miles north of Wardair.

Wardair is believed to be 70 to 80 miles north of Galadi.

2. Your object will be to effect a reconnaissance in the direction of Wardair and, if no strong opposition is met with, to seize and hold that place, thus securing the water supply to the Main Column, which will advance from Galadi on 17th instant.

You will refrain from attacking the enemy if you have reason to suppose that the main body of his force is at hand, but it is probable that you will be in possession of the wells before any important body of the enemy can be concentrated to meet you.

Once in possession of Wardair, and in strong defensive position, you should be able to hold your own without difficulty, and to inflict the severest losses on the enemy if he ventures to attack you.

3. As previously ordered, you will start to-night with that portion of your column detailed to move to-day, and you will reach to-morrow morning the water post which has been established 20 miles towards Wardair.

At this post you will obtain 1 day's water for your column, and on the 11th instant you will proceed towards Wardair, taking with you the detachment 5th Bn. King's African Rifles now at that post, and leaving as garrison one Officer and 10 N.F.R. Sappers and Miners now at the water post.

By the morning of the 12th instant, it is presumed that you will have accomplished some 38 miles from Galadi, and by the evening of the 12th instant, some 55 miles.

4. The Mounted Infantry of your column will, as already detailed, start on the evening of the 11th instant, reaching the water post on the morning of the 12th, and receiving from it 1 day's water.

The Mounted Infantry will start again on the evening of the 12th, and will march until they join your column on the morning or afternoon of the 13th instant, receiving that night the first of the 4 days' water supply carried by you for them.

5. Every endeavour will be made to form a watering post at Gumburu (40 miles) by the 6th instant, but it is doubtful whether we shall have tins or cans available to store more than 750 gallons, to include water for garrison of 10 men.

6. Your further proceedings must be left to your judgment, bearing in mind the general instructions embodied in paragraph 2.

7. You will keep the General Officer Commanding informed as to your movements, and, in the unlikely event of such opposition being concentrated as to compel you to fall back, you will, in addition to reporting on the military situation, state what your requirement will be in the way of water, in order that a water convoy may be despatched without delay.

8. At present arranged, the Main Column will start from here on the 17th instant, and should have accomplished some 55 miles by the morning of the 20th instant.

G. FORESTIER-WALKER, *Lieut.-Colonel,*
Chief Staff Officer, Somaliland Field Force.

*From Lieut.-Colonel A. S. Cobbe, Commanding Reconnaissance towards Wardair,
to the Chief Staff Officer, Somaliland Field Force.*

Galadi,
21st April, 1903.

Sir,

I have the honour to report that, in accordance with the instructions received, I proceeded on the night of the 10th instant from Galadi with a force, strength as per margin,* to the water post which had been established on the 19th instant, 20 miles south-west of Galadi. I arrived at the post on the morning of the 11th instant, and found that it had been established on the wrong road, and too far to the south.

I reported that this was the case, and informed you that it was my intention to strike off in a north-westerly direction, until I should reach the proper road, which, according to the information received from the guide, should be the northernmost road from Galadi.

I marched across country, taking with me the detachment, 5th Bn. King's African Rifles,† who had garrisoned the water post, and sending scouts to Gumburu, and passed the southern road to Gumburu, on the morning of the 10th instant, at 11 miles from the water post. At 16 miles I reached the centre road to Gumburu after passing through thick bush, and halted on it. I forwarded a letter from this camp, through the Officer commanding water post, suggesting the removal of that post, and stating I would send back the empty camels direct by the road on which I now was, also informing you that two of the enemy's horsemen had been seen close to our camp, from which they had galloped away.

As my mounted men had given me no news of a road further north than this, I decided to move by this road to Gumburu. This is the road which Colonel Plunkett used when he raided to Gumburu previously.

In the afternoon I sent the Somali Mounted Infantry, under Lieutenant Chichester, to the front, with orders to go about 10 miles before dark, and marched myself by moonlight until I reached them. Lieutenant Chichester reported that about seven of the enemy's horsemen had been seen, but that, seeing our men, they had galloped off; the scouts whom I had sent to Gumburu also reported that they had fired on the enemy's scouts.

I halted here and sent on eight Somali Mounted Infantry with about 12 foot scouts, to go through the night and examine the road; the scouts were ordered to wait and report to me at daylight, while the Mounted Infantry scouted further to the front.

I started at 4 a.m. on the 13th and marched 10 miles, being met at various points by my scouts, who reported that the road was clear, and that the tracks of the enemy's horsemen led away to the west. As the guide appeared to be doubtful whether we were on the right road to Wardair or not, I recalled my scouts from the road leading west, and sent five mounted men out to the north-west to look for another road further north. They returned and reported that, after passing through thick bush, they had found a path which seemed to be much less used than the one on which I was marching, I, therefore, decided to keep on the same road.

The British and Burgher Mounted Infantry,‡ under Captain Shakerley, joined me at the mid-day halt, and, before marching, I sent back 70 camels with empty water-tins under an escort. I reported that I was extremely doubtful of the road, and that I was about 49 miles west of Galadi, but that I should go on till mid-day on the next day, and, then, if I had found out nothing definite about the road to Wardair and the wells, I should have to return, as I could not afford to go further with the water which I had.

On the afternoon of the 13th, I sent on all the Mounted Infantry in front, with orders to go about 8 miles along the road, which would enable me to

* Camel Battery—1 British Officer, 20 N.F.R. 1st Bn. King's African Rifles—6 British Officers, 116 N.F.R. 2nd Bn. King's African Rifles—10 British Officers, 1 British Warrant Officer, 253 N.F.R. 6th Bn. King's African Rifles—1 British Officer, 10 rank and file. Indian Medical Service—1 British Officer. Transport—1 British Officer, 1 non-commissioned officer, 134 assistants, 380 camels, 33 followers.

† 5th Bn. King's African Rifles—1 British Officer, 50 rank and file.

‡ British Mounted Infantry—2 Officers, 21 non-commissioned officers and men. Burgher Mounted Infantry—1 Officer, 22 non-commissioned officers and men.

march by moonlight. I started at 5 p.m., with the Infantry, but shortly after starting, not seeing the tracks of the Mounted Infantry on the road, I suspected that they had been guided by the Somali Mounted Infantry on to the northern road, which the Somalis had previously reconnoitred. I sent two camel sowars to follow their tracks and recall them, who returned without finding their tracks.

As I was now in thick bush, and had no scouts ahead, I halted before dark, after 4 miles, and made a zariba. Three scouts were sent back to the afternoon camp, to follow on the tracks of the Mounted Infantry, with a letter recalling them to me. These did not reach the Mounted Infantry till 7 a.m.

At 4 a.m., on the 14th instant, I sent my remaining scouts a short distance ahead, but did not march myself until daylight, at 6 a.m. I advanced shortly, and as the bush grew thicker and the paths dispersed, I decided that I could do no more by mid-day, and so ordered the column to retire.

After retiring for about a mile and a-half, the new advanced guard was fired into by the enemy's horsemen. I was able to collect most of the transport into the zariba, but some stampeded, and the two companies in front dispersed the horsemen, who, however, continued to hang about till the Mounted Infantry, hearing our guns, came up and chased them away.

I continued the retirement to a place north of Gumburu hill, about 42 miles from Galadi, and sent back a letter saying that I proposed to leave a post there, and to return myself to Galadi. This letter I sent by two Somali Mounted Infantry, who returned saying they had met seven of the enemy. I then sent it by 10 British Mounted Infantry. During the night I sent out my scouts to watch the bush for the enemy's scouts; in the morning they fired at, and dispersed, some of the enemy's horsemen, who had galloped up to them unawares. I decided, on the morning of the 15th, to rest the men, who had had a trying time. During the morning it rained hard for 1 hour, and, sending men out, I found some pools, where I filled up empty tanks and watered the horses, and I decided not to march. I received a letter informing me that a convoy was on its way to Gumburu.

On the morning of the 16th, I sent out half a company to the west, under Captain Morris, and half a company, under Captain Luard, to the W.S.W., to reconnoitre for the enemy, and to look for water; also a mounted patrol to the north to look for the northern road and water, and scouts to S.S.E., who returned and reported water.

I sent out a strong escort, with camels and empty tins, and obtained some water. The patrols came back from the north later, and reported that they had gone out 7 miles but had seen no water or signs of the enemy.

In the morning firing was heard from the direction of Captain Luard's party, and Captain Morris reported the enemy in front, but that they retired and advanced in accordance with his movements. I sent out the Mounted Infantry to him, and when they reached him they saw no enemy, and Captain Morris showed them the direction Captain Luard had taken, whence firing had been heard. They went in that direction, but saw no enemy, and came on some of Captain Luard's men sent back by him with a note, in which he said that he had been fired on by the enemy's mounted patrols, but had chased them and killed three ponies, captured a rifle, wounded some of them, and was following them, but would be back by 10 a.m. Captain Morris returned and reported that he had seen the enemy's scouts again since the Mounted Infantry had left him, so I sent half a company to follow Captain Luard's tracks and reinforce him should it be necessary. I also sent the Mounted Infantry out to occupy the enemy on the west.

I sent in a report of what I was doing, also expressing an opinion that the enemy were collected in the thick bush about 10 to 12 miles distant, where I had been attacked by the horsemen on the 14th, and were sending out scouts towards us; also stating that I wished to hold my post with all my force until the arrival of the main column if my water would last. I also sent a letter to Officer commanding convoy to march straight in.

As this letter was leaving I heard firing from the Mounted Infantry, and a messenger came in asking for reinforcements, which I sent out. Very shortly afterwards I received another letter from Captain Shakerley saying that Captain Luard, hearing the firing, had come up on the flank of the enemy, who had galloped off.

Convoy, under Captain Vesey,* came in, bringing back my letter, and I added to it another letter, giving the casualties in the Mounted Infantry, *i.e.*, Lieutenant Chichester, killed; Burgher Hill, severely wounded; and two Somali Mounted Infantry wounded (one since dead). I also said that I would send back all the empty camels possible the next day to Galadi.

In the afternoon I sent out a strong reconnaissance of 200 men, under Major Margesson, to see if any of the enemy were about. He went about 4 miles and saw no enemy.

I decided to send back all except 150 camels next afternoon, with empty water-tins, putting my water into a tank. I ordered a reconnaissance on the morning of the 17th, consisting of one company 2nd Bn. King's African Rifles, under Captain Olivey, which would proceed to the west about 3 miles, and a half company 1st Bn. King's African Rifles, under Captain Walker, to proceed to a hill about 1½ miles to the south-west, to see if the country was clear of the enemy.

I made a tank in the zariba for water about 4.45 a.m.

I received a report from Captain Olivey, despatched 7.45 a.m., saying that he was 3 to 4 miles out, had seen no enemy, but only the tracks of one foot man, and that he was coming back. Shortly afterwards I received another report, marked 8.5 a.m., saying that the enemy, both horse and foot, were advancing, and that he was retiring slowly and required reinforcements.

I ordered Colonel Plunkett to take out one company 2nd Bn. King's African Rifles and 50 men of the 2nd Sikhs with two Maxims to bring Captain Olivey in, and a gun was fired to recall Captain Walker.

Colonel Plunkett started about 9.15 a.m., owing to the slight delay occasioned by loading the Maxims and distributing 50 rounds extra per man. As Colonel Plunkett started another report from Captain Olivey arrived saying that he was within 1½ miles of the zariba and was not in action.

This was shown to Colonel Plunkett, to whom I had given orders that he was only to bring Captain Olivey back.

I reported the news which had been received to you at 9 a.m., saying that I could not send the convoy back yet, and that my communications might be cut. I also sent a horseman to recall Captain Walker, and proceeded with decreasing and strengthening my zariba and entrenching it.

At 11.45 a.m. Somalis reported that they heard firing; it was scarcely audible, but when it seemed certain that there was firing, I sent out mounted Somalis to report—one of them came back about 12.45 p.m. carrying Colonel Plunkett's guide, wounded, on his pony. This man said that the force had been cut up.

I sent more mounted men to find out news, and sent a report at 1 p.m. to Galadi, and another at 2.30 p.m., when some 18 men had returned.

The fighting appears to have been some 6 miles from the zariba according to the accounts of the men who returned, and the firing was barely audible, being at first mistaken for the wind.

Colonel Plunkett, after meeting Captain Olivey, which he should have done within a mile of the zariba, must have gone on, taking Captain Olivey with him, and been drawn on by the enemy until attacked by the whole of the Mullah's forces. I did not consider myself able to take out reinforcements to him, as I had about 250 men left and could not take out more than 150 men, as even 100 would have been insufficient to defend our zariba as it was, if seriously attacked, and any reinforcements which I could take could not have arrived at the scene of the fight until it was over.

In the afternoon I sent out a mounted patrol to see if they could find more stragglers, with orders not to allow themselves to become engaged with the enemy on any account. These went some 3 miles and saw an enemy's picquet and at once returned. They were shortly followed by a large number of horsemen, whose dust could be seen from the zariba. A couple of shrapnel were fired which sent them back.

The enemy made no attack on our zariba, but had men watching it, and at night sent their scouts close to it, where they were fired on by my patrols.

At 1 p.m. on the 18th instant, Major Kenna with 100 Mounted Infantry arrived, giving me instructions to retire if possible on Galadi, and informing me

of the arrangements made on the road, I sent a letter informing you of my plans, and, after patrolling all round, I started next morning with all my transport, wounded, &c., and met you at mid-day without coming into contact with the enemy, tracks of their scouts and fires in the west being the only signs.

On the 16th, after the arrival of the convoy under Captain Vesey, I found that I had full water rations for 4 days, and was still filling tins from a rainpool, and I could make my water last 6 days, so I wished to keep all my force holding the enemy and covering the advance of the Main Column from Galadi, which I expected would reach me by 20th, when I confidently expected that the General Officer Commanding would be able to attack the enemy within 10 miles from my zariba. On the 17th, when the enemy was reported in full, I wished to get in the companies safely which were out reconnoitring, and then considered that I was quite strong enough in my zariba, which it was extremely doubtful that the enemy would attack, and I also had sufficient water to last me for some days after I expected the Main Column. I regret extremely that Colonel Plunkett's disobedience of my orders in proceeding after the enemy when he had met Captain Olivey's company should have led to such a grievous disaster, and destroyed the chance of dealing a destructive blow to the enemy while avoiding the great risk of marching the long distance to Wardair with large water transport, through dense bush in the face of the enemy.

In the thick bush on the 14th, I found the left flank company and a large amount of transport had passed within 50 to 60 yards of me without being seen, and got in front of the front face, and later, when retiring, and my advanced guard was fired on by the enemy, who were very few, and I was able to collect nearly all my transport before any shots were fired from a flank, and the transport happened to be in an open patch, even then a few camels stampeded and some loads were lost.

I think it would be a very difficult thing to protect one's transport in the thick bush, and as the number of camels is bound to be as many, if not more than the number of fighting men when carrying several days water, a column in square formation in dense bush practically resolves itself into four detached bodies of troops out of sight and touch of each other. There is little doubt that the enemy suffered very severely on the 17th, as they made no attempt to interfere with my retirement on the 19th, after I had received the reinforcement of 100 Mounted Infantry.

I attach the report of the Officer Commanding Mounted Infantry on the action of the 16th, and his recommendation of Rifleman Miller, King's Royal Rifles Corps Mounted Infantry, for the favourable consideration of the General Officer Commanding. I also wish to bring to the notice of the General Officer Commanding the very able manner in which Captain Shakerley, King Royal Rifle Corps, and Captain Foster, Burgher Mounted Infantry, collected their men, who were galloping in extended order, when suddenly attacked by a large body of the enemy, and also the very steady behaviour of the British and Burgher Mounted Infantry, which alone enabled them to keep off the enemy until the appearance of the Infantry made the enemy retire.

I also wish to bring to the notice of General Officer Commanding, for his favourable consideration, No. A 759 Private Mandelumbe, 2nd Bn. King's African Rifles, who brought in No. 383 Private Gomani, who was wounded in the arm, a distance of 6 miles to the zariba.

The following is a list of casualties on the various dates:—

14th April.—One Somali Guide, slightly wounded.

* 2nd Sikhs—1 British Officer, 48 N.F.R.

	Killed in action.	Wounded (since dead).	Wounded.	Missing.	Remarks.
British Officer	1	..	..	..	Lieutenant Chichester, 6th Bn. King's African Rifles. } 16th April.
Somali	1	1	..	
Burgher Mounted Infantry	1	..	
Total	1	1	2	..	
4TH BN. KING'S ROYAL RIFLE CORPS.					
British rank and file	2	No. 2176 Rifleman Laurence Ensor; No. 1589 Rifleman John Barrow.
2ND SIKHS.					
British Officer	1	Captain Vesey.
Native Officers	2	
N.F.R.	46	
1ST BN. KING'S AFRICAN RIFLES.					
Sikh..	1	No. 153 Lance-Havildar Khajan Singh, 3rd Peshawar Battery.
N.F.R. Africans	1	..	2	
Maxim gun carrier	1	
2ND Bn. KING'S AFRICAN RIFLES.					
British Officers	7	Lieut.-Colonel Plunkett, Captain Johnston - Stewart, Captain Olivey, Captain Morris, Lieutenant Gaynor, Lieutenant Bell, Captain McKinnon.
Sikh..	1	Havildar-Major Dewan Singh, 36th Sikhs.
Somali followers	1	3	
N.F.R. Africans	27	117	
5TH BN. KING'S AFRICAN RIFLES.					
Hospital assistant	1	
INDIAN MEDICAL SERVICE.					
British Officer	1	Lieutenant Sime, I.M.S.
TRANSPORT.					
Somalis	1	10	
Total	1	29	195	

I have, &c.,
A. S. COBBE, *Lieut.-Colonel,*
Commanding Reconnaissance.

Sir,

I have the honour to report that in accordance with orders I proceeded, on 16th April, 1903, with my patrol, strength as per margin,* along the road running west from the zariba; when we had gone about 1½ miles we encountered three of the enemy's scouts, we pursued them and after going about ½ mile came suddenly upon a considerable force of the enemy's mounted men in an open clearing, we opened fire and in a very short time I found that

* British Mounted Infantry, 1 Officer, 4 men; Burgher Mounted Infantry, 1 Officer, 12 men; Somali Mounted Infantry, 1 Officer, 12 men.

Gumburu,
17th April, 1903.

they were working round my flanks and rear; I retired about 40 yards to a more favourable position and formed a small circle, the enemy were between me and the zariba, and I had wounded men and one killed; a brisk fire was maintained for about ¾ of an hour, the enemy showing much courage and persisting, one man and horse being killed within 12 yards of the circle, I despatched a messenger to the Officer Commanding Column informing him of our position. We eventually succeeded in driving off the enemy at, I believe, a considerable loss to them. About 10 minutes after the firing was over Captain Luard, King's African Rifles, came on the scene with his company, and I have no doubt that the approach of this force assisted me materially. A force from the zariba arrived later. I very much regret to report the following casualties:—Lieutenant Chichester, Somali Mounted Infantry, killed. Trooper Hill, Burgher Contingent, and two Somalis wounded; three horses killed, and seven wounded.

Two of the enemy's dead were found on the ground and 13 dead ponies, but I believe they suffered considerably as most of the firing was at fairly close range, and several were seen to fall from their horses. The enemy being round us some time after the firing was over so I presume they were removing their dead and wounded.

I estimate their numbers at about 200. I have brought to the notice of the Officer Commanding Column, in a separate letter, the good services of Riflemen Miller, King's Royal Rifle Corps Mounted Infantry.

I am, &c.,
G. C. SHAKERLEY, *Captain,*
Commanding British (King's Royal Rifle Corps)
Mounted Infantry.

To the Staff Officer to Column under
Lieut.-Colonel Cobbe, V.C., D.S.O.

Galadi,
22nd April, 1903.

CASUALTY LIST OF 17TH APRIL, 1903.

1st Bn. King's African Rifles.

Missing, reported dead—

153 Lance-Havildar Khazan Singh.
52 Corporal Chidwata.
24 Lance-Corporal Kunga.

Died of wounds, 19th April, 1903—
36 Private Sabani.

A. S. COBBE, *Lieut.-Colonel,*
Commanding 1st Bn. King's African Rifles.

Gumburu,
18th April, 1903.

Sir,

I wish to bring to the notice of the Officer Commanding Column the good services of No. 2556 Rifleman Joshef Miller, 4th Bn. King's Royal Rifles (British Mounted Infantry).

On 16th April, 1903, I was in command of a mounted patrol sent out from the Column we came in contact with some mounted dervishes and were eventually surrounded by several hundred. Rifleman Miller was standing close to me and heard me say that I was going to send a message to the Officer Commanding Column, he immediately volunteered to carry this message. I gave him a letter; he succeeded in galloping through the enemy's lines at great risk, and delivered the letter to the Officer Commanding Column.

I have, &c.,
G. C. SHAKERLEY, *Captain, King's Royal Rifle Corps,*
Commanding British Mounted Infantry.

To the Staff Officer,
The Officer Commanding Column.

Forwarded to Chief Staff Officer for the favourable consideration of General Officer Commanding. His horse was wounded when getting back.

A. S. COBBE, *Lieut.-Colonel,*
Commanding Reconnaissance.

NARRATIVE OF THE ACTION OF GUMBURU ON 17TH APRIL, 1903, EXTRACTED FROM EVIDENCE BY SURVIVORS GIVEN BEFORE COMMITTEE OF ENQUIRY HELD AT GALADI AND ELSEWHERE.

The force which marched out of the zariba at Gumburu, under Lieut.-Colonel Plunkett, on the 17th instant, consisted of 48 men, 2nd Sikhs, and a company 2nd Bn. King's African Rifles.

About 1 mile from the zariba this force met "C" Company of the 2nd Bn. King's African Rifles, under Captain Olivey.

The force then apparently formed square, with the Sikhs in the front face, and marched some 6 miles further to an open spot, which was surrounded by thick bush.

The distance of the bush from the square is variously estimated from 300 to 600 yards.

The enemy had apparently collected in this bush, and advanced on the square from it.

First horsemen, then foot riflemen, and afterwards spearmen, attacked the square on all sides. The horsemen and riflemen were driven back, but ammunition becoming exhausted, the square was broken by the rush of spearmen.

In spite of the fire of the troops and Maxims, the enemy frequently came up as close as 10 yards from the square.

When the ammunition was exhausted, Colonel Plunkett gave orders for the troops to charge with the bayonet back to the zariba. Previous to this, however, it appears that many Officers and men had been killed and wounded.

Some evidence points to the front face of the square being first pushed back by a rush of spearmen upon the Sikhs, who fought with the bayonet, but re-formed.

At this period of the fight most of the casualties occurred, and from the evidence of witnesses the whole of the Officers were killed, together with the two men of the King's Royal Rifles who accompanied the force.

Captain Johnston-Stewart, before being killed, told those who could to get back to the zariba.

The fight appears to have lasted some 2 hours.

Colonel Plunkett left camp at 9.15 a.m., and at 11.45 a.m. firing was heard in the distance. This would make the scene of the action about 7 miles from the zariba.

The return, at 12.45 p.m., of a Somali, who brought in news that all was over in the square, cannot be accepted as reliable evidence, as he probably escaped early in the fight, and was brought in upon the pony of the scout sent out to see what was happening.

The numbers of the enemy's dead, as stated by witness, vary, but the Somali or Yao cannot be relied upon to estimate numbers with any approach to exactitude. The Yao can only count up to 10.

The evidence of Somalis points to the fact that some outside tribes (Adones, probably) were engaged in the attack.

The evidence of Yaos speaks of fair men (probably Arabs) and others (probably Adones), who are negroes, and Somalis, as having been seen in the fight.

The whole evidence goes to prove that the fight was a most gallant one, and that the majority of the men had finished their ammunition before the square was broken by an overwhelming rush of spearmen.

Most of the men who returned appear only to have had 100 rounds on the person. These men belonged to Captain Olivey's Company, the Sikhs; the other company took out 150 rounds per man.

G. FORESTIER-WALKER,
Chief Staff Officer.

No. 15.

From Brigadier-General W. H. Manning, Commanding Somaliland Field Force, to the Secretary of State for War.

Sir,

Bohotle, 28th June, 1903.

I have the honour to enclose a despatch from Major J. E. Gough, Commanding the Flying Column of the Berbera—Bohotle Force, forwarded to me through Lieut.-Colonel J. E. Swann, Commanding the Berbera—Bohotle Line of Communication.

After the occupation of Galadi, I instructed Lieut.-Colonel J. Swann to employ the Flying Column in a reconnaissance in the direction of Wardair, to coincide as to time with the movements of the Obbia Force in that direction.

Major J. E. Gough describes in his despatch the operations undertaken by him with this object in view.

I enclose the remarks made by Lieut.-Colonel J. Swann upon the manner in which Major J. E. Gough conducted the reconnaissance to Daratoleh. I consider that his skilful handling of a small force in difficult bush country, when surrounded by superior numbers of a brave and fanatical enemy, is worthy of high commendation.

Major J. E. Gough, in his despatch of the 23rd April, attached to the report of the operations of the Berbera—Bohotle Flying Column, has brought to my notice the names of two Officers whom he recommends for the Victoria Cross for an act of conspicuous gallantry during the action of Daratoleh.

I beg to forward for favourable consideration the names of those two Officers—

Major W. G. Walker, I.A., Bikanir Camel Corps.

Captain G. M. Rolland, I.A., Intelligence Officer, Flying Column, Berbera—Bohotle Force.

Major J. E. Gough also brings to notice the names of the following Indian and African soldiers for acts of conspicuous gallantry on the same occasion, and recommends the bestowal of the Order of Merit upon the Indian soldiers and the Medal for Distinguished Conduct in the Field upon the African soldiers.

I beg to forward, for favourable consideration, the names as given in Major Gough's despatch:—

For Order of Merit—

B.C.A. No. 126, Regimental No. 2376 Lance-naik Maieya Singh,
26th Beluchistan Regiment, Indian Army, serving with the
Indian Contingent, British Central Africa.

For the Distinguished Conduct in the Field—

No. 66 Serjeant Nderamani, 2nd Bn. King's African Rifles.

No. 87 Corporal Surmoni, 2nd Bn. King's African Rifles.

Sowar Umar Ismail, Somali Camel Corps, 6th Bn. King's African Rifles.

The behaviour of all ranks during the action of Daratoleh appears to have been excellent. The Somali Mounted Infantry and Somali Camel Corps of the 6th Bn. King's African Rifles, contrary to expectation, behaved with great steadiness.

Major J. E. Gough also brings the names of the following Officers and

non-commissioned officers to my notice as having performed exceptionally good work on the occasion of the fight at Daratoleh:—

Captain (Local Major) H. B. Rowlands, 2nd Bn. King's African Rifles.
 Captain R. E. L. Townsend, 2nd Bn. King's African Rifles.
 Captain J. E. Hughes, I.A., Bikanir Camel Corps.
 Captain T. N. Howard, 6th Bn. King's African Rifles.
 Captain L. H. R. Pope-Hennessy, 3rd Bn. King's African Rifles
 (attached to 6th Bn. King's African Rifles).
 Lieutenant J. H. Horton, Indian Medical Service.
 Armourer-Serjeant A. Gibb, Army Ordnance Corps (attached 6th Bn.
 King's African Rifles).
 Jemadar Kishen Singh, Bikanir Camel Corps.
 No. 2333 Colour-Havildar Jai Singh, 24th Beluchistan Regiment,
 Indian Contingent, British Central Africa.
 Interpreter Ahmed Sheri, 6th Bn. King's African Rifles.
 Interpreter Ahmed Jibril, 6th Bn. King's African Rifles.
 No. 88 Havildar Ahmed Ismail, 6th Bn. King's African Rifles.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
 Your obedient Servant,
 W. H. MANNING, *Brigadier-General,*
Commanding Somaliland Field Force.

REPORT ON THE ENGAGEMENTS OF DAROTELEH.

From Officer Commanding Flying Column to Deputy Assistant Adjutant-General, Lines of Communication, Berbera-Bohotle.

Sir, Bohotle, 28th April, 1903.

I have the honour to forward the following report, describing the operations of the Flying Column from 13th to 28th April, 1903:—

After seeing Lieut.-Colonel Swann, Officer Commanding, Lines of Communication, it was decided that the Flying Column would leave Bohotle on 13th April, with the object of co-operating with the Galadi force in a south and south-westerly direction from Bohotle, and if possible to seize the water at Danop and use that place as a pivot for further operations. The information about water at Danop, from Somali sources, was to the effect that there was a pool of rain water there 50 yards by 70 yards, and 2 feet deep, that this would not have evaporated in the ordinary course of events, but that if the Mullah's people had watered much stock there they might have drunk it dry.

The following force left Bohotle at 4 p.m.:—

	Officers.	Non-commissioned officers, British.	Rank and file.	Followers.	Maxims.
Indian Contingent, B.C.A.	1	..	85	8	2
2nd Bn. King's African Rifles	8	..	260	20	1
Hospital	1	..	22	2	..
Transport	1	1	..	130	..
Somali spies .. .. .	..	..	20	..	..
Supply .. .. .	..	1	..	8	..
Staff	3	..	..	8	..
Total	14	2	387	176	3

Major Gough in command, Captain Bruce as Staff Officer, and Captain Rolland as Intelligence Officer.

Transport, consisting of 406 camels, carrying 5 days' water, 12 days' rations, and reserve ammunition.

Halted at 5.30 p.m. Distance of march 4 miles, on the Kurmis—Bohotle road.

On the 14th April, 1903, left zariba at 5.30 a.m., and marched 14 miles on Kurmis—Bohotle road, where the force halted for the mid-day halt. An issue of water was made, and the spare camels, with empty water tins, sent back to Bohotle. Continued march at 2 p.m., on Kurmis—Bohotle road, for 2 miles, at which point the column struck off south-west by west. Halted 5.30 p.m. Distance of march, 20 miles.

Three mounted Somali scouts were sent on to try and get information whether there was water at Danop, or if any water in the balis ahead of the column. These men missed the column on their return, and arrived at Bohotle.

On the 15th April, 1903, left zariba at 5.40 a.m., the mounted troops of the Flying Column, strength as below, under Major Sharp, caught up the Infantry column, and continued their march, keeping about 2 miles ahead of the Infantry.

	Officers.	Men.	Followers.	Camels or ponies.
Bikanir Camel Corps	2	50	4	55
6th Bn. King's African Rifles— (Somali Camel Corps)	1	50	6	65
(Somali Mounted Infantry)	3	80	6	86
Total	6	180	16	206

This force left Bohotle at 4 p.m., on 14th April, starting after the Infantry, in order to save water, as owing to their being no water on the road every drop had to be carried in water tins. At 7.30 a.m. the column struck the Bohotle—Illik—Walwal road, and continued the march along it. Three hours mid-day halt. Left again at 3 p.m., the Mounted Infantry ponies having been given a 4 gallon drink. Distance of march, 21 miles.

On the 16th April, 1903, as no news of water, either at Danop or neighbourhood, orders were given to the mounted troops to continue on the Illik—Walwal road for 20 miles, and to make every endeavour to capture a prisoner, and to look out well for any balis holding water.

If no news of water at Danop obtained, the mounted troops to make a raid in a southerly direction, inflict as much damage on the enemy as possible, and then to fall back on the Infantry column, who would remain at Garrero till the morning of 18th April, when they would fall back towards Bohotle to pick up a water convoy. If information was obtained that there was water at Danop, the mounted troops were to seize the place and hold it until the Infantry column arrived.

The mounted troops, under Major Gough, left the zariba at 3.30 a.m., carrying as much water for the men as possible (*i.e.*, Camel Corps, 3 days; and Mounted Infantry, 2 days).

This force moved 20 miles along the Illik—Walwal road, and at 11 a.m. the Somali Camel Corps brought in two prisoners, who stated that they had met some of the Mullah's scouts 3 days previously, who had told them that there was water at Danop, and that the place was held by a few of the Mullah's mounted riflemen. The mounted troops, therefore, continued their march to Danop from Blitdali, under Major Gough, one of the prisoners being used as a guide. Captain Rolland returned to the Infantry column with orders to Major Rowlands to continue his march on Danop, but if he received no further instructions he was to turn back to Bohotle on evening of 17th, as otherwise he would not have enough water with which to make the return journey, and until the mounted troops actually held Danop it was impossible to say what the water supply there actually was.

The mounted troops halted at 6.30 p.m. having marched 32 miles. It was found afterwards that this force was led considerably out of the direct road.

On the 17th April, 1903, the mounted troops continued their march at 3.30 a.m., and met the Bohotle—Megagjifa—Danop road at 6 a.m., some 14 miles from Megagjifa. At 11.30 a.m., when some 10 miles from Danop, the force halted, as the animals were very done up by the heat and want of water. Ten of the best Somali Mounted Infantry ponies were picked out, and a patrol of Somali Mounted Infantry sent on to Danop to reconnoitre and report on the water. At 4 p.m. two of this patrol returned and reported as follows:—

“Went to Danop, and found 15 of the enemy’s horsemen, chased them, capturing nine ponies. Water there only sufficient for the whole Flying Column for 3 days.”

On this information orders were sent out by mounted messengers to Major Rowlands to return to Bohotle, as there was not enough water to fill up tins for the return journey.

The mounted troops continued their march to Danop to water up, and to act on any further information that might be obtained.

Arrived Danop, 5.45 p.m., a few shots being fired by the enemy on our left flank. Water was found to be more than expected, although not enough for the whole Flying Column. Orders were, therefore, sent to Major Rowlands, at 6.30 p.m., cancelling previous orders, and ordering up 100 2nd Bn. King’s African Rifles, 50 Sikhs, 2 Maxims, reserve ammunition, 100 water tins, and all available rations, the remainder of the column to return to Bohotle.

A strong zariba was made.

On the 18th April, 1903, patrols of Somali Mounted Infantry were sent out west and south-west at 6 a.m. These returned at noon with 400 loot camels and two prisoners. The latter reported 3 days’ heavy fighting between Galadi and Wardair, and that the Mullah had lost many men. Zariba was strengthened.

At 5.30 p.m. messengers, received from Major Rowlands, dated noon this day, 15 miles east of Megagjifa, saying that up to the time of writing no messengers from Flying Column were received by him, and that he would have to return unless he received orders by early morning of 19th. His men had been placed on a half issue of water to enable Major Rowlands to stay on an extra day.

Messengers were sent back at once, repeating previous orders *re* coming on to Danop.

An Ibrahim was sent to Walwal to try and get information, and camel meat was issued to all ranks as rations.

On the 19th April, 1903, an Officers’ patrol, under Captain Hughes, consisting of 30 Bikanir Camel Corps and 10 Somali Mounted Infantry, were sent out on Walwal road. This patrol returned at 5 p.m., having gone 15 miles on Walwal road and having seen nothing. At 12.30 p.m. a few of the enemy’s horsemen reported in the bush close to the zariba. Fifteen Somali Mounted Infantry chased them out of it, a few shots being exchanged.

At 1.30 p.m. a letter was received from Major Rowlands, acknowledging receipt of yesterday’s orders, and saying that he was acting on them. Our two previous messengers were afterwards found to have eventually fetched up at Bohotle.

On the 20th April, 1903, Major Rowlands, with 50 Sikhs and 30 2nd Bn. King’s African Rifles, arrived at our zariba at 1.30 a.m., having marched 35 miles, the convoy being zaribaed at dark about 10 miles from Danop. The Bikanir Camel Corps were sent out at daylight to meet the convoy and escort it into Danop. The convoy arrived all correct at 9 a.m. A false alarm occurred at noon. The zariba was strengthened and bush cleared.

On the 21st April, 1903, a patrol of 25 Somali Mounted Infantry was sent out at 4.30 a.m. towards Wardair with orders to go on till they met the enemy or otherwise obtained information and to bring back a prisoner, if possible.

Another patrol of Somali Camel Corps was sent to Massara (7½ miles south-west by west) to report on water there. This patrol returned at 8.30 a.m. reporting the water there so filthy that the animals refused to drink it. The Somali Mounted Infantry patrol returned at 1 p.m. with two prisoners, and

reported having met 42 of the enemy’s scouts 12 miles from Danop; they killed 18 and brought back 2 prisoners. The prisoners stated as follows:—

“Sent out from Daratoleh (25 miles S.S.E. from Danop) to watch the English force and report on its strength. Enemy’s force at Daratoleh, 50 mounted riflemen and 300 spearmen, but that they had received further reinforcements yesterday.” Also stated that there had been heavy fighting at Gumburru, the Mullah losing heavily; also that there was a fresh rain water bali at Daratoleh.

The Ibrahim who was sent out on 17th returned at 2.30 p.m. and corroborated the above story, but said that the enemy had a large force at Daratoleh, and that the English force had halted at Gumburru and was short of water.

A report of the above was sent to the Officer Commanding Lines of Communication, Bohotle, informing him that the mounted troops would go out to Daratoleh to-morrow (morning of 22nd).

On the 22nd April, 1903, as reported in my letter of 21st to Officer Commanding Lines of Communication, Bohotle, I left Danop at 4.30 a.m. with following force:—

45 Bikanir Camel Corps, 2 Officers, with 1 Maxim under Serjeant Gibb.
 54 Somali Mounted Infantry } 6th Bn. King’s } 3 Officers.
 50 Somali Camel Corps } African Rifles } 1 Officer.
 30 2nd Bn. King’s African Rifles, 2 Officers mounted on Bikanir riding camels (behind the camel sowars).
 12 Indian Contingent, British Central Africa, 1 Officer, mounted on ponies.
 Lieutenant Horton, I.M.S.

At 7.30 a.m. we were fired on by the enemy’s scouts. The Somali Mounted Infantry chased and killed two men, capturing two rifles (Lee-Enfields) and three ponies.

We lost one pony shot. One mounted scout of enemy got away. At 9.15 a.m. we again came in contact with the enemy’s scouts, and, at 10.20 a.m. Captain Howard of the Somali Mounted Infantry reported a large force of enemy advancing to meet us. The force was dismounted at once, animals placed in centre, and the men lining the faces.

At 10.30 a.m. the enemy attacked in front, almost immediately developing the attack on all sides. Owing to thick bush and long grass the firing was at very close range, from 20 to 50 yards being the average range. This heavy attack continued till 2 p.m., our men being most steady and firing well. The Maxim under Serjeant Gibb was moved from place to place as occasion arose, and the enemy always giving way when it opened fire. The enemy attacked in a most determined way, exposing themselves freely. At 2 p.m., our ammunition beginning to run short, and one of the enemy who was captured by the Somali Camel Corps reporting that the Mullah himself was at Daratoleh, and it therefore being highly improbable that the Obbia force were either at Wardair or even threatening the place, I had to decide whether to advance further or return to camp. Principally owing to lack of ammunition for further big fight, I decided to return to Danop. All the wounded were put on riding camels or ponies. About 2.15 p.m. the enemy seemed to be reinforced and firing began again, and at 2.30 p.m. the front face (Bikanir Camel Corps) under Captain Walker, and the left face (2nd Bn. King’s African Rifles) under Captain Townsend, charged about 100 yards into the bush, clearing the enemy, who were still keeping up a desultory fire from our immediate neighbourhood. Directly they returned the rear face advanced 200 yards, the camels, &c., closing on them, and the front and side faces retiring, thus forming an elastic square with the animals in the centre. The retirement was continued in this formation through thick bush until 5.30 p.m.

At 3 p.m., as we were short of ammunition and were being considerably pressed on flanks and rear by the enemy, who had brought up more riflemen and spearmen, I sent four Somali Mounted Infantry to Officer Commanding detachment at Danop to send out ammunition to meet us. (This force, under Captain Barclay, met us 6 miles from Danop about 11.30 p.m., and returned to Danop with the mounted troops.)

Up to 5.30 p.m. the rearguard and side faces were heavily engaged. Our movements were naturally slow owing to our having to load the wounded on to camels.

At 5.30 p.m. I mounted the Somali Mounted Infantry (the then leading face), and they went forward under Captain Dickinson and Captain Howard in a fan shape and then halted, thus clearing the enemy from our side faces on our again moving.

I deeply regret to report the following Officers killed:—

Captain C. M. Bruce, R.F.A., Staff Officer to Flying Column.
 Captain C. Godfrey, I.A. (Indian Contingent, British Central Africa).

The following Officers are wounded:—

Major A. Sharp, Officer Commanding Somali Mounted Infantry and Somali Camel Corps.
 *Major H. B. Rowlands, 2nd Bn. King's African Rifles.
 Captain E. M. Hughes, I.A. (Bikanir Camel Corps).
 Captain R. E. Townsend, 2nd Bn. King's African Rifles.

Also the following rank and file:—

Killed—

3 Bikanir Camel Corps.
 1 Somali Mounted Infantry.
 4 Somali Camel Corps.
 4 2nd Bn. King's African Rifles.
 1 Indian Contingent, British Central Africa.

Total 13

and the following wounded:—

4 Bikanir Camel Corps.
 7 Somali Mounted Infantry.
 5 Somali Camel Corps.
 7 2nd Bn. King's African Rifles.
 2 Indian Contingent, British Central Africa.

Total 25

We also lost 17 riding camels killed and 13 wounded, also 9 ponies killed and 9 wounded.

During the attack on us between 10.30 a.m. and 2 p.m. four bayonet charges were made, two by the 2nd Bn. King's African Rifles, one by the Somali Camel Corps, and one by the Bikanir Camel Corps and Indian Contingent, British Central Africa. These were made with the object of clearing the bush, and in all cases succeeded.

The firing ceased at about 5.45 p.m.

The force returned to the zariba at Danop at 1.15 a.m. All wounded brought in and most of the dead.

In conclusion I cannot speak too highly of the behaviour of all ranks. It could not have been better, the Somalis surprising everyone by their steadiness and dash, the 2nd Bn. King's African Rifles having both Officers wounded and losing 11 men killed and wounded out of 30, and yet full of dash and fight.

At some future time I hope to be allowed to bring forward the names of Officers and men for the consideration of the General Officer Commanding.

It is of course difficult to estimate the force against us, but I think there were 300 riflemen, and probably 400 to 500 spearmen. Their losses must have been very heavy—150 killed would probably be within the mark.

We picked up 11 rifles belonging to the enemy, none of ours falling into his hand.

On the 23rd April, 1903, Captains Bruce and Godfrey were buried close to our zariba in the morning. The zariba was strengthened and all water tins filled. A letter was sent to the Officer Commanding Lines of Communication, Bohotle, saying that the Flying Column would start to come back on

* Since died.

25th April, unless news of the Galadi force was received in the meantime, and asking for a water convoy to be sent out to meet the column.

On the 24th April, 1903, messengers were received from Officer Commanding, Lines of Communication, reporting that Colonel Plunkett's force had been cut up at Gumburu, and the probable withdrawal of our forces to Galadi. Orders were at once issued for the return of the column to Bohotle, and letter in duplicate was sent to the Officer Commanding, Lines of Communication, reporting this and asking for water a day earlier if possible. The column marched off at 12.30 p.m., the Somali Mounted Infantry covering the rear and right flank some 3 to 6 miles out. Halted 7.30 p.m. (18 miles).

On the 25th April, 1903, left camp at daybreak, the Somali Mounted Infantry first sending patrols round the zariba at the radius of $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 mile. Mid-day halt in the open for 1 hour. Zaribaed at 3.30 p.m. at Balihalielo (21-mile march).

On the 26th April, 1903, left zariba at 6 a.m. Same formation. At 7.30 a.m. met messenger from Captain Byrne saying he was at Kabri with 150 men, 140 water tins and 12 days' rations. Captain Byrne had met my messengers to Officer Commanding Lines of Communication, and had moved at once to where I had asked the water to meet me. Zaribaed at 5 p.m., 1 mile from Captain Byrne (20 miles march).

On the 27th April, 1903, left zariba at 6 a.m. Joined Captain Byrne. Zaribaed 5 p.m. The Mounted Infantry ponies were watered (4-gallon drink), the Somali Camel Corps being sent straight on to Bohotle to water their camels. (Distance of march 19 miles.)

On the 28th April, 1903, left zariba at 6 a.m., and arrived at Bohotle 10.30 a.m. All wounded doing well. (Distance of march 11 miles.)

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

J. E. GOUGH, Major,
 Officer Commanding, Flying Column.

From the Officer Commanding, Flying Column, to the Officer Commanding, Lines of Communication, Bohotle.

Sir,

Danop, 23rd April, 1903.

I should like to bring the following incident, which occurred during our return to Danop on the afternoon of 22nd April, to the notice of the General Officer Commanding, Somaliland Field Force:—

“Owing to the thick bush and the rear-guard having to hold their ground while wounded men were being placed on camels, the rear-guard had got considerably in rear of the column. Captain Bruce, who was with the rear-guard, was shot through the body from about 20 yards and fell on the path, unable to move. With him at the time were Captain Walker, I.A. (Bikanir Camel Corps); Captain Rolland, I.A., Intelligence Officer, Flying Column; two men, 2nd Bn. King's African Rifles; one Sikh, and one Somali of the Camel Corps. In the meantime, the column, being unaware of what had happened, were getting further away. Captain Rolland ran back some 500 yards and returned with help to bring off Captain Bruce, while Captain Walker and the men remained with Captain Bruce, keeping off the enemy, who were all round in the thick bush. This they successfully accomplished, but not before Captain Bruce was hit a second time and the Sikh wounded. But for their gallant conduct, Captain Bruce must have fallen into the hands of the enemy.”

I beg to submit the names of the Officers for the Victoria Cross, and the men of the 2nd Bn. King's African Rifles and 6th Bn. King's African Rifles for the Distinguished Conduct Medal (names of men attached) and the Sikh for the Order of Merit.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

J. E. GOUGH, Major,
 Officer Commanding Flying Column.

The names of the men recommended for the Distinguished Conduct Medal and Order of Merit are—

1. B.C.A. No. 126/Regimental No. 2376 Lance-Naik Maieya Singh, 24th Baluchistan Regiment.
2. No. 66 Serjeant Nderamani, 2nd Bn. King's African Rifles.
3. No. 87 Corporal Surmoni, 2nd Bn. King's African Rifles.
4. Sowar Umar Ismail, Somali Camel Corps. Tribe Habr Toljaala (Abokr Abdulla), 6th Bn. King's African Rifles.

J. E. GOUGH, Major,
Officer Commanding Flying Column.

The Chief Staff Officer,
Somaliland Field Force.

Bohotle, 1st May, 1903.

I forward herewith Major Gough's despatches describing his operations from Danop, and the action near Daratoleh; also, in a separate letter, Major Gough's recommendation of certain Officers and men for special mark of distinction.

2. In forwarding these documents, I desire to place upon record an expression of my high appreciation of the care, foresight, and dash exhibited by Major Gough during the operations which he describes, and in which he proved himself to be an able and trustworthy commander in the field.

J. SWANN, Lieut.-Colonel,
Commanding Berbera—Bohotle, Lines of Communication.

Officer Commanding Berbera—Bohotle Force,

The General Officer Commanding desires that this despatch, which he has read with much interest, shall be written up, so as to include movements from departure of the column from Bohotle.

It is at present an inchoate document, for it leaves the reader unaware as to Major Gough's original force, of his march to Danop, and of the force which he there left.

Will you please, therefore, request Major Gough to make these necessary additions to the commencement of his despatch, and to return the despatch through you.

G. FORESTIER-WALKER Lieut.-Colonel,
Chief Staff Officer.

Chief Staff Officer,

Bohotle, 22nd May, 1903.

Major Gough's despatch, covering operations from 14th April to 28th April, forwarded herewith.

Also his original recommendation of Officers and men for special marks of distinction.

J. SWANN, Lieut.-Colonel,
Commanding Berbera—Bohotle Force.

No. 16.

From Brigadier-General W. H. Manning, Commanding Somaliland Field Force,
to the Secretary of State for War.

Head-quarters, Somaliland Field Force,

Bohotle, 29th June, 1903.

Sir,

I have the honour to report the progress of events since my last despatch. I had decided to move across the Haud to Bohotle all other troops except the garrisons of Galkayu, Bera, Dudub, Galadi, and Badwein, retaining hold upon these places until the last moment, and then withdrawing the garrisons of Galadi, Dudub, Bera, and Galkayu, so as to concentrate at Badwein upon the same day, for the march across the Haud. I carried out this movement, concentrating the whole force at Badwein on the 17th June, the withdrawal from the various posts having been unmolested.

I had heard rumours from deserters from the Mullah's camp that a move towards the Nogal was contemplated. I did not, however, attach much importance to this rumour, since such a move could not have been made at the time, unless the watering places then in our possession had first been captured. However, heavy rain fell late in May and early in June, filling up the waterholes ("ballis") to the south of Bohotle and on the road towards the Nogal. This enabled the Mullah's force to carry out the bold move of crossing our lines of communication between Bohotle and Damot, having first placed the whole of his mounted force in such a position as to contain Bohotle and Damot, and to threaten any force moving from Garrero to Bohotle.

I heard in Galkayu on the 13th June that bodies of the enemy's horsemen had been in the neighbourhood of Bohotle and Damot, and that Damot had been fired into by a mounted force of dervishes. It was not until I arrived at Badwein on the 17th June that I received information which made it evident that the Mullah had profited by the filling of the waterholes to make his move into the Nogal. The chief reasons for which appear to have been to escape from the pressure brought upon him by our occupation of the Mudug and by the second Abyssinian advance on Gerlogubi, and also to get into touch with his caravans of arms and ammunition being brought to him from northern ports.

The force I had with me in Badwein to cross the Haud consisted of 1,480 fighting ranks, 1,554 followers, 2,232 transport animals, besides a large quantity of live stock. I had made arrangements for carrying four days' water to cross the Haud, having arranged for sufficient water to be stored at Damot to water the force on arrival, and to enable sufficient water to be carried on for the march from Damot to Bohotle. The whole Mullah's force was reported to be within 6 miles of Damot on the 15th June, and the garrison at Damot was not strong. It appeared as though our movement across the Haud would be opposed: I am of opinion, however, that our rapid concentration at Badwein and our movement from thence had prevented the information of our evacuation of the Mudug reaching the Mullah until we were close to Damot and too late for him to make provision to attack the force in the thick bush. I marched out of Badwein on the 18th June, and arrived in Damot on the 21st June.

The only casualties on the march being one man wounded when on picquet duty and one man missing, undoubtedly lost in the thick bush, both of the 2nd Sikhs, and one transport driver wounded by our own fire; this man having left the zariba at night, and having proceeded to the encampment of some women who were following the column, endeavoured, together with the women, to enter the zariba at night, and were mistaken for a number of the enemy, and were fired upon—three women were, I regret to say, killed, and the transport driver severely wounded.

Major Hoskins, Commanding at Damot, had been fired into by the enemy's horsemen on several occasions, but no attempt to make a determined attack upon the zariba was undertaken by the dervishes.

I halted a day at Damot and reinforced the garrison there, bringing up its strength to 250 rifles and three Maxims. I should have brought in this

post had sufficient transport been available, since the water supply there is precarious, and with the present position of the Mullah in the Nogal, it serves no useful purpose. The route to the Nogal by Baran being waterless in the dry season.

I marched out of Damot on the 23rd, reaching Bohotle on the morning of the 26th June.

The road from Damot to Bohotle was crossed by innumerable tracks of camels and sheep and goats, and while marching into Bohotle some 300 camels and 1,500 sheep and goats were captured on the road. From prisoners taken, the tribesmen at present seem disorganized, the flight from Wardair to the Nogal having scattered them, and our sudden appearance from the Mudug having caused a panic. There is no doubt, however, but that the Mullah, having obtained further supplies of arms and ammunition, will shortly commence raids upon our eastern tribes.

I propose now to leave garrison of 400 Indian and African troops at Bohotle, where rations for $2\frac{1}{2}$ months for such a force are collected. To move down into Garrero and Burao garrisons, to bring each of these posts up to about 500 each, and to concentrate the remainder of the troops at Sheikh pending the arrival of Major-General Sir C. Egerton.

I have sent out a column of 700 rifles to bring in the Damot post; this should arrive here on the 3rd July, and on that day I propose to move out the 2nd Sikhs, British Mounted Infantry, and details to Sheikh. The remainder of the force above and beyond the Bohotle garrison will leave Bohotle on the 5th July for Garrero and Burao, provided sufficient transport is available.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

W. H. MANNING, *Brigadier-General*,

Commanding Somaliland Field Force.